

**“No tourists, no life”:
The perceived socio-economic benefits of resort work in Puerto Plata,
Dominican Republic**

by

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**A Thesis
presented to
The University of Guelph**

**In partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts
in
Public Issues Anthropology**

Guelph, Ontario, Canada

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ABSTRACT

“NO TOURISTS, NO LIFE”: THE PERCEIVED SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF RESORT WORK IN PUERTO PLATA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

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This thesis is an investigation of the perceived socio-economic benefits of resort work in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic. In July and August of 2013, ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic. Observation was conducted at a resort in Puerto Plata, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 participants who had worked at, were currently working at, or were affiliated with, resorts in Puerto Plata. Using Jessop’s conceptual framework of *strategic calculation* and *strategic selectivity* to build on anthropological definitions of agency, this thesis suggests that resort workers drew on personal experience in deciding how best to exercise agency in order to extract opportunities from their work. The results of this research indicate that despite their economic dependence on, and the inherent instability of, the resort industry, resort workers perceived their work as beneficial as a result of the agency they could exercise in order to generate more of a personal profit.

DEDICATION

To my family who, although frequently confuse my area of research with “something to do with dinosaur bones,” always believed in me, even when I had stopped believing in myself.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to the participants of this study, who not only shared their wisdom and life experiences, but who truly treated me as a friend. I will always appreciate your kindness and the time you dedicated to making this research possible.

I would also like to recognize the Department of Sociology and Anthropology for the academic support I received. I am grateful to my advisor, Dr. Belinda Leach, for her encouragement and guidance throughout this process. Although the research direction I originally proposed was a daunting one, I am appreciative of your support and patience in helping me to make this research possible. I wish to thank my committee member, Dr. Vivian Shalla, for her valuable feedback on this project. I truly appreciate your insight, attention to detail and helpfulness during this process. I would like to thank Dr. Satsuki Kawano for her role as external examiner for this thesis. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my PIA cohort for their support and unconditional friendship, and Shelagh Daly for her friendliness, administrative support, and willingness to provide a listening ear.

I would not have been able to achieve this academic accomplishment without the support of my family. I would like to recognize my father, Noor, for encouraging me to pursue a Master's degree. Your wisdom has changed my life course, and I am so grateful for your advice. I am sincerely thankful for the support of my mother, Bonnie, during those bumps in the road when I just needed reassurance and a shoulder to cry on. I would also like to recognize my grandparents. I am forever grateful for the love and support you have given me throughout my academic career.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Dominican Republic continues to experience overall success in terms of its tourism industry, boasting over 4.5 million visitors in 2012 (Caribbean Tourism Organization 2013). Despite the overall economic growth experienced by the Dominican Republic, and the perceived importance of tourism for long-term growth (World Travel and Tourism Council 2013), an analysis of the tourism industry at the provincial level is necessary. Such an examination ensures the perceived success of the tourism industry in the Dominican Republic as a whole is not generalized across resort destinations throughout the country. As the tourism industry is estimated to have employed over 180,000 Dominicans in 2013 (World Travel and Tourism Council 2013:4), the significance of this research stems from the overwhelming importance of tourism in providing employment opportunities for Dominicans. Due to the importance of the tourism industry to the livelihoods of Dominicans, the province of Puerto Plata's recent struggle to generate the tourist presence it once did is of significant concern to those employed by the industry (Padilla 2005:357).

Current literature on resort destinations in the Dominican Republic has documented recent changes in tourist preferences resulting in tourists favouring some resort destinations in the Dominican Republic over others. Tourists' faddish tastes, among other unpredictable factors to be discussed later in this thesis, have resulted in lower tourist numbers in Puerto Plata, compared to previous decades. This was also a trend noted by participants in this study. These significant changes demonstrate the importance of conducting situational analyses of tourist destinations within a country in order to ensure that the perception of the success of the tourism industry is not

generalized. This research draws on the knowledge and experience of current and former resort workers in the province of Puerto Plata in the Dominican Republic in order to understand the recent ebbs in the Puerto Plata tourism industry and how tourism workers have adapted to these changes. This research is significant in analyzing how resort work, an industry that once thrived in the province, has been impacted by industry transformations, and whether resort workers' perceptions of their work have changed in the process. Also important to this study is gaining an understanding of the ways in which these workers are dynamic agents in their work and not simply passive victims working in a turbulent industry. This thesis specifically investigates the perceived socio-economic benefits resort work provides resort workers in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic, and the agency these workers exercise in managing the industry's inherent instabilities, and in capitalizing on the socio-economic opportunities provided by their work. The term "socio-economic" will be used in this thesis to describe the social and economic opportunities resort work provides resort workers, including, but not limited to, acquiring language skills through consistent communication with foreign tourists and the ability to earn foreign exchange through tips.

For the purposes of this research, the term "resort" is used to describe, "hotels offering a comprehensive range of recreational facilities on site" (King 1997:13). As discussed by Adler and Adler (2004:38), researching in a setting of leisure can be difficult in trying to achieve credibility, which may account for the lack of research on resort work in popular tourist destinations such as the Dominican Republic. While research on Dominican tourism and resort work has centred on informal work (Gregory 2007), sex tourism external to and inside of resorts (Herold, Garcia, and DeMoya 2001),

implications for rural communities (León 2007), and performances of love (Brennan 2007), studies investigating the significance of resort work in the lives of resort workers in the Dominican Republic are absent. Also, while research on informal tourism industries tend to focus on noncompliance and agency exercised by those resisting formal tourism regulations (Tripp 1997; Gregory 2007), tourism research, especially on the Dominican Republic, seems to assume that resort workers do not exercise the same kind of agency. The research conducted here draws attention to the changes experienced by those employed by the resort industry, the implications for workers of the instability of resort tourism, and the ways in which resort workers adapt to these fluctuations. This project also highlights the ways in which resort workers exercise noncompliance and agency in their positions as formal tourism workers.

This research study employed a combination of methodologies, including anthropological observation techniques, semi-structured interviews and casual conversations. The purpose of the semi-structured interviews was to not only obtain first-hand accounts of resort work, but to confirm and support the data collected through observation. This research used open-ended interview questions in order to encourage participants to share and elaborate on their personal experiences, and to also provide insight into the ways in which they exercised agency in an attempt to benefit from their line of work. This method was especially beneficial in generating discussion regarding their perception of resort work as indispensable. During the semi-structured interviews and casual conversations that took place over the course of the month of fieldwork, questions surrounding the importance of resort work to participants, the length of time they had spent working in the resort industry, and the reasons as to why they decided to

pursue resort work were asked. In addition, questions about what they enjoyed least and most about their positions helped participants to explain how, or if, they exercised agency in order to compensate for any job discontent. Former and current resort employees, as well as those affiliated with the resort industry through external work, such as photographers and excursion directors, were interviewed in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the various positions within the resort industry.

Research was conducted at a resort located along the coast of Puerto Plata, which, for the purposes of this research, will be called “Hotel de Bachata”. Non-managerial resort staff were observed for a week in order to develop an understanding of their daily routine, how they interacted with tourists, as well as how they interacted with one another as resort employees. Observation was conducted in August 2013, and interviews were conducted both before and after the observation period, in July and August.

This thesis argues that, despite their economic dependence on resort work and the instability associated with the resort industry, resort workers valued their work as a result of the agency they were able to exercise in their positions, and the benefits attached to consistent access to tourists. To make this argument, this thesis will draw on Jessop’s (1990, 2008) concepts of *strategic calculation* and *strategic selectivity* to explain the relationship between structure and agency in the resort industry, and how resort workers strategically decide how best to take advantage of the opportunities provided by their work. While both concepts provide the possibility to acknowledge the potential for individuals to exercise agency, they also allow us to recognize the imposing political and economic structures that can determine the kinds of agency exercised. These concepts also help us to identify how agents exercise “strategic” behaviour in order to evade these

structures. *Strategic calculation* suggests that agents use their own personal experiences and belief systems in order to take advantage of the opportunities that they can extract from the structural constraints that surround them. Agents then strategically decide how best to act while under these constraints. *Strategic selectivity*, however, is employed on a larger contextual scale. For instance, a context may favour a particular strategy over another in order to achieve particular outcomes. However, the ways in which agents extract opportunities within these contexts, using their personal experiences as a compass, is strategically calculated. This project understands agency within these terms; however, the data collected for this research suggest that *strategic calculation* and *strategic selectivity* cannot only be understood as being employed separately and highlight instead the opportunity for agents to employ them in tandem. For instance, agents may exercise *strategic calculation* and extract opportunities they deem beneficial from their work in order to increase the viable options available to them when needing to employ *strategic selectivity*. While *strategic selectivity* suggests that agents selectively favour some strategies over others within a context in order to achieve desired outcomes, this concept is defined as any choice being a viable choice. In other words, contextual structures such as racism, which may limit an individual's options, are not taken into consideration. In the context of this thesis, for example, Jessop's *strategic selectivity* is used to understand construction work as a viable employment option, despite the racism Dominicans of Haitian descent encounter in this line of work. This thesis discusses the limitations of applying the conceptual framework of *strategic selectivity* in understanding why Dominicans of Haitian descent choose to work in the resort industry, as their decision to pursue resort work should not simply be understood as a strategic decision.

This does not remove *strategic calculation* from these individuals, but it is important to acknowledge that just because “choices” are available, this does not mean they are really “choices” at all. The data collected for this research will demonstrate how *strategic selectivity* is inadequate in analyzing why some of my informants chose work in the resort industry, but how they nevertheless exercise *strategic calculation* in order to extract the benefits provided by their line of work.

In order to establish a comprehensive understanding of this research project within an anthropological framework, the remainder of this chapter will discuss: the emergence of the Anthropology of Tourism as an area of study; the contribution of anthropologists to the study of agency; and the significance of this research in contributing to Public Issues Anthropology as a sub-discipline. The chapter will conclude with a description of the organization of this thesis.

What is the Anthropology of Tourism?

Up until the beginning of the 1970s, the discipline of Anthropology was largely absent in the study of tourism, as many anthropologists did not perceive it to be a legitimate area of research (Nash and Smith 2006:13). Tourism was typically studied through an economic lens, which optimistically perceived tourism to be a beneficial development strategy for Third World countries (Schwartz 1997). In developing a niche in the study of tourism, anthropologists are also responsible for having defined “the tourist” in a way unique from that of other disciplines. For instance, sociologist Dean MacCannell (1976) has identified a tourist as not simply being a sightseer, but an

individual in search of local authenticity, identity and meaning. Anthropologists, however, have largely identified tourism as an act of leisure; individuals who are free of the cultural obligations that infuse the locales that they visit (Nash and Smith 2006:14). As Smith notes, a tourist is “a temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change” (1989:2). Although the anthropology of tourism has slowly garnered more academic attention with a focus now on alternative types of tourism, such as eco-tourism, anthropologists once perceived tourism negatively and ethnographic accounts were solely dedicated to identifying the adverse impacts of tourism on host communities (Stronza 2001:268). For instance, Rossel’s suggestion that “tourists wreak havoc over the face of the social and cultural landscape” (1988:1) provides insight into the anthropological perspective on tourism that dominated prior to the introduction of alternative forms of tourism (Stronza 2001:268). As Crick notes, tourism was essentially blamed “for every value of transformation under the sun” (1989:308). Despite the perception of tourism as having negative consequences on host communities, anthropology also recognized the significance of tourism with regards to economic development and social and political transformations, especially, more recently, with regards to ecotourism (Stronza 2001:264). Anthropologists have also been drawn to tourism studies because of the interactions between people of different cultures and different backgrounds that tourism allows. Lett, for instance, argues that tourism is “the single largest peaceful movement of people across cultural boundaries in the history of the world” (1989:275), because the meeting of tourists and locals allows for both to reflect on their lives as well as the lives of others (Stronza 2001:264).

Anthropologists' Contribution to the Study of Agency

With the development of the anthropology of tourism as a legitimate field of study, anthropologists have also contributed to recognizing the agency of host communities, and the acknowledgment that not all members of a community participate in tourism or partake in the same ways. Steven Gregory's ethnography *The Devil Behind the Mirror* (2007), which focuses on the politics of globalization that influence the inner workings of the tourism industry, solely investigates those who have been excluded from the formal tourism industry, and how they, as a result, try to overcome these obstacles by gaining access to tourists in informal ways. Similarly, Denise Brennan (2004) in her ethnography *What's Love Got to Do With It?* explores the ways in which Dominican resort workers operationalize their close interactions with tourists in order to develop relationships with tourists and secure visas to travel or live abroad. Anthropologists have also contributed to our understanding of agency. For instance, Ortner describes agency as "concerned with the mediation between conscious intention and embodied habituses" (2001:77). Ahearn similarly makes this distinction when she notes that agency is "the socioculturally mediated capacity to act" and that "all action is socioculturally mediated both in its production and in its interpretation" (2001:112). This being said, anthropologists have also made distinctions between "actors" and "agents". For instance, Karp argues that actors' behaviours are "rule-governed" or rule "oriented", whereas an agent exercises a sense of independence in deciding how to generate desired results (1986:137). Actor and agent then should be considered two different behaviours of the same individual (Ahearn 2001:113). Understanding that these practices will also vary

depending on the cultural context is also a contribution anthropologists have made to the study of agency (Jackson and Karp 1990). As Pickering suggests, “within different cultures human beings and the material world might exhibit capacities for action quite different from those we customarily attribute to them” (1995:245).

Similarly, tourist imaginaries of the locals that tourists come into contact with contribute to the agency that host communities are able to exercise in their tourism practices. For instance, Grabhorn notes that tourism “involves for the participants a separation from normal ‘instrumental’ life and the business of making a living, and offers entry into another kind of moral state in which mental, expressive, and cultural needs come to the fore” (1983:3). Salazar understands imaginaries “as socially transmitted representational assemblages that interact with people’s personal imaginings and are used as meaning-making and world-shaping devices” (2012:864). He argues that tourism marketers encourage prospective tourists to travel to exotic destinations where the environment and the local population can be consumed through observation and the imagination (2012:866). Imaginaries, however, are intangible in nature, and therefore the best way to analyze them is to see how they materialize in such ways as behaviours and discourses (2012:866). Salazar also notes that while scholars tend to focus on the commoditization of host communities, interpersonal relationships can also be established between host and guest (2012:878). The opportunities that arise from these interactions are what Crapanzano (2004) calls “imaginative horizons”. These horizons influence how all parties involved in tourism understand and experience it (Salazar 2012:878). It is the establishment of these relationships that can foster benefits for hosts who attempt to gain from the opportunities these interactions produce. This research project will discuss the

ways in which resort workers attempt to capitalize on these interactions with guests, and how they describe guests' assumptions and imaginaries about them as contributing to their ability to profit.

Anthropologists, more recently, have begun analyzing tourism practices through a more optimistic lens. With the introduction of alternative forms of tourism, such as ecotourism, community-based tourism and pro-poor tourism, many scholars have recognized that hosts are not simply passive recipients of foreign contact, but are also active agents in their interactions with tourists (Chambers 1999:x). Hosts are acknowledged as having the capacity to choose how they decide, or if they decide to participate, in the tourism industry. By studying tourism in this way, host communities are understood as tailoring tourism as best they can in order to suit their own needs. Stronza (2001:278) similarly argues that tourism should not be understood as an external force, which is imposed on host communities, but rather as an industry that may also be welcomed by locals. Researchers have failed to recognize why hosts choose to participate in tourism in the ways that they do, as well as how they exercise agency in order to enhance their work experience and evade the tourism structures that attempt to limit their potential to profit. As Stronza (2001:262) notes, as a result of this absence in the literature, there has been an underlying assumption in anthropology that tourism *happens* to host communities, as opposed to the latter actively seeking out the potential opportunities that the industry presents. Analyzing how locals participate will provide insight into why they choose to do so, and the influence that tourism has in their lives (2001:267). This research attempts to fill this gap in the literature, which fails to acknowledge the ways in which resort workers operationalize their positions to further

benefit from the industry, and how their work impacts their lives. These are important facets in understanding the significance of the tourism industry in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic. As a result, Jessop's (1990, 2008) conceptual framework of *strategic calculation* and *strategic selectivity*, which acknowledges imposing economic and political structures, but also the ability of individuals to exercise agency using personal experience and discretion depending on the context, was deemed most appropriate in informing this thesis.

This Study's Contribution to Public Issues Anthropology

As Nash and Smith (1996:16) point out, the Western lens through which we analyze and study societies is not particular to anthropologists, but is an obstacle that affects academics in other disciplines, as well. This being said, the research objectives of applied, practicing and public issues anthropologists are now merging in order to provide a more comprehensive, inclusive, decipherable and accessible analysis of the societies under study (Lamphere 2004:431). In striving to create a more collaborative and accessible venue for the sharing of anthropological research, anthropologists are establishing collaborative relationships with the groups they study, and are presenting research in public forums in order to demonstrate the relevance of these studies to everyday life (2004:243). Although anthropologists continue to study smaller, largely understudied communities, these societies are increasingly facing greater contact with external influences (2004:431), including exposure to tourism and the interactions with tourists that the industry generates (Wallace 2005:6). As Greenwood describes, tourism is

“the largest scale movement of goods, services, and people that humanity has perhaps ever seen” (1989:171). This study is relevant to public issues anthropology in drawing attention to this international phenomenon, and studying how the presence of tourists affects the host communities that they come into contact with, and how hosts alternatively try to capitalize on tourist presence. With the introduction of such alternative forms of tourism as eco-tourism, community-based tourism (Stronza 2001:274), and pro-poor tourism (Ashley et al., 2000; León 2007) there is an acknowledgement by anthropologists of the potential of tourism to positively benefit host communities. Anthropologists are moving away from denouncing tourism as a vehicle for destroying “all that is culturally good and authentic” (Greenwood 2004:167). This being said, this research study also draws attention to the issue of how tourists can be more responsible travelers. How can tourists ensure their presence benefits, and negatively impacts as little as possible, the local communities with which they come into contact? These are issues highlighted by Erve Chambers (2005) and Deborah McLaren (1998) who believe that tourists can behave more responsibly in their travels. Chambers suggests “our present knowledge can help us develop guidelines for responsible tourism that are more realistic than those that are usually offered” (2005:27). He notes that tourists are typically encouraged to avoid paying the price for goods initially quoted by local merchants, and to instead “bargain for a fair price” (2005:32). He suggests, however, that while tourists are simply searching for a good deal, local custom assumes that because of “who [they] are”—a wealthy tourist—they should pay the price quoted to them (2005:32). Similarly, the data collected for this research project point to the social and economic importance resort work has in resort workers’ lives, and the ways in which

resort travelers can assist workers in profiting from their line of work. Instead of boycotting resort tourism, or adopting a negative perception of tourism as was previously done in the early stages of the anthropology of tourism, tourists can attempt to be more aware of and educated about the influence their presence has on host communities.

Organization of this Thesis

This thesis centers its analysis of the socio-economic benefits of resort work for resort workers on three central themes: access to tourists, the economic benefits of resort work (and resulting economic dependence), and the instability of resort work. These three themes are dominant throughout the thesis in explaining the importance of resort work in the lives of resort workers, and their significance will be further discussed below.

During interviews, and through observation, it became apparent that the simple fact that resort workers have consistent access to tourists and foreign exchange resulted in their perceiving their work as highly valuable. In this thesis, access will be discussed in a variety of ways, including access to tourists themselves, access to tips, access to skills to improve workers' human capital, access to resort amenities, and greater access to the potential to move abroad (obtaining a visa through relationships established with resort tourists). It is concluded that, as a result of this increased access to tourists, workers attempt to advance both socially and economically while simultaneously navigating through the structures of the resort industry that they understand as reinforcing their subservience. The ways in which tourists conversely attempt to capitalize on their access

to “exotic” resort workers will also be discussed in demonstrating how resort workers attempt to profit from tourist expectations and imaginaries of them as the exotic “other”.

Originally, in organizing this thesis, the economic benefits described by resort workers were to be a separate theme from discussions of their economic dependence on the resort industry. However, upon further analysis, it became apparent that the economic benefits described to me by my informants resulted in their economic dependence on the industry and, consequently, in their reliance on an industry that was unstable. As a result, the theme of “Dependence on Resort Work and its Perceived Economic Benefits” was perceived as best suited in analyzing these conversations. Ultimately, due to the poor economic opportunities available in the local community, resort work was perceived as beneficial despite resort workers’ economic dependence on the industry. This proved especially true for Haitian immigrants who frequently experienced poor working conditions and discrimination by the Dominican population. This dependence, however, left resort workers not only vulnerable to the fluctuations inherent in the tourism industry, but also resulted in their sometimes being taken advantage of, such as not being compensated during mandatory resort closures for construction projects. Interestingly, upon further analysis, the economic dependence of resort workers on resort work extended beyond the national borders of the Dominican Republic, and was evident even when Dominicans attempted to move abroad.

The inherent instability of the tourism industry is well documented in tourism literature. As a result of its dependence on the global economy and foreign tourists, the resort industry accommodates these fluctuations by laying off or firing employees, or, as discussed with interview participants, by closing down resort complexes altogether. This

instability affected, and was discussed by, nearly all of the participants in this study. In addition to the economic instability of resort work, further analysis uncovered unpredictability with respect to my informants' work relationships with their coworkers. Although not a central theme in this thesis, the unpredictability of work relationships will be discussed in relation to the gender inequalities in the division of labour frequently characteristic of Caribbean resorts, as well as in terms of the arbitrary policies that account for unjustified firing.

Chapter 2 provides a literature review discussing these themes from the perspectives of anthropology and tourism studies in order to establish a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of resort work. In this chapter, the themes extracted from the analysis of the data are informed by existing literature. Inspired by the works of Urry (1990), Brennan (2004), and Cabezas (2006), access is described as not only resort workers taking advantage of their access to tourists in order to advance economically and socially, but also the ways in which tourists, to a certain degree, expect to similarly benefit from these workers, as the latter are perceived as part of the "product" (i.e. the resort experience) being purchased. The ways in which resort workers exercise agency to profit from these expectations is discussed in Chapter 4. Literature describing the economic benefits of the resort industry in comparison to other jobs available in the province (Freitag 1994; Adler and Adler 2004; ILO 2013), and research on the country's dependence on the tourism industry as a result of these perceived benefits, will also be discussed (Britton 1982; Clancy 1999; Crouch & Ritchie 1999; Sindiga 1999). The inherent instability of the tourism industry is well documented in anthropological and tourism research. Works investigating the instability of the resort industry with respect to

crime, fluctuations in the global economy, inter-provincial competition and seasonality will be described here.

Chapter 2 also discusses the theoretical frameworks that inform this research. Dependency theory, as understood by Frank (1967, 1979) and Wallerstein (1974), is briefly discussed in order to demonstrate its usefulness in analyzing peripheral countries' dependence on core countries for a steady flow of tourists. Dependency theory, however, is concluded to be inadequate in acknowledging the potential for individuals to exercise agency and influence the outcomes of their own lives. As a result, this research is primarily informed by Jessop's theoretical framework of structure and agency, and employs his concepts of *strategic calculation* and *strategic selectivity* in analyzing how resort workers strategize in their work based on personal experience and foresight in order to achieve desired outcomes. This framework builds on Giddens' (1976, 1979, 1981, 1984) structuration theory. The theoretical frameworks of the tourist gaze and tourist imaginaries are also discussed in analyzing why resort workers exercise agency in the ways that they do in their interactions with tourists. Although the theoretical framework of the tourist gaze overlooks the potential for individuals to exercise agency, both the tourist gaze and tourist imaginaries are relevant in understanding tourists' perceptions of resort workers, and how resort workers exercise agency in their ability to profit from tourists' preconceived ideas of them as an exotic "other". Regulation theory, which further develops Butler's (1980) Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model, is also discussed in Chapter 2 in order to provide an understanding of why resort workers continued to foresee tourism as an asset to the Dominican economy, despite their being consistently affected by its inherent instability.

Chapter 3 outlines the significance of the fieldsite chosen, provides justifications for the methodology employed, offers insight into the participant group, and describes the socio-economic profile of the Dominican Republic. Here, I will also highlight the ethical dilemmas encountered during the research process.

Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 are both dedicated to a discussion of the findings and analyses for this research project. Chapter 4, which is entitled “Findings and Analysis I: Overcoming Resort Structures and Exercising Agency”, discusses the theme of access, and the agency exercised by resort workers in order to capitalize on the availability of tourists. These findings are then followed by an analysis of the *strategic calculation* employed by workers in order to take advantage of this access. Chapter 5 is entitled “Findings and Analyses II: The Limits of Exercising Agency Within Tourism/Resort Structures”. The first section discusses the perceived economic benefits of resort work and resort workers’ dependence on the resort industry as a result of these benefits, followed by a discussion of workers’ agency in exercising *strategic selectivity* in their decision to remain in the resort industry. The second section discusses the instability associated with their work in the resort industry, followed by an analysis of their rationalizations for this instability, and their insistence on remaining in the resort industry despite their vulnerability to its unpredictability.

Chapter 6 provides a conclusion to this thesis. It summarizes the findings and discusses the significance of this research and of the original data obtained. The limitations of this research, including the methodological obstacles encountered, will also be discussed. The chapter will propose recommendations for further research in the field of tourism in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Resort workers in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic are not merely passive recipients of the global and local structures in place, which attempt to exploit and profit from their labour. Instead, these workers are active agents in their work, and attempt to take advantage of the opportunities their close proximity to tourists provides them. Below is an analysis of the relevant literature, which outlines: the historical context of the Dominican Republic's shift from an export-oriented economy to a service-sector one; the factors that influenced the country's current tourism context; how the country has fared in regards to these changes; the current tourism context in the Dominican Republic today; and how resort workers exercise agency in their work in order to take advantage of their access to foreign exchange, and tourists more generally.

First is a discussion of the Dominican Republic's economic dependence on the resort industry as a result of the structural adjustment policies encouraged by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in the 1990s. These structural adjustments encouraged the abandonment of agricultural exports and the implementation of export-processing zones and mass tourism in order to generate foreign exchange. These adjustments, however, led to underemployment and poverty, and in the country's dependence on the tourism industry as a result of the government's abandonment of supplementary industries. Second, this chapter will discuss the political economy of the Dominican tourism industry and the significance of the tourism industry in providing employment opportunities for Dominicans. In addition, the current tourism context in Puerto Plata will be discussed and will draw attention to the recent obstacles encountered in generating tourist presence in the province, including inter-provincial competition and

an increase in local crime. Third, the instability of resort work, specifically with regards to how it affects resort workers, will be discussed, including the seasonality of the resort industry, global economic instability, fluctuations in the oil market, foreign political instability, as well as contractual resort labour, which results in unsteady employment. Last, using Jessop's conceptual framework of *strategic calculation* and *strategic selectivity* in order to understand the agency exercised by resort workers, this section will discuss the economic benefits resort work provides resort workers. The ways in which these workers exercise agency in order to generate more of a personal profit, while compensating for the losses they accumulate as a result of working in an unstable industry, will also be discussed.

The Dominican Republic's Economic Dependence on the Resort Industry

There is a significant body of literature discussing the dependency of peripheral tourist destinations on core countries for tourism, and the ways in which this core-periphery relationship has a deleterious impact on the fragile economies of host destinations (Britton 1982; Clancy 1999; Crouch & Ritchie 1999; Sindiga 1999; Timms & Conway 2011; Chaperon & Bramwell 2013). In the Dominican Republic, this core-periphery dynamic with respect to tourism emerged in the late 1960s when the Dominican administration of President Balaguer began a campaign to promote tourism as an economic solution to declining sugar, cocoa, and coffee prices. This campaign was supported and encouraged by the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, and other international agencies (Gregory 2007:27). Balaguer's rise to power in 1966, with

the support of the United States, was concurrent with the country's shift to a tourism-based economy. The United States, United Nations, World Bank, and Organization of American States all substantially subsidized the Balaguer regime. This was an attempt to create an economy in the Dominican Republic that would result in tourism-based development (Itzigsohn 2000:40).

With the rapid expansion of the tourism sector came a reduced emphasis on agricultural exports (Betances and Spalding Jr. 1995:18). Indeed, by 1986, revenues from traditional exports, such as sugar, cacao, coffee, and tobacco had plummeted from 51.9 percent in 1977 to a mere 22.8 percent. In 1991, sugar accounted for only 8 percent of export revenues in the Dominican Republic, in comparison to 40 percent provided by the growing tourism sector (Itzigsohn 2000:32). The decreased focus on Dominican agricultural exports and the increased focus on tourism development was promoted by the United Nations as a way for the Dominican Republic to participate in the global economy, overcome economic crisis and acquire foreign exchange (Padilla 2007:49).

Amidst worsening economic conditions in the Dominican Republic in the 1990s, including inflation, imbalanced trade relations, and an increasing foreign debt, the government negotiated a conditional agreement with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to implement fiscal reforms, or what are often referred to as structural adjustment policies (IMF 1999). This agreement included price liberalization, exchange rate devaluation, and the elimination of food subsidies (IMF 1999). Although the newly implemented adjustment policies resulted in lower inflation, they also led to an increase in underemployment and poverty (Itzigsohn 2000:51). The export manufacturing industry in the Dominican Republic grew substantially in the 1990s as a result of the

structural adjustment policies made by the World Bank and IMF (Sagawe 1996). These export-processing zones provided foreign investors with the ability to exploit cheap Dominican labour and import and export goods without tax. This growth was not accompanied by livable wages, however, and many factory workers either took these jobs in addition to other work they held, or to supplement their spouse's income (Gregory 2007:160).

These policies also pushed many Dominicans into the informal economy, frequently within the tourism sector, in order to avoid state regulation. Efforts by police to formalize and eliminate informal activities within the tourism industry have only further reduced Dominicans' opportunities to earn a living. Tourist zones have become "virtual war zones", as overwhelming numbers of informal workers try to take advantage of the presence of tourists and convince them that their product is the one to purchase (Gregory 2007:30). The structural adjustment policies advised by the International Monetary Fund combined with the recommendations of the United States and the World Bank to implement a tourism-based focus for development have resulted in the Dominican Republic's dependence on the tourism industry. Since 1982, tourism has been the principal industry in the Dominican economy (Freitag 1996:225). The Dominican Republic now has a service-sector economy, reliant on the volatility and economic unpredictability of the tourism industry (Padilla 2007:52).

As highlighted by Betances and Spalding Jr. (1995:15), during the years that the Dominican economy relied on the export of sugar, cacao, coffee and tobacco, the state levied export taxes on these products, and therefore collected revenues from the export sectors. Tourism, however, generates revenues that are largely tax-exempt. The tourism

sector, then, does not make contributions to state revenues or to the national economy other than through wages and local expenditures (1995:16). This shift from an export-led economy to a service-sector economy has discontinued the previous revenues of the state. This transformation has diminished the role of the state in the economy, and has decreased its ability to meet the needs of the mostly poor Dominican population (1995:18). In the 1990s, the standard of living in the Dominican Republic fell to its levels of 1980. It is obvious that the foreign-directed development strategies that influenced Balaguer produced negative results both economically and politically (1995:18). Thus, in recent years, the Dominican economy has made a shift from a colonial economic model relying primarily on agricultural exports, to a service-sector economy that is dependent on the influx of foreign exchange through tourism (Padilla 2007:49).

By 1992, tourism had replaced exports such as sugar and cocoa as one of the largest export sectors in the country (Pattulo 2005:7). However, despite the economic growth experienced by the Dominican Republic during the 1990s with the development of the tourism industry, a multitude of factors, including the prevalence of a booming drug economy, the relocation of export manufacturing jobs to Mexico through the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the decline in agricultural exports, have limited job variation and opportunities in the country. These factors have also contributed to the country's dependence on enclave resort tourism (Padilla 2005:356).

The tourism sector is the largest source of employment in the Dominican Republic (Padilla 2007:12) and, as a result, some groups have resisted any attempt at economic development through industrialization (Gregory 2007:209). For instance, the Megaport project in Boca Chica, Dominican Republic, in 1991 pitted its multinational

and Dominican sponsors against Boca Chica's tourism industry and created public deliberation and debate concerning the region's economic development needs and the future of the Dominican economy (2007:213). This project called for the construction of a state-of-the-art, deep-water containership port connected to a free-trade zone industrial park. Such a large megaport required more dockside space than did previously established ports. Those against the establishment of such infrastructure were largely Dominicans whose livelihoods were highly dependent on the Dominican tourism industry. Those employed by the tourism industry claimed that industrial development was incompatible with tourism and would result in the intensive use of natural resources that, consequently, would have a negative impact on the tourism industry (2007:215). It was also feared by many that the Megaport project would impede the flow of water out of the Bay of Andrés, which would eventually affect the coral reefs in the region, ultimately eroding the beaches, and consequently ending the tourism industry in the surrounding areas (2007:216). This is an example of how attempts at industrial development have been met with resistance as a result of the overwhelming reach of the tourism industry in the country, and the fear that such development ultimately means the end of tourism.

As Chaperon and Bramwell (2013) suggest, the notion of dependency in the tourism literature can encourage oversimplified criticisms of exploitation. However, studying the relationships between core and peripheral countries can provide insight into the kinds of relationships that are established through tourism, which simultaneously acknowledge the agency of both the visitor and the visited. Frank's (1967) *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America: Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil* provides an original model for understanding dependency, and has frequently been acknowledged

as providing the foundation from which dependency theory has grown. Frank (1979) attributes the underdevelopment of peripheral countries to their dependency on core countries, which gives the latter control over the former. Similarly, Wallerstein's (1974) *The Modern World-System* acknowledges the importance of understanding the historical processes that have contributed to the organization of the world system, and how these countries' positions within the world system contribute to the periphery's dependence on the core. Like Frank (1967, 1979), Wallerstein (1974) understands underdevelopment not as a deficiency of peripheral countries, but rather as a result of positionality within the broader world system and unequal relations between core and peripheral countries. Wallerstein's theoretical framework suggests that social structures cannot be understood without an appreciation for the historical events that established these structures (Aronowitz 1981:503).

More recently, as developing countries have been prescribed tourism development as a remedy for their development dilemmas by financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Gregory 2007:27), dependency theory has been used as the theoretical framework for analyzing these countries' reliance on foreign intervention for development (Finney 1977; Weaver 1988; Hall 1994; Peet 1999). This approach suggests that the development of core countries relies on the continued underdevelopment of periphery countries (Jordan 2004) and the exploitation and extraction of resources from the periphery (Peet 1999). This dynamic then results in imbalanced relations between the core and the periphery (Chaperon and Bramwell 2013:133). Dependency theory has also heavily influenced tourism studies and the analysis of core-periphery relations (2013:133). For example, Britton (1982) uses

dependency theory in order to analyze the use of tourism as a development tool and the core-periphery relations that emerge from its implementation, which result in underdeveloped countries relying on developed countries to provide tourists. In addition, these unequal relations are further strengthened as a result of the establishment of enclave resorts, which generate foreign capital, but lack permeation into the local economy (Chaperon and Bramwell 2013:133)

Dependency theory, however, accords too much power to core countries in explaining core-periphery relations. For instance, the implementation of enclave resort tourism has been compared to agricultural production in that both generate a dependence of the “producers” on external markets (Chaperon and Bramwell 2013:133). What dependency theory lacks is any acknowledgement of peripheral tourism development as not being entirely deterministic. For instance, in analyzing core-periphery relations, attention need not only be paid to the importance of core countries in providing tourists, but also to the agency exercised by tourism workers in their attempts to take advantage of opportunities the tourism industry provides them (Bramwell 2006:958).

The Political Economy of Tourism in the Dominican Republic

Various aspects of the economic history of the Dominican Republic, including the country’s declining sugar, cocoa, coffee and tobacco exports, foreign economic intervention and structural adjustment policies directed by international monetary agencies, have contributed to the importance of the tourism industry to the Dominican economy. In 2011, the International Labour Organization reported that the tourism

industry in the Dominican Republic accounted for 27% of the country's employment, employing over 180,000 Dominicans in hotels, bars and restaurants (Economist Intelligence Unit 2008), which was just behind the public administration sector (ILO 2013:9). Tourism is one of the dominant industries in the Dominican Republic and generates the largest amount of foreign exchange, having amounted to approximately US \$3.8 billion in 2006. The growth of tourism in the country has also enhanced the strength of the construction industry, transport and commerce. The Dominican Republic continues its model of mass tourism, first implemented in the 1990s, focusing on the enclave resort complexes that decorate the perimeter of the island. This model, however, has also continued the trend of low tourist expenditures as a result of the "all-inclusive"-ness of these resorts (Economist Intelligence Unit 2008).

As Timms and Conway suggest (2012:396), the geographical location of Caribbean countries, such as the Dominican Republic, has contributed to the region's general success with regards to the attention it has received from tourists. For instance, in 2009, tourists spent over US \$4 million traveling to the Dominican Republic, making it the destination grossing the highest amount of tourist receipts (2012:403). In the 1990s, as the push for the development of enclave resort tourism began, the Dominican government pursued development initiatives to enhance the attractiveness of the beachside for tourists. The first of these initiatives was the construction of a new road and airport near Puerto Plata, in order to facilitate easier access for tourists to the beaches (2005:357). This being said, Puerto Plata as a tourist destination is now one of the oldest in the Dominican Republic. As a result of its aging infrastructure, the province of Puerto Plata is currently confronting inter-provincial competition for tourists with neighbouring

provinces. The province of La Altagracia in the south end of the island is a more recently established destination spot in comparison to Puerto Plata, which is located in the north. The former boasts unparalleled beaches and luxury hotels in comparison to the polluted beaches and older infrastructures of Puerto Plata. In order to remain competitive, Puerto Plata has resorted to heavily discounting vacation packages (Padilla 2005:357), but has also experienced a multitude of resort closures as a result of this competition. As Papson (1979) suggests, growth of international tourism in an area is not to suggest the longevity of its success, but should rather be interpreted in terms of the faddish tastes of tourists.

In addition to inter-provincial competition, an increase in crime in Puerto Plata has led to a decline in tourist numbers, which has resulted in resort closures and displaced resort employees. The Caribbean region as a whole is currently suffering from increased criminal activity and Puerto Plata is no exception. The province of Puerto Plata acts as the middleman for the trafficking of drugs due to its close proximity to the United States and Haiti, and is simultaneously experiencing an increase in gang violence (Karagiannis and Madjd-Sadjadi 2012:75). Puerto Plata is also one of the leading provinces in the country for seizures of crack cocaine, ecstasy, and heroin (International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 2010:2). Padilla (2005:368) claims that in terms of visitor satisfaction, tourists feared for their safety more so in Puerto Plata than in other resort location in the country, and reported to be less likely to return to the province as a result. Although tourists are much less likely to be victims of violent crimes while on vacation than at home, the perception of danger is enough to seriously impact the tourism economy in a region with high crime rates (Karagiannis & Madjd-Sadjadi 2012:77), and this perception has visibly affected tourism in Puerto Plata.

The Instability of the Resort Industry

Although dependency theory lacks an appreciation for individuals' ability to exercise agency in their own lives, it succeeds in recognizing tourism as an unstable industry, where this instability contributes to peripheral countries' dependence on core countries. Britton describes tourism development as the "opposite of self-reliant development" (1978:207), as peripheral countries are reliant on an industry that cannot guarantee growth and is characterized by instabilities. These instabilities consist of seasonality, which results in uneven tourist presence throughout the year (Adler and Adler 2004:99), economic crises or fluctuations experienced by developed countries, as well as instabilities in the oil market, which can affect vacation prices (Crick 1989:315). Flexible labour, including contractual work, is also common as resorts need to adjust labour expenditures according to demand. As a result, staff may be laid off during slow periods, and hiring may increase during busy ones. Resorts frequently have a core group of full-time staff that remain permanently, and a supply of part-time, contractual staff that are hired on the basis of need (Adler and Adler 2004:99). This flexible labour is beneficial for resorts as they can cut where need be in order to accommodate fluctuations in, and the unpredictability of, the global tourism industry (Murphy 1996).

The high level of dependence the Dominican Republic has on the tourism industry also makes it extremely vulnerable to the external fluctuations of the world economy, which ultimately affects job creation and results in unstable work (Clayton & Karagianni 2008:192). Global tourism is an industry that is inherently vulnerable to external factors

that can dictate how economically successful the industry will be at any given time. For example, the terrorist attacks in New York in 2001, as well as the economic crisis of 2007, are examples of such factors that can result in low tourist numbers. While the Dominican Republic's proximity to the United States is advantageous in maintaining a consistent flow of tourists, any economic or political crises in the United States may negatively impact the Dominican's tourism economy (Karagiannis & Madjd-Sadjadi 2012:74).

The economic instability of the resort industry can be characterized by Butler's (1980) Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model. Although somewhat linear (Garay & Cánoves 2011), this model is a useful tool in examining the "life" and instability of the resort industry in older tourist destinations, such as that of Puerto Plata. The model begins with the "exploration" stage, whereby a small number of tourists are attracted to a location because of its natural qualities. Contact between tourists and locals is sporadic, and the presence of tourists does not interrupt the flow of life for local inhabitants. The second phase, "involvement", requires the establishment of tourist facilities in order to accommodate increasing numbers of foreign visitors. "Development" is the third phase, and suggests a distinct increase in the number of tourists as they are drawn by the promotion of the destination. It is at this stage that artificial tourist attractions may be established. The "consolidation" phase consists of an increase in absolute tourist figures whereby the number of visitors may exceed the number of locals. It is at this stage that an economy can be deemed a tourism-based one, and when the area may develop an inauthentic atmosphere and an increased divide between the local population and tourists. The fifth phase, "stagnation", represents a plateau in tourist numbers whereby the

destination is no longer considered a desirable travel location (Butler 1980). From here, according to Butler, a sixth stage may ensue that consists of “decline”. The tourist location is unable to remain competitive with surrounding destinations, and a decline in the industry will commence. The sixth phase calls for a renewal of the tourist area whereby defining characteristics are rejuvenated and improved in order to stimulate tourist interest once again. It can be argued that Puerto Plata currently sits in between the fifth and sixth stages according to Butler’s model, as tourism in the province is no longer generating the tourist presence it once did. Current projects in the Puerto Plata region to restore existing resort infrastructures are evidence of the stagnation and plateau in tourist numbers.

Regulation theory provides a useful, less linear, analysis of the life cycle of tourism, and takes into consideration the political economy of tourism in a given country. According to this theory, decline is not inevitable. Instead, it acknowledges the eventual stagnation of production and consumption systems, such as resort tourism, which require a society to readjust and modify its existing system. Similarly to Butler’s model, regulation theory also acknowledges the eventual stagnation of newly established systems, but also suggests these systems will ultimately need to renew themselves and continue this process of renewal into the future (Garay & Cànoves 2011:655). Regulation theory is optimistic in informing analyses of economically dependent tourist destinations, so long as they can continue to modify their existing systems to accommodate changes in production and consumption systems. Thus, according to regulation theory, the instability evident in the resort industry in Puerto Plata today may improve, even if temporarily, depending on how the province responds to the changing tourism context. Butler’s TALC

model and regulation theory provide a basis for understanding why resorts in Puerto Plata are undergoing construction, and why my informants emphasized the potential of tourism to continue to economically benefit the Dominican Republic, despite the recent ebbs in tourist presence.

The instability of resort work can be extended beyond its economic dimension to include the unpredictability of work relationships between coworkers, as well. This instability is represented in gendered divisions of labour, characteristic of resort complexes in the Caribbean. Cabezas (2006:514) described her encounter asking a Cuban receptionist at a resort complex whether women were ever hired to open doors or work as bellboys. The receptionist, rather puzzled, explained that doormen were always men, and chambermaids were always women, as “Things [were] like that [there].” This frustration, especially among women, in their attempt to advance within the resort structure, a structure that has firmly entrenched gendered divisions of labour, can result in strained work relationships between men and women. These conceptualizations of labour inform job requirements and attempt to dictate the types of interactions that occur between women and men (Adkins 1995:95-137).

Resort Workers’ Agency and the Socio-Economic Benefits of Resort Work

In order to analyze the ways in which resort workers use their positions of close contact and interactions with tourists to socially and economically benefit, this research employs Jessop’s (1990, 2008) concepts of structure and agency. As discussed above, dependency theory and the tourist gaze tend to lack an acknowledgement of individuals’

ability to influence their own livelihoods within preexisting structural contexts. Thus, the ability of resort workers to manipulate and navigate their way through the existing tourism structure needs to be recognized. While relevant research with regards to agency exercised in and around the Dominican tourism industry has been conducted, such as Gregory's (2007) study of the Dominican Republic's informal tourism industry, Brennan's (2004) analysis of Dominican men's performances of love for tourists, and León's (2007) analysis of informal entrepreneurship, this research project explores the ways in which Dominicans who are a part of the resort tourism structure exercise agency in their work in order to generate even more of a personal profit. Chaperon and Bramwell (2013) suggest that in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of the tourism industry, both structural limitations and individual agency need to be recognized. An approach, then, that acknowledges the dependency of resort workers on the resort industry with respect to their human agency is most beneficial in investigating resort work in Puerto Plata (2013:134).

This research is informed by Jessop's (1990, 2008) approach to the dynamics between agency and structure, which builds on Giddens' (1976, 1979, 1981, 1984) structuration theory. While Giddens understands agency as the ability of an agent to make decisions within the context of a specific structure and describes this as "discriminations employed by actors" (Giddens 1984:211), Jessop understands agency as not being confined by an absolute or rigid structure, but as instead allowing for individuals' own perspectives and decision-making processes. For instance, Jessop maintains that structural constraints within a society—which can include that of dependency on the tourism industry—are not absolute, but are rather negotiable systems depending on how

individuals decide to act on them. Most importantly, Jessop rejects the idea of actors acting entirely on free will, and states that “agency” is exercised within the structural limitations established in a society. Thus, for Jessop, agency is exercised through “strategic calculation”—which refers to an actor’s ability to draw on personal experience and expertise in order to make a strategic decision within the structural constraints before them—and “strategic selectivity”—which refers to a specific context as favouring a particular strategy over another. Chaperon and Bramwell (2013:135), who build on Jessop’s framework, note that although actors are influenced and limited by the contexts that encourage “strategic selectivity”, such as dependency on foreign capital from tourists, they still possess opportunities to exercise “strategic calculation”.

Although agency is a significant concept in understanding the importance of resort work for resort workers, tourism literature on the tourist gaze remains relevant in analyzing the dynamics between resort workers and hotel guests. As Urry (1990:66) points out, in the case of the hospitality industry—unlike, for instance, manufactured products—what exactly is being purchased is unclear. He argues that, “[...]the tourist gaze is structured by culturally specific notions of what is extraordinary and therefore worth viewing” (1990:66). Tourist gaze literature, then, suggests that agency is removed from agents, as they are simply objects for the consumption of tourists. For instance, Amalia Cabezas (2006:516) discusses guest objectification when she recounts the story of an informant who works as a chambermaid at a resort in Varadero, Cuba. She discusses how male guests often request sex similarly to how a guest would request an extra towel or other amenity; as though a sexual encounter was considered to be part of the service.

Similarly, tourist imaginaries about Dominicans can contribute to the types of relationships that develop between resort workers and tourists, and the kinds of benefits these workers can acquire as a result of these imaginaries. Tourist imaginaries play a large role in tourist experiences as tourists create fantasies about their travels and the local people they encounter (Kirsch, 1997; Córdoba 2011). The concept of tourist imaginaries renders both tourists and locals as possessing agency in the production of these imaginaries (Edensor 2009; MacCannell 2001; Shéller 2003), and highlights how resort workers can take advantage of their access to tourists by engaging in certain performances in order to profit (Baerenholdt Ole et. al. 2004; Shéller and Urry 2004). Britton suggests that these imaginaries are established as a result of advertising, which promotes tourist destinations as “sensuous” and as a “paradise” (1979:321). He also suggests that host populations are perceived as being available for tourists’ pleasure. In addition, when close contact between hosts and guests are inevitable, such as in enclave resort tourism, these interactions tend to be “romanticized” in advertisements (1979:323), either suggesting the destination to be a fantasyland, or as a place where, quite literally, romances with exotic locals can transpire. As Freitag (1994:545) notes, resort workers adapt to the presence, attitudes and expectations of leisure tourists, and this adaptation determines the interactions that will ensue between these workers and guests. Resort workers are active agents in their work, not passive recipients of tourist consumption, and exercise agency in the ways in which they can benefit from tourists’ preconceived ideas. For instance, Cabezas’ (2006:516) notes that her chambermaid informant would sometimes use guests’ requests for sex as opportunities to economically profit.

Theories of the tourist gaze and agency converge in Caribbean tourism literature, which investigates host-guest relationships and how guests' preconceived notions of the exotic other are taken advantage of by hosts in order to economically or socially benefit. These studies do not only describe sexual encounters in exchange for payment, but also the relationships that can develop as a result of the close interactions between tourists and resort workers. The access that those employed by the resort industry have to tourists allows them to take advantage of the opportunities these interactions provide them. In Weichselbaumer's (2011:1220) analysis of female travelers to the Caribbean, she notes that various relationships may develop, ranging from one-night stands to long-term relationships. The female traveller may return to the vacation destination to visit her partner, send financial remittances and gifts back to her partner, or she may consider marriage to her foreign partner in order for him to have the opportunity to travel to the West. These men are not considered prostitutes, nor do they consider themselves to be prostitutes, but they are given names such as "sanky pankies" (Weichselbaumer 2011:1220) in places such as the Dominican Republic, indicating their lifestyle of engaging in relations with female tourists in order to obtain personal, especially financial, gain (Brennan 2004:104). Women engaged in "sex tourism" tend to not perceive their advances as such, as they feel they genuinely seek love, romance, and companionship with these men (Herold, Garcia, and DeMoya 2001:994). What this perception permits, then, is the opportunity for "sanky pankies" to establish long-term relationships with these women, and financially benefit for extended periods of time.

Denise Brennan's (2004) ethnography *What's Love Got to Do With It* highlights the prevalence of Dominicans who strategically operationalize their positions as resort

workers, and the interactions with tourists these positions facilitate, in order to provide better lives for themselves. For instance, she recounts two Afro-Dominican men who worked at a resort complex in Sosúa, Dominican Republic who were planning to marry their English girlfriends after only having known them for 15 days. The president at the time, Joaquín Balaguer, publicly denounced the marriage as being false on the grounds that the two men simply wanted to obtain visas to leave the Dominican Republic, and that these men were “sankies” (2004:91). Poor economic conditions in the Dominican Republic combined with the near impossibility of obtaining a travel visa makes establishing permanent relationships with foreigners an attractive option (2004:100). Without familial ties to countries in the West, Dominicans are economically immobile, thus relying on their access to tourists to assist in their endeavours.

Brennan (2004:102) suggests that there are particular positions of employment in the resort industry whereby access to tourists is greater, and therefore performances of love are more evident. Activity directors, also known as *animación*, are an example of such positions (2004:103). As resort complexes are considered a “goldmine” for access to tourists, it is no wonder that resort workers attempt to take advantage of the opportunities these interactions provide (2004:104). While the types of jobs that exist within resort complexes may be the same as those found in the local community, such as employment in bars and restaurants, the chance of coming into contact with a foreign tourist as a resort worker is much greater. Brennan (2004:105) cites a Dominican resort manager who claims that those who work as activity directors are “privileged” because of the constant contact and access they have to tourists. Because of the acknowledged opportunities that access to resort guests provides these workers, such as free meals, going out to

nightclubs, and receiving gifts, some activity directors agree to work for free for the trial period of their employment, which can last for over a month (2004:105).

As Cabezas (2011) notes, resort management typically encourage staff to engage in more personal interactions with hotel guests, which ensures that guests have an enjoyable experience and also may secure their return. These acts of good customer service, however, also provide workers with the opportunity to acquire personal gain. Activity directors are especially encouraged to walk a fine line between what Cabezas describes as “safe flirting” and more explicit sexual relations (2011:7). Maids may also leave personal notes or flower and towels arrangements in a hotel guest’s room (2011:7). Some resort workers, however, emphasize the potential to obtain visas from establishing relationships with tourists—not necessarily the earning potential of working at a resort—as the most beneficial aspect of their work. It is these social relations, not necessarily the immediate financial gain, from which they hope to benefit at some point in the future (2011:7). Thus, resort workers, especially those in positions of direct and constant contact with tourists, such as *animación* workers, strategically exploit the opportunities for personal gain that their line of work provides.

Despite the attractiveness of moving abroad, however, those who do manage to obtain visas to reside with their foreign partners are sometimes met with a harsh realization. Brennan (2004) cites a resort worker who married an English woman and moved abroad only to have divorced her as a result of being unable to find a job. He returned to the Dominican Republic to work in a hotel where he enjoys meeting a “variety of women” on a daily basis, instead (2004:106). Thus, while moving abroad is the ideal situation for many resort workers, they see no point in remaining abroad if the

economic profitability and perks in doing so are absent. Access to tourists, and the establishment of relationships with them, then, cannot only be understood as an attempt to leave the country.

The decline of the manufacturing of traditional goods such as sugar, cocoa, coffee and tobacco, combined with the overwhelmingly high levels of poverty in the Dominican Republic, also contribute to resort work being a highly regarded source of employment. Having direct access to tourists as a resort worker is advantageous for personal gain, and this proves especially true in the context of the Dominican Republic's economic paradox: economic growth coupled with continued poverty. According to the World Bank, poverty levels in the Dominican Republic were the same in 1990 as they were in 2010 (ILO 2013:16). Resort work provides employees with the opportunity to work in service positions where they have the potential to secure tips. In these positions, they are able to take advantage of not only their access to tourists, but of the economic structure of the resort industry, which attempts to insulate foreign exchange from seeping into the local community.

Hall and Brown (2006:96) suggest that tourism employment turnover rates are related to employee satisfaction and length of service. However, resort workers in Puerto Plata, with the exception of *animación* workers, appear to typically hold jobs at a single resort for years at a time, only leaving their positions after having been fired, laid-off, or displaced as a result of resort closures. As Freitag (1994:543) suggests, tourism is a dominant industry in the Dominican Republic that requires a large amount of labour without much formal training. As a result of the country's high unemployment, many Dominicans believe that any industry that can create a substantial number of jobs in the

region is a good one. Despite low pay and instability as a result of seasonality or job insecurity, any job is considered better than no job (1994:543).

Interestingly, factors that typically discourage tourists from visiting a region also contribute to increased spending inside resort complexes. For instance, resorts may emphasize the dangers of venturing outside of resort enclaves, and therefore encourage tourists to remain inside the limits of the resort complex to ensure their safety. As a result, foreign currency remains inside resorts, which can also benefit resort workers—for instance in terms of tips for bartenders and waiters/waitresses (Adler & Adler 2004:4; Clayton & Karagianni 2008:189). Although these practices tend to exacerbate the problem of surrounding poverty, they also explain why being employed by resorts is more economically beneficial than not being employed by them. Similarly, Gregory (2007:26) describes the racial discrimination in the hiring practices of resorts in Boca Chica, Dominican Republic, which tend to exclude those considered *moreno*, or “dark skinned”, including Haitians. However, he also acknowledges the language skills possessed by Haitians, including Spanish, French and English, which alternatively allows them to obtain positions in hotels (2007:182,186). These skills make them additionally appealing to owners of shops in tourist zones, where Haitians have the ability to communicate with a wider range of tourists (2007:185). Despite these additional skills, Haitians are nevertheless paid less than Dominicans employed in the same positions (2007:186). As observed by Gregory, (2007:190), Haitians are frequently perceived as ruthless in their attempts at making money. One Dominican even argued that Haitians would “sell their own children” if it had the potential to make them money. In fact, Haitians who worked “as slaves” in the cane fields and as construction workers were

frequently cited as examples of doing anything for money (2007:190). This points not only to the racism and discrimination experienced by Haitians in the Dominican Republic, but also to their perception of the resort industry as providing them with better opportunities for economic advancement.

Literature Review Conclusions

The literature discussed in this chapter provides a framework for understanding the themes extracted from the research data. Access to tourists is significant in the lives of resort workers as they attempt to take advantage of the opportunities their work provides them; such opportunities are not available in employment external to the resort complex. One of the ways that opportunities are materializes is in the establishment of friendships or romantic relationships with tourists. Resort employees, such as activity directors, who are in constant contact with tourists, are considered especially “privileged” because of their daily interactions with tourists, but are simultaneously taken advantage of by the industry because they work without pay and for long hours. In addition, the instability of resort work due to fluctuations in the global economy, crime and seasonality, results in the laying-off or firing of employees, as well as unsteady contractual work. Although resort work provides employees with access to tourists, which can result in the accumulation of foreign capital and the establishment of romantic relationships, resort employment is nevertheless unpredictable.

The resort industry in the Dominican Republic is representative of the dependence that Dominicans have on the tourism industry as a result of the economic restructuring

that was implemented in the 1980s. Ultimately, Dominicans perceive resort work as being more profitable than work external to the industry because local job opportunities are inadequate. Resort work provides employees with direct access to foreign capital as a result of guests' expectations for enclave resorts to supply them with everything they need. Resort work offers workers the opportunity to financially benefit from tourists by being both the producer and the perceived product (Leidner 1999:83). The latter, however, should not simply be understood as passive oppression. The findings of this research demonstrate how resort workers are active agents in their work in their attempts to benefit from their "insider status" and the opportunities their close proximity to tourists presents.

Chapter 3: Methodology

My interest in the dynamics of the tourism industry in the Dominican Republic began as a result of my frequent leisure travels to the country. Every year for one week, for a period of approximately eight years, I found myself within the boundaries of the resort walls, isolated from life that existed external to them. On my bus ride to these resorts, I would pass small huts on the side of the road, drive through littered streets and see many Dominicans sitting on curbs or standing against trees for shade, watching the bus as it drove by. I found myself comparing these realities with the lush gardens, marble floors and friendly faces that greeted me as I pulled through the resort gates. How was life outside of the resort confines different from the world tourists were exposed to in resorts? Did the seemingly good working conditions inside the resort walls have a positive impact on life outside of them?

In my undergraduate studies, I had the opportunity to learn about Dominican life and its tourism industry from a non-tourist perspective in reading Steven Gregory's *The Devil Behind the Mirror*. My interest in tourism and the Caribbean was furthered after having read Mark Padilla's *The Caribbean Pleasure Industry* in my graduate studies. What I noticed from having read both of these ethnographies was a focus on the informal tourism industry. Upon further research, I came across dated literature on the resort industry in the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Plata. What the current literature lacked, however, were follow-up studies in which resort tourism was analyzed that took into consideration changes over the years. The tourism industry is frequently cited in the literature as being unstable and volatile. However, studies investigating the impacts of these changes over time, in situational analyses, did not seem to exist. What is more,

there was a dearth of research that examined resort workers' agency in improving their lives. What is clear from my research project is that informants exercised agency in their work in order to take advantage of their access to tourists, and to manage the instabilities associated with the resort industry. This thesis thus fills an important gap in the literature by acknowledging the agency of resort workers in the Dominican Republic, and the strategies they used in order to generate more of a personal profit in their line of work.

This research project was conducted from July 19th, 2013 to August 19th, 2013. Although the projected research period was to be two months in length, due to financial restrictions, this period was decreased to a one-month time span. This research site was chosen due to my familiarity with San Felipe de Puerto Plata, in addition to the lack of current and relevant research surrounding the resort industry in the area. The country itself is understudied despite being one of the most frequented tourist destinations in the Caribbean, and in spite of the understanding that tourism as an industry is inherently turbulent, unstable and in constant flux. In addition, as a result of my frequent travels to the province of Puerto Plata, I began to notice a decline in tourist presence over the last few years. I believed that research into the reasons for this apparent decline, and how resort workers were dealing with these low tourist numbers, was necessary. While tourism research in the Dominican Republic has investigated the resort industry to the extent of its impacts on the local community, as well as on resort workers, my study provides more current research into the socio-economic benefits of resort work, while also investigating how the ebbs in Puerto Plata's resort industry have affected resort workers, how they have adapted to these changes, and how they perceive the resort industry as a result.

Puerto Plata is one of the oldest developed tourist regions in the Dominican Republic. While Punta Cana—located on the eastern most tip of the island—in recent years has been superseding the former in terms of tourist popularity, the effects of this shift in tourist preference with regards to resort workers' livelihoods is revealed in the research that has been carried out for this thesis.

Between 1991 and 2010, job opportunities in the Dominican Republic increased by 1.6 million, averaging approximately 75,000 jobs per year (ILO 2013:5). Such statistics, however, speak to the Dominican Republic as a country, and fail to adequately address economic crises at the provincial level. As a result, this research uncovers the struggles resort workers in Puerto Plata currently face, as neighbouring Punta Cana continues to construct upscale resorts while Puerto Plata responds by discounting packages in order to appeal to travelers (El Caribe 2003). While those interviewed emphatically regarded their line of work as much preferred over non-resort jobs that they previously held, or other jobs available to them outside of the tourism industry, they also recognized declining tourism numbers in the province that have resulted in less work, less tips, and the closing of some resorts in the area. As outlined by the ILO (2013:4), while the Dominican Republic boasts middle-income status, the country lags in social spending to alleviate the high rates poverty. As a result, resort workers perceive their work in the resort industry as a beneficial solution to the lack of adequate job opportunities available to them and therefore as a means to stay out of poverty.

Before my departure for Puerto Plata, I located an apartment that was a 10 minute drive from Hotel de Bachata. I decided that residing in an apartment, as opposed to staying as a guest at a resort, for the majority of the time that I was conducting my

research would be a more ethical option. I did not want those I might be interviewing to feel compelled to answer my questions, or behave in a certain way because of my presence as a “customer”. Instead, I stayed at Hotel de Bachata for a week in order to observe, and spent the other three weeks residing in the apartment. During this week’s time of observation at Hotel de Bachata, I developed friendships with some resort workers whom I kept in touch with during my month’s stay in Puerto Plata; I also interviewed some of these individuals.

For this project, I interviewed 13 individuals, as this was deemed most feasible given the one-month time frame for field research (Adler 2005:33). One of the participants interviewed was an expatriate who has been living in the Dominican Republic for over 30 years. I deemed this interviewee a valuable source of information for this project because of her fluency in English, but also because she had resided for the past 30 years in close proximity to a very concentrated resort area, and was very aware and knowledgeable of the changes in the resort industry that had occurred in the last few years. In addition, due to my difficulties arranging interviews with women participants, I believed she would provide a valuable female perspective, even though she was from a very different economic class than my other informants. The 12 other participants in my research project fell into one of three categories: those who are currently working at a resort, those who once worked at a resort, and those who are affiliated with resorts though the companies that employ them. The participants in this study range in age from 24 to 42, and all reside in the Port of Puerto Plata, in the province of Puerto Plata, except for one participant who immigrated to Canada and had been living there for 9 years. Six

of the 12 participants were parents, and only three reported being in a committed relationship. The breakdown of these 12 participants is as follows:

Table 1: Participant Demographic Information

Gender	Occupation	Years of Service in the Resort Industry	Years of Service at Resort Currently Working At
Male	Gardener	7	7
Male	Tour Guide; Former <i>Animación</i> Employee	Affiliated with resorts through tours for 10 years; Worked as animación at resorts for 4 years	N/A
Male	Former <i>Animación</i> Supervisor	5	N/A
Male	Waiter	13	13
Male	Former Waiter	3	N/A
Male	Waiter	14	14
Male	Chef	5	1.5
Male	Chef	7	7
Male	Taxi Driver; Former Bellboy	23	N/A
Male	<i>Animación</i>	4	6 months
Female	<i>Animación</i>	7	2
Female	Resort Photographer	Affiliated with resorts through photography company for 2 years; Is only situated at a single resort for 3 months at a time	N/A

The participants possessed a wide array of job types, and this helped develop a more comprehensive understanding of the resort industry, which ensured that the perceived benefits of resort work by workers of one department did not represent the perspectives of all resort employees. These different perspectives provide insight into the advantages and disadvantages of working in different departments, as well as how those employed in these various departments perceive their position in comparison to others. In this thesis, “department” refers to the different resort positions held by resort workers at Hotel de Bachata, and was also used by participants when discussing resort work. For this thesis, the departments discussed include: gardening, *animación*, wait staff (waiters) and kitchen staff (chefs).

In order to participate in the interviews, a prospective participant needed to have worked at, to have been currently working at, or to have been affiliated through his or her position with a resort. As the participants interviewed were mostly men, I inquired with an interviewee why it appeared that more men than women were working at Hotel de Bachata. He informed me that this was rare, and that usually resort labour consists equally of men and women. During my fieldwork, however, I had less access to women than men at Hotel de Bachata, and so my participants were mostly men.

A first group of participants was recruited via e-mail, using contact information they provided to me in my previous travels to Puerto Plata, in order for us to keep in touch. These particular individuals were informed of my return to the country and of my research project. They were then asked whether they would be interested in participating in the project by being interviewed regarding their work, or former work, in the resort

industry. Six interview participants were recruited using this method. I managed to obtain my other participants as a result of the observation I conducted at Hotel de Bachata, and through snowball sampling. With respect to the former, as resort work encourages the formulation of friendships with tourists, it did not take me long to establish relationships with those who worked at the resort. By the end of my observation, my newfound friends were informed of my continued stay in the area as a result of my research, and contact information was exchanged. I then contacted these individuals at a later date to inquire as to whether they were interested in being interviewed for my study. I established stronger relationships with some of my participants after these interviews, typically exploring Puerto Plata together on their days off from work. These friendships also allowed for the multiple casual conversations we engaged in pertaining to their work during the research period.

I spent a week's time of observation at Hotel de Bachata in the Port of Puerto Plata. Only one resort was chosen for observation as I was most recognized at this particular location, which made reestablishing my friendships with workers, as well as establishing new friendships, easier. Also, due to financial restrictions, observing at one resort was deemed most economically feasible. During observations, I took notes observing worker-tourist interactions, as well as the behaviour of resort workers (such as their work schedules, duties), and their interactions amongst themselves. Observation notes were taken in a booklet that was kept in the hotel room safe during my week's stay, and then kept in the safe in my apartment residence for the remainder of my stay in the Dominican Republic. In my observation notes, I differentiate between workers based on their uniforms and personality traits. I do not describe physical features or defining

characteristics of the individuals observed. Distinguishing between the different workers was important for observation in order to determine any differences in the behaviour of workers in different departments.

During my week's stay at the resort, I reconnected with workers I had met on previous vacations, and developed new friendships with many of the other employees there. Some employees were aware of my purpose at the resort sooner than others, as some would inquire as to why I was "sitting alone" and "studying". When I disclosed my purpose for being at the resort, they showed interest in my research, and would at times divulge information about their work on the spot. I only had these kinds of in-depth conversations with members of the *animación* team, as well as the resort photographer. Both positions, according to my informants, had low supervisory presence.

In addition to observation, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 7 of the 13 participants. These interviews consisted of a set of questions that were to guide the interview process. These questions did not have to be asked in order and were intended to encourage conversation. The interviews were conducted at my place of residence at a date and time selected by the participant in order to accommodate the busy schedules of these workers. The other 6 interviews were obtained through casual conversations, whereby the participant was asked a variety of questions pertaining to his or her work in the resort industry, but in no specific order. The interview guide inspired the questions asked; however, the participant had more control over the direction of the conversation. Using this method, the participant drove the interview, discussing whatever he or she thought was the most important as pertaining to his or her work at the resort. Casual interviews were employed whenever the participant was pressed for time, or if the

interview location did not accommodate the use of a voice recorder. These casual conversations typically took place more than once with each participant, resulting in more of a continued conversation during my month's stay in Puerto Plata. These conversations regarding their work took place at the beach, el malécon, and at local discothèques.

For the interviews that were conducted at my place of residence, I provided participants with beverages and food, which were on the table in front of us where the interview was taking place. The participants would drink and eat the food provided during the interview. With regards to the conversations that did not take place at my apartment, I provided small bottles of rum or Toronto Blue Jays T-shirts, depending on the participant, as compensation. As rum is a popular alcoholic beverage in the Dominican Republic, and because there are many Dominican players on the Toronto Blue Jays, these gifts were always received with pleasure.

I obtained verbal consent whenever a participant consented to participating in the research project, whether it was a semi-structured interview or a casual conversation. I determined that a signed consent form would be viewed with haste and uncertainty in this cultural context, especially since my questions pertained to their work. Due to the instability of resort work, I did not want them to fear for their positions, which might have been the case with a signed document.

Although my informants possessed varying degrees of English language skills, due to their overall competence, a translator was not necessary for the interview process. The semi-structured interviews were recorded on a voice recorder and then later transcribed onto a laptop. At the beginning of every recording, I said aloud the code

assigned to the participant in order to distinguish one interview from another. The codes assigned to each participant were recorded on a separate document and kept in a safe. After each recorded interview was transcribed, the recording was erased from the device. The transcribed interview was then marked with the identifying code assigned to that particular participant.

During the casual interviews, I took notes in a booklet and labeled each interview with the participant's corresponding code. Although I did not take notes throughout the entire interview, whenever the participant said something worth noting "word for word", or drew attention to an important concept, I made sure to make note of it in the booklet. After each casual interview, I would transfer the notes from my booklet, including mental notes, into a document on my computer. These casual conversations proved to be very useful as they allowed participants to take control of the conversation and comfortably discuss their ideas without feeling restricted by interview questions. However, because of the lack of a recorder, some points were inevitably forgotten. In these cases, I would contact the participant via e-mail to inquire as to whether they would be able to meet again, or whether we could speak via telephone. The three individuals of whom I required clarification allowed me to call them to obtain this information, and I always ensured these phone calls would not be of extra cost to them.

Because almost half of the interviews conducted were casual ones, the process of analysis is a mixed one. For the casual interviews, conversations were typed out from memory, using the notes taken from my notebook to guide the writing process. The transcriptions of the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using a colour-coded process, whereby common themes were highlighted using the same colours. These

themes were extracted and typed out into a separate document where similar themes found from the casual interviews were added as well. After themes were extracted from both the semi-structured and casual interviews, the notes taken from the observation period were coded using the same colours that were used for the themes extracted from the transcriptions.

As mentioned above, during the research period, I grew concerned over my inability to recruit women participants. The majority of my informants were men, and I feared that the only reason for my success in recruiting male informants was because they were trying to employ the same tactics on me as they were on other women tourists to obtain personal gain. During the recruitment process, I was met with professions of love as well as requests for romantic relationships. I found myself reiterating to these individuals that my only purpose in Puerto Plata was to conduct research, and I would frequently redistribute the verbal consent script that accompanied this project, which was available in both English and Spanish. Once my identity as researcher, rather than tourist, was clearly defined, I asked these prospective participants whether they still wanted to participate. One male participant decided not to. Despite my attempts at clearly outlining not only my research project, but also my identity as a researcher, there were participants who still attempted to cross those boundaries. In making my intentions clear multiple times, I was finally able to establish a researcher/participant relationship with my male informants.

Chapter 4: Findings and Analyses I

Overcoming Resort Structures and Exercising Agency

Chapters 4 and 5 discuss the research findings, and each section in these chapters is followed by an analysis of the findings. Conceptually, Chapter 4 demonstrates how my informants exercised agency in their work despite the hierarchical resort structures in place, such as managerial staff, that attempted to render them subordinate, subservient and passive. The themes discussed in this chapter are identified from the data collected, and are also evident in the existing literature. This chapter discusses the theme of access. This was the issue that my informants talked about most and was also the most evident issue that I uncovered during my observation at Hotel de Bachata. Access to tourists was described to me as the most beneficial aspect of resort work. In addition, I observed, and was told stories of, the innumerable ways in which resort workers exercised agency in their interactions with tourists in order to economically and socially benefit. These benefits were far-ranging, and not all were monetary in nature. Different opportunities arose from resort workers' access to tourists, and I describe in this chapter the ways in which the former exercised agency in order to take advantage of these opportunities, as well as navigate around the instabilities associated with the resort industry. This chapter draws on Jessop's (1990, 2008) concept of *structural calculation* in order to demonstrate how workers were active agents in determining and extracting the opportunities available to them in their line of work.

Section 1. Access to Tourists and Exercising Agency in the Resort Industry

In my discussions with informants, innumerable perceived benefits of resort work were frequently cited to me as reasons why their work in the resort industry was so advantageous. These benefits were most often related to their ability to access—or come into some kind of contact with—foreign guests staying at resorts. Basic everyday interactions with foreign tourists provided resort workers with access to things they would not have otherwise had access to had they not worked in, or been affiliated with, the resort industry. In attempting to benefit from this access, I observed, and was also told about, the agency my informants exercised in order to benefit socially and economically from their positions. For instance, informants would provide exceptional customer service, treating their guests like family, in order to profit economically through the accumulation of tips. Resort workers would also take advantage of their positions of close interaction with tourists in order to improve their foreign language skills, which sometimes resulted in their acquiring better paying resort positions. Informants also described to me how they acquired resort amenities as a result of their ability to develop friendships with guests. Romantic relationships were also developed with tourists in hopes of obtaining visas to leave the country permanently through marriage. Informants also described to me how they exercised agency in order to establish relationships with tourists, who would then send remittances back to them in the form of money or gifts. Although the development of these relationships was frowned upon by management, resort workers would develop relationships with resort guests off of resort premises and away from the prying eyes of management, which allowed workers to acquire additional

benefits they would not have been able to attain otherwise, such as free nights out on the town, including alcohol and food, and sexual encounters with these tourists.

i. Agency and Accumulating Additional Income Through Tips

Monetary gain in the form of tips, whether in foreign currency or the Dominican peso, was described to me as a very important benefit of resort work. In observing José, a waiter of Hotel de Bachata, greeting and attending to customers at the resort's main restaurant, it was evident he very easily established rapport with his guests. Upon observation of the dining area throughout the week, I noticed guests returning to the section in which José worked, greeting him with a hug and the customary kiss on either cheek, or a handshake. Although it could be argued that these guests were simply establishing a routine for themselves, sitting in the same seating area for every meal, it was clear that the service and attention that José provided influenced guests' decision to return to his section on a daily basis. José explained to me that he had received many awards from the hotel over the years for having been voted by guests in the hotel's survey as the best waiter at the resort. His statement was clearly supported by the evident relationships he had established with his guests; some first-time guests of the resort, and some returning guests who had established and maintained a friendship with José over the years. I spoke with a Canadian couple who told me they returned to Hotel de Bachata for the past eight years, and that visiting José was one of the reasons they continued to do so. I observed José walking up and hugging this couple upon their arrival to the resort, as they proceeded to take their seats in the dining room, greeting them by name as though

they had never left. He would provide the utmost attentive service I witnessed at the restaurant, not only by providing efficient service, such as ensuring their liquor or water glasses never ran dry and clearing plates immediately after guests were finished with them, but by engaging his guests in conversations about their lives and by frequently referring to guests as “mi familia”. Some guests discreetly gave José a tip after almost every meal, subtly placing it in his hand during a handshake. He would graciously accept their generosity with a “muchas gracias, mi amigo” or a “muchas gracias, mi familia”. I also observed José training and disciplining new wait staff, sometimes to their disgruntlement, which not only spoke to his experience on the job, but his success in it.

ii. Access to Tourists and the Development of Human Capital

While tips are a common source of valued additional income for those working in the service industry, I observed, and was informed of, the other benefits of tourism work that provide human capital to those in contact with tourists on a regular basis. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), human capital is “the knowledge, skills, competences and other attributes embodied in individuals that are relevant to economic activity” (1998:9). Human capital, then, does not only refer to formal education training, but also includes any acquired knowledge or skills that can be used for productivity. Interactions with tourists, simply for the sake of being able to converse with, and learn from, them, was brought to my attention as being of significant importance in my informants’ line of work. José for instance explained to me, “Siempre me gusto trabajar directamente con las personas. Conocerte saber me su

país. Yo contarle del mío en sin empapar me de sus virtudes, sus idealism.” José is describing his enjoyment working with people and learning about their ways of life, as well as sharing his ways of life, without necessarily being immersed in their culture. Similarly, Maria, an *animación* employee at Hotel de Bachata, explained to me how her position was more beneficial than working in other positions at the resort. Her job, also known as an “entertainment director”, was to entertain guests, organizing pool and beach games during the day, as well as participating in the nightly performances on the resort’s stage, which usually consisted of themed skits or dance routines. Maria and I had an interesting conversation about her attachment to her position as *animación*, despite her dislike of *animación* management at the resort, when she confided in me that she intended on finding a job as *animación* at a different resort:

Sarah: “Why don’t you stay [at the resort] but work a different position?”

Maria: “I love my job. I make more money than waiters or maids. Waiters make around 8,000 pesos a month, and I make around 10,000. Yeah, I could be a waiter and make tips, but they don’t talk to tourists. They say hello, give them a fork or spoon and that’s it.

Sarah: “You can’t have the same kinds of conversations as a waiter like you can as *animación*?”

Maria: “As a waiter, there’s no freedom. You always have someone looking over your shoulder.”

Sarah: “You mean like a supervisor?”

Maria: “Yeah, they’re always there making sure you’re doing things right. In *animación* we’re more free. We can talk to tourists as much as we want, play with them, walk around.”

In contrast to wait staff, Maria described the *animación* position as providing workers with more freedom; freedom to play with and talk to tourists while simultaneously being able to freely walk around the resort. Because the very purpose of *animación* work is to engage and entertain tourists, supervisors were not always present to oversee the various activities that took place around the resort. This freedom added to the appeal of the position. In speaking with Luis, a former resort personal trainer and *animación* worker, he confirmed my other informants' perspectives on the benefits of working closely with tourists.

Luis: "I worked as a personal trainer there [at the resort] but I did not like it."

Sarah: "Why not?"

Luis: "Because I cannot talk to tourists! I was very good as personal trainer, but I told my manager, 'I want to work in *animación*'. So, I went there [working as *animación*] and it was much better for me. As *animación* you need to have a kind of charisma and energy! I was very, very good. No really, very good."

Sarah: "Wasn't being *animación* tiring?"

Luis: "Yes! Sometimes I would not finish until midnight, and then I have to come back early the next day, understand?"

When I asked Luis why *animación* team members would not change positions despite the long hours and hard work, he gave a response very similar to Maria's in that he described their access to tourists, and the freedom of their positions, as very desirable. He asked me, "In what other job at a resort can you walk on the beach with tourists and sit and talk to them, and really get to know them?"

In describing other benefits of her work as *animación*, Maria described her

enjoyment of learning different languages by speaking with tourists on a consistent basis throughout the day. She proudly explained to me that over the years her work as an *animación* team member equipped her with knowledge of multiple languages simply through conversing with tourists regularly.

Maria: “I didn’t know any languages when I first started *animación*, just Spanish.”

Sarah: “So you managed to learn all these languages on your own?”

Maria: “Talking to tourists everyday! In *animación* we talk to people all the time, all day, you know? I know now German, French, English, all of it.”

Despite her lack of language skills, except Spanish, upon her entrance into *animación* work, Maria was able to use her daily access to tourists in order to improve on her foreign language skills. Luis similarly described his position as an *animación* team member as providing him with the opportunity to learn a variety of languages, including German, French, Dutch, Italian and English. He boasted to me the speed at which he learned English—3 months—because his job entailed constant interactions with tourists who spoke English, among other languages. Luis explained to me that his charisma and energy, coupled with the fact that he knew multiple languages, prompted management at other resorts to take notice of him, and offer him *animación* positions at their resorts with better pay and benefits, as a result.

Maria and Luis, who both worked primarily as *animación* team members in their careers as resort workers, were not my only informants to discuss language skills as a beneficial aspect of working in the resort industry. Alex, an excursion tour guide whose tours were affiliated with resorts in the area, explained to me that as an *animación* team member in his twenties, he appreciated the interaction he was able to have with tourists

because it allowed him to learn a variety of languages. It was the language skills he developed as an *animación* team member that encouraged him to pursue work as a tour guide. As a tour guide, he was then able to improve on the language skills he developed as an *animación* worker through the formal language training provided by the tour company. He explained to me that the more languages a tour guide knows, the more he will get paid when he has excursionists on his tour who speak those languages. His work as an *animación* team member, then, provided Alex with foundational knowledge of multiple languages, which allowed him to financially profit as a tour guide.

Similarly, during an interview with Hector, he explained to me that he was currently attending school in order to improve his English-language skills. Originally having emigrated from Haiti, Hector spoke French, as well as Spanish, fluently. He explained to me that he was able to legally immigrate to the Dominican Republic as a result of his fluency in Spanish.

Sarah: “So you’re learning English right now? What other languages do you speak?”

Hector: “Spanish and French, because, you know, in Haiti we speak French and Creole.”

Sarah: “Do you have family over there, in Haiti still?”

Hector: “Yes, my sister, she is there, but she cannot come because she do not know any Spanish.”

Sarah: “So you know quite a few languages! Why did you decide to go to school for English?”

Hector: “Working at a hotel is better for advancement. I want to learn English to talk to people in English.”

By advancing his knowledge of English, and by working at a resort where he

could practice these skills on English tourists, Hector hoped he could advance in the resort industry. Similarly, Carlos, a waiter at Hotel de Bachata of Haitian origin described to me his knowledge of Dutch, French and Spanish and that he was currently improving his English by speaking with tourists everyday. After having been in consistent contact with Carlos over a span of two years, I noticed a definite improvement in his English. When I inquired as to whether he was attending English classes, he smiled and proudly said he simply did his best to learn from the resort guests.

iii. Agency and Access to Amenities

The resort industry not only provides workers with the ability to access otherwise unattainable language skills, but also offers them physical access to amenities intended for hotel guests. Informants shared with me the ways in which they took advantage of their daily proximity to hotel amenities, and I witnessed some of these behaviours in my observations as well. Using the same “charisma” and friendliness that had originally established their friendships with hotel guests, resort workers would also use these skills in order to benefit from the amenities a resort provides its guests. For instance, I observed members of the *animación* staff using the social connections they had established with guests in order to obtain food from the buffet or beverages from the bar, such as soda beverages and juice. Workers, typically members of the *animación* team—since, as mentioned by informants, they were not always under the watchful eye of their supervisors—would ask guests they had befriended if they could get a drink from the bar for them, or whether they would get them food from the buffet and bring it to them in

secret, while they worked. In these interactions I observed, I did not witness a tourist decline these requests. In these interactions, I frequently heard workers describing to tourists their “thirst” or “hunger”, which ultimately prompted the tourist to sympathize with their new friend, and they would inevitably do as they were asked. On a rare occasion, I also observed waiters taking sips of beer or wine from behind a partition that divided the cleaning station from the tables where the guests dined. As a recognized face at the resort, I too was approached by staff, particularly *animación* team members, but also resort photographers who roamed the resort taking pictures of guests, to bring them food or beverages from the buffet. I also had an *animación* staff member inquire if I had any Band-Aids for her, as she had cut her hand during an activity she was leading. These workers’ requests for resort food was justified by Maria who claimed that while *animación* staff work the hardest and have some of the longest shifts at the resort, they are only allowed to eat with the guests three days a week, and only during lunch.

Maria: “*Animación* work the hardest at the resort. We start early and we don’t leave until late at night. You know, you’ve seen! It doesn’t matter, the resort treats us bad. We only eat with the tourists sometimes at lunch. The other days they give us chicken, rice and beans. 3 things! Everyday! I can’t eat that everyday! I don’t even like chicken!

Maria’s entitlement to resort food was deemed justified because of her demanding position as *animación*, but was also an act of rebellion against the bland food the resort provided her.

Access to resort amenities was not the only means by which resort workers obtained material gain. In fact, I observed on many occasions resort workers making the most of their access to tourists by requesting, or taking, possessions tourists brought to

the resort with them. In passing through the resort's front lobby from time to time, I would overhear conversations between upset guests and management staff in which the former were reporting a theft from their room, or elsewhere at the resort. The items taken were more often than not electronics of some variety. In addition, beach vendors—although not considered to be directly affiliated with resorts, they nevertheless have increased access to tourists along the beach on which resorts sit—would befriend tourists as they lay sunbathing or walking along the beach. As the week progressed and an acquaintanceship developed—either through daily conversations or through tourists purchasing the services these vendors provided—many vendors requested that their new friends bring them anything they no longer wanted, such as shampoo, lotion, toothpaste or flip flops. I also personally experienced resort workers requesting the magazines I had finished reading. At times, these requests were made in accompaniment with the presentation of a flower picked from the resort grounds' garden.

Tourists, however, do not present the only opportunity from which to obtain resort amenities. For instance, Maria informed me that chefs, who have the closest physical access to the resort's food, make deals with resort workers in which they will provide workers with a plate of food for a fee. The chefs will then exchange the plate for this fee at a pre-established location at the resort with low management presence. When I showed surprise that these chefs would charge their friends a fee for access to the buffet food, Maria responded with, "What? Did you think they would do it for free? No, they want money!" Thus, the potential to benefit from resort work was sought out not only by workers with access to tourists, but workers without access (such as chefs), in their attempts at turning their position into a profitable one.

iv. Establishing Relationships with Tourists for the Opportunity to Move Abroad

Resort workers who were employed in positions in which daily communication with tourists was a requirement, also described to me their potential to establish relationships with resort guests, and the ways in which agency was exercised in order to capitalize on these opportunities. Although developing a romantic relationship was not always the intention, acquaintanceships and sometimes friendships that transcended time and distance once the tourist returned to his or her country were described as equally profitable. These established relationships were just one of the ways in which these workers were able to take advantage of the access they had to tourists; it is a characteristic that clearly distinguishes resort work from the other types of work available in Puerto Plata.

The phenomenon of workers in the Caribbean tourism industry who take advantage of their access to foreign tourists by establishing close relationships with them is well documented in tourism literature (Herold, Garcia, and DeMoya 2001; Brennan 2004; Cabezas 2006, 2011; Weichselbaumer 2011). It is no surprise, then, that resort workers in Puerto Plata—a province located in a country that has experienced one of the greatest increases in economic growth, yet still suffers from overwhelming poverty and low social spending—take advantage of their access to tourists in a way that has the potential to benefit them financially, emotionally and/or physically. As a yearly tourist of Puerto Plata for about eight years, the concept of “sanky pankies” was not lost on me during my fieldwork. Gloria, a photographer at Hotel de Bachata whom frequently

walked around the resort trying to convince tourists to take a picture with the hotel iguana, described to me the significance of this concept. She explained that *sanky pankies* were boys or men who tried to benefit materially, or financially, from engaging in relationships with tourists, and that they were especially abundant in *animación* positions.

During my month-long stay in Puerto Plata, I met Deborah, an expatriate to the Dominican Republic for over 10 years. One afternoon, she invited me along with her for an afternoon of drinks at an ocean-side bar, which she frequented regularly.

Accompanying us to the bar was her friend Andrea. During the commute, Andrea and I sat side-by-side in the backseat of the car discussing how long we would be staying in Puerto Plata, and where we were from. Deborah sat in the passenger seat as her husband, Andrew, an expatriate for over 10 years, as well, drove. I asked Andrea whether she was travelling alone, or whether she was staying with someone she knew in Puerto Plata. She informed me that she was in Puerto Plata visiting her Dominican boyfriend whom she had met while on vacation a year prior at the resort where he worked. She then inquired, rather matter-of-factly, whether I was also in Puerto Plata visiting my Dominican boyfriend. A little taken aback by the assumption, I told her I was in Puerto Plata for research, and that I did not have a Dominican boyfriend. Deborah then turned around from her place in the front seat and said, “Not yet anyway. If you don’t have one now, you will soon!” Similarly, in one of my first conversations with Andrew, I described my research project, and explained that I already had a few contacts in Puerto Plata whom I hoped would be able to provide me with more potential informants for my project. Andrew developed a serious countenance and warned me that the men in Puerto Plata have “girlfriends from all over the world” and that I was to be very careful.

My experience as a single woman living in an apartment in Puerto Plata proved to be different than that from my previous travels, and supported Andrew's warnings of Dominican men's professions of love. Sometimes, having only been introduced to someone a couple of days prior, I was already met with confessions of "love" and "girlfriend" requests. I evaluated these immediate professions as not only attempts at developing a closer relationship with me, but as a result of the nature of tourism. Clifford (1997) describes resorts as places in which people do not reside, but instead pass each other in transit. I have analyzed these fast professions of love in that context then as not being solely for the purpose of solidifying a relationship, but as a result of the time constraint tourism places on the ability of resort workers to establish these relationships, which in turn provide them with opportunities to economically profit. The majority of my informants at some point during our conversations mentioned to me that Dominican men frequently take advantage of their access to foreign women by establishing either close platonic or romantic relationships with them. Dominican women were not mentioned as trying to establish romantic relationships with foreign men. Sex, gifts, money and the potential to obtain tourist visas were all cited as incentives for Dominican men to pursue relationships with foreign women.

Luis shared with me the many tactics he observed resort workers employing in the hopes of eventually obtaining visas. He informed me that almost all of the male *animación* workers tried to develop relationships with tourists in order to "get a ticket out of the country." When I inquired whether he ever employed these tactics, he laughed and said he probably would have if he did not have family waiting for him in the United States. He informed me that he had friends on the *animación* team who would target

women that were considered “undesirable”, because they were thought to have low self-esteem and would easily fall in love with them. Luis discussed friends he had whom succeeded in getting female tourists to fall in love with, and marry, them. These women would realize later that their husbands had “real” girlfriends in the Dominican Republic whom they could now bring over to their new home country. When I inquired whether these Dominican women knew about their boyfriends’ foreign wives, he told me that these women typically agree that their husbands engage in affairs with these women, as long as they work hard to obtain a visa and eventually send for them in the Dominican Republic. Luis explained that Dominican men would tell a tourist that they love her after only having known her for a few days in order to “hook them”. Luis said these men typically have women from all over the world, and whoever falls in love with them first will be “the one they go with” (with whom they leave the Dominican Republic).

Resorts also sometimes hire professional dancers to perform in the evening entertainment. Luis informed me that majority of these male dancers are homosexual; however, because of “the way they move and dance” female tourists tend to be attracted to them. Luis told me that it did not matter to the dancers that these female tourists wanted to sleep with them, and that more often than not they would sleep with them despite their sexual preference just to be able to develop relationships with these women in hopes of leaving the country. Luis explained that this is why *animación* work is so appealing: “They can get close to the tourists because it is their job. They can dance with them, talk to them, make love to them. That’s why young people love working *animación* so much!”

Some resort workers may also have lives established in the Dominican Republic, which could include having a wife, children, and a house of their own, in addition to foreign girlfriends from whom they benefit. For instance, Gloria told me that her colleague had a wife and a newborn baby, but also had a girlfriend who lived abroad. She would visit him in the Dominican Republic and also helped him obtain a tourist visa to visit her in Europe.

Gloria: “Don’t say anything, but he [her coworker] has a wife and a baby, *and* he has a girlfriend. He just got back from there, in Europe, visiting her. One time, when his girlfriend came to visit him here at his apartment, he told his wife she should take the baby to her mother’s. So she was with her baby at her mother’s, while his girlfriend lived there [at the apartment] with him. Isn’t that bad?”

Gloria is describing her colleague as convincing his wife to stay at her mother’s apartment, while he accommodated his foreign girlfriend’s visit to Puerto Plata. According to Gloria, his Dominican wife was unaware of the relationship. This arrangement provided her colleague with gifts, as well as the opportunity for him to travel abroad, which would have been impossible had their relationship not existed.

v. Access to Tourists and Sexual Encounters

Gifts from and sex with tourists were also brought to my attention as part of the benefits of establishing relationships with tourists. Female tourists in particular were described to me as engaging in physical relations with male resort workers, and then sending them money or gifts from abroad upon their return home. Rodrigues, an

animación worker at Hotel de Bachata for a year, told me that he did not currently have a Dominican girlfriend. When I inquired as to why, he told me it was because he had access to foreign women all the time. He said he once had a girlfriend from Spain, and they would communicate via video chat on the computer from time to time, but that he ended the relationship because he had cheated on her with a tourist staying at the resort in which he was working at the time. Rodrigues matter-of-factly said, “Why would I want a girlfriend when I can sleep with tourists and they send me gifts?” He discussed how foreign women fall in love with Dominican men because of the way they move, and, because of this, they keep “coming back for more”, in addition to sending gifts from abroad, or bringing gifts with them upon their next visit.

Similarly, Alex discussed his encounters with female tourists and their sexual propositions for him. He discussed that, as an *animación* team member in his twenties, foreign women were attracted to him because he had a “rasta-man” appearance in that he had long dreadlocks, and was, therefore, perceived as “exotic”. More recently, as a tour guide, he described to me the ways in which female tourists he met during the excursions he led would propose sexual encounters with him. Alex explained to me that there is no shortage of female tourists looking to have sexual relations with Dominican men, and that a lot of Dominican men take advantage of the opportunities these propositions present. I did not have the opportunity to observe Alex as an *animación* worker, nor did I witness any suggestive interactions between him and his excursionists (most of those on the tour I was on were families).

Analysis: Access to Tourists and Agency in Resort Work

As discussed above, resort work in Puerto Plata provides workers with not only financial benefits as a result of the access they have to foreign currency through tips, but also provides them with the opportunity to accumulate human capital, as well. The ability of these workers to exercise agency in their work was most evident in their interactions with tourists, as well as their interactions with each other.

It comes as no surprise that workers in the restaurant industry, especially those employed by resorts, take advantage of their potential to accumulate tips. While observing José work—for two weeks straight, in typically split shifts followed by three days off—dressed in a neatly pressed white short-sleeved dress shirt and a vest coloured in the resort’s signature colours, I quickly became aware of the “opportunities” José described his work providing him. José was an exception in the dining room, providing service above and beyond the service I witnessed other waiters providing. It was not only his service that generated consistent and sometimes substantial tips (I observed a guest tipping him US\$5 for breakfast one day), it was the way that he treated every guest like they were his only one. He would sing to his guests, hug them, inquire about their families, and sometimes show them pictures of his own family, which he had stored on his cell phone that he kept hidden in his pocket. He would move tables around to accommodate the seating choices of guests, and it seemed as though no request was too large for him to accommodate. In Cabezas’ (2006:508) discussion with a resort worker in her research on Cuba’s all-inclusive resorts, her informant noted: “If [tourists] smile at you, you smile back even more. If they ask you for something, you get it right away. You sweat to bring them what they want. And if they want a monkey or an elephant, you

invent it. The thing is that you find a way to please them.” Although her informant described this in the context of establishing relationships with tourists, these behaviours can also augment gratuity earnings. Not only did José satisfy management in providing exceptional customer service—clearing plates as soon as they were finished with or refilling wine and water glasses with every sip taken—he treated every guest like they were his family, even referring to them as “mi familia.” In doing so, José was able to navigate through the resort structure, which required him to provide top-notch customer service, while simultaneously exercising agency and *strategic calculation* in the ways in which he decided to provide this service. By treating and making every guest feel like a member of his family, José was able to economically profit from his position; a position that was situated within an “all-inclusive”, and therefore expenditure-free, resort.

In conversations with my informants, they frequently discussed the most enjoyable aspect of their job as being able to talk to tourists regularly and getting to know them, while learning a new language in the process. As was brought to my attention by many of my informants, knowledge of English, even at a basic level, is not a requirement in order to obtain a job at a resort. For instance, Melvin, Hector and Pedro all possessed very little understanding of English when I interviewed them. When I inquired as to whether it was difficult obtaining a job in the resort industry because of their lack of English skills, they told me it was actually easy for them to obtain work because they took advantage of their connections in the resort industry. Melvin explained to me that only “a little” English was necessary to obtain a resort position, and only if you work in positions that require you to communicate with tourists on a consistent basis. In contrast to Cuba, where language training for resort staff is provided (Cabezas 2006:513), it

became obvious to me through interviews and observation that Dominican resort workers use their constant contact with tourists in order to develop their language skills; skills they were not formally provided with in the education system or by the resort industry. Through their positions, they not only developed language skills, but increased their human capital in that they could now communicate with tourists in a way that enhanced their job experience, and might even benefit them financially. For instance, José's knowledge of multiple languages as a waiter allowed him to engage his guests in a way that made them feel special, especially since he was attempting to speak their language. With respect to *animación*, informants frequently cited "getting to know tourists" as one of the most enjoyable aspects of their position. Ultimately, their ability to speak multiple languages and better communicate with tourists allowed them to pursue friendships, or sometimes romantic relationships, with tourists. Luis, for instance, described one of the opportunities of *animación* work as being the potential to learn multiple languages which increased the probability of developing a romantic relationship with a female tourist and moving abroad. In addition to being able to communicate with, and potentially benefit, from tourists, my informants seemed to also perceive their development of language skills as possibly providing them with better job opportunities. Thus, while it could be argued that the development of these language skills was inevitable, considering the amount of interaction resort workers have with tourists on a daily basis, the pride in which my informants described their knowledge of the languages they had accumulated, and the ways in which they operationalized their language skills in order to obtain better paying resort positions, really highlights the agency and *strategic calculation* they used in their line of work in order to benefit from their interactions with tourists, and pursue

better opportunities.

Direct access to tourists was not only described as providing informants with language skills, but was also seen as providing “freedom”; freedom that may not have otherwise been available in work external to the resort industry. Although it was exclusively *animación* workers who described to me the “freedom” of their work, it is nevertheless significant in illustrating the agency resort workers exercise in maneuvering through the structures of the resort industry. For instance, as described above, informants described the uniqueness of their positions in that they had the freedom to talk to, dance with, and get to know tourists as a result of their jobs as essentially tourist entertainers. In an interview with Luis, he explained that management, especially *animación* management, typically encourage their *animación* staff to establish close relationships with tourists in order to encourage them to return. He emphasized, however, that there is a line between flirting with tourists and “sleeping with them”, and if management ever discovered incidents of the latter, workers could be fired. As Cabezas describes, “Workers in these positions must learn to navigate a thin line between encouraged behaviour such as ‘safe flirting’ and fraternizing with guest[s] and more sexually explicit relations” (2006:516). Luis described to me that after a long day, *animación* workers would sometimes have to commute far to get home. He explained to me that this was why resorts sometimes provided living arrangements at the resort for their workers. When I inquired as to why more *animación* workers did not take advantage of the on-site residences, he simply explained, “Because you cannot bring tourists in there.” *Animación* workers have taken their positions as tourist entertainers into the public realm in order to avoid resort protocol and take advantage of the benefits their access to tourists provides.

In addition, in my conversations with Maria, she explains how male resort workers “treat tourists like queens” in acts of chivalry, despite the fact they do not treat Dominican women in this way. She explained to me that Dominican men learn how to treat tourists by watching foreign couples at the resort interact. Through their constant interaction with, and access to, tourists, resort workers learn how to not only engage tourists through improved language skills, but through behaviour, as well. In this way, *animación* workers employ *strategic calculation* and exercise agency in their attempt to establish relationships with tourists and evade resort rules, which prohibit worker-guest relations.

In addition, tourist imaginaries and their preconceived ideas about the exoticness of Dominican men contributed to resort workers’ ability to establish relationships with female tourists in order to profit. While female resort workers did not share with me stories of female worker engagement with male tourists, or whether they engaged in these relations themselves, my informants all talked about the ways in which male Dominican resort workers took advantage of female tourists’ perceptions of them as “exotic”. As Rodrigues and Alex explained to me, female tourists enjoyed the exoticness of the Dominican man and his ability to move and dance. Through observation, these conversations of sexual conquests were confirmed as not merely embellishments or expressions of *machismo*—whereby men aspire to superiority over women (Mayo and Resnick 1996:263), masculinity and promiscuity (Derby 2000:1116). I witnessed not only male resort workers’ flirtatious interactions with female resort guests, but also female guests’ suggestive behaviour towards resort workers, indicating the potential for sexual or romantic relationships to develop. This being said, the conceptual framework of tourist imaginaries informs how resort workers used tourists’ perceptions of them as “exotic” in

order to benefit. By exercising *strategic calculation* to take advantage of these preconceived ideas of their Dominican-ness, resort workers sometimes engaged in romantic or sexual relationships with tourists in order to economically profit.

In discovering the transactions that took place between resort workers in their access to resort amenities, such as in my conversation with Maria and her discussion of paying chefs for food, resort workers then not only utilize their charisma in order to benefit from tourists, but also use the amenities by which they are surrounded everyday in order to benefit from each other. For instance, in finding a way to obtain resort food, despite management's attempts at limiting *animación's* access to it, Maria was essentially exercising *strategic calculation* and applying her personal knowledge of negotiation in order to rebel against the resort structure that attempted to dictate what she could eat. Similarly, the chefs who were providing these plates of food to resort workers were exercising agency and *strategic calculation* in their attempt at compensating for the fact that they did not have the same access to tourists (and therefore the same benefits) that their friends in other positions did (such as *animación*). For instance, the chefs I interviewed shared with me that they were not tipped very often, and very rarely needed to speak with tourists, which accounted for their poor English skills. These internal networks, then, appear to be a way for workers, especially those in non-tip generating positions, such as chefs, to benefit from their access to amenities. In charging resort workers for food, chefs too gave themselves the opportunity to exercise agency in their work, while navigating around the resort rules and structures that were put in place to inhibit their ability to do so. For instance, in a conversation with Pedro and Guillermo, two chefs at Hotel de Bachata, they informed me that they were not allowed to be on the

resort premises on their days off. In fact, even the beach on which the resort sat was considered off-limits to them, and they were restricted to the periphery of the beach. From these conversations, I concluded that because of the limited opportunities to additionally profit—to generate tips or communicate and establish relationships with tourists—chefs have found a way to enhance the profitability of their positions and take advantage of their access to resort amenities. In doing so, they simultaneously erode the resort's hierarchical structures which place them in a submissive position (Cabezas 2006:509).

Chapter 5: Findings and Analyses II

The Limits of Exercising Agency Within Tourism/Resort Structures

The first section discusses the perceived economic benefits of employment in the resort industry—how it differs from work external to resorts—and how these perceived economic benefits resulted in my informants' dependence on the resort industry. Although informants described their ability to navigate their way around the resort structure and exercise agency in their work, their dependence on tourists in order to supplement their income demonstrates their economic dependence on the industry. The second section describes my informants' discussions of the instability of resort work, and the ways in which they justified this instability as a result of their economic dependence on the resort industry. My informants' insistence on tourism as necessary for the growth of the Dominican economy, and their persistence in finding work in the resort industry despite their sometimes being negatively impacted by the industry's inherent instabilities, really highlights their economic dependence on tourism. Acknowledging this instability, however, my informants described how they would work hard during the busy season in order to "take it easy" during the slow season, when tourists were less present. Throughout this chapter I also draw on Jessop's (1990, 2008) *strategic calculation* and *strategic selectivity* in order to describe my informants' behaviour as active agents and strategic decision-makers in their work and in their lives. I also draw on dependency theory in explaining the Dominican Republic's reliance on global forces and international contributions to sustain their tourism industry.

Section 1. Dependence on Resort Work and its Perceived Economic Benefits

As a frequent tourist of the Dominican Republic, specifically Puerto Plata, I became familiar with the bus ride from the Puerto Plata airport to *la zona turística*. During this bus ride, I would pass local *tiendas*, bars and restaurants, all of which provided locals with jobs much like those available in resort complexes. I began to question what the economic differences were between work in such positions and resort work. From an economic standpoint, all of my informants described resort work as providing them with more opportunities than other forms of local employment they previously held. However, their work also resulted in their dependence on the resort industry. Despite the agency my informants were able to exercise in their work, they were nevertheless economically dependent on resort tourism for their livelihood. My informants justified holding jobs in the resort industry, despite the laborious work, including long hours and sometimes strenuous work, because of the lack of job opportunities available outside of the resort industry. In addition, racism was described to me as prevalent in Puerto Plata, especially against Haitians. As a result, the two Haitian resort workers I interviewed described to me how their work in the resort industry was much better than work they had previously held as construction workers—a typical line of work for Haitian immigrants—with regards to both pay and working conditions, which also contributed to their dependence on the resort industry. Also, because of the large pool of tourists that the resort industry provides, workers affiliated with this industry—such as those employed by excursion tours or photographers contracted by the resort—were also economically dependent on the industry. Employment at resorts also provided my informants indirect benefits, such as taking advantage of opportunities to be “paid in

kind” by tourists, or gaining transferable skills in resort positions that could be used to obtain a job abroad. However, the opportunities for advancement in the resort industry were seen as minimal, especially for those workers who could not afford an education in tourism. Resort workers, then, who could not afford to pursue further education, remained economically dependent on an industry that provided them with minimal opportunities for advancement. This accounts for their agency in extracting as many benefits as they can from the industry, which attempts to maintain their subservience and compliance in low-level resort positions.

i. “Humanness” as a Justification for the Hard Work Endured in Resort Work

I first met Melvin during one of my trips as a tourist when he worked as a waiter at Hotel de Bachata in Puerto Plata. In his interview, despite not working at the hotel anymore, he explained that he welcomed the arduous work that accompanied being a waiter at a resort because “more work is more better.” Similarly, José talked about how he became a waiter at Hotel de Bachata and stayed for over 10 years.

José: “I am a waiter now, but I worked in a store before this.”

Sarah: “Why did you decide to change jobs?”

José: “That job did not provide me and my family with good opportunities. I wanted to get a job at a resort to give my family a better life.”

Pedro, a chef at Hotel de Bachata, told me he had been working as a chef for many years, but prior to working at this hotel he had been working at a small, villa-like hotel that was not affiliated with a large resort chain.

Pedro: “I worked at, you know, a small hotel. It was very, very nice. Very expensive. But it did not pay me good. I have a cousin who works there [at Hotel de Bachata] and he helped me to become a chef there.”

When asked whether they were “tired” from their demanding workloads, both José and Pedro justified their work, despite its arduousness, as being necessary. José explained, “El trabajo es los mas importante para sobre vivir en este mundo tan dificil para nosotros los seres humanos.” José is describing work as being a necessary, nevertheless difficult, part of living and a part of being human. Similarly, when I asked Pedro whether he was tired from only receiving two days off after working for two weeks straight he waved off my concern with his hand and said, “I[t]’s okay. I work because I am human.” Ultimately, as a result of the poor employment opportunities available in Puerto Plata, which resulted in their economic dependence on the resort industry, Melvin, José and Pedro were essentially justifying the arduousness of their work as something that they must endure as a result of their humanness.

ii. Racism in Puerto Plata and the Appeal of Resort Work

Resort work was also described to me as preferred to other types of work available in the Dominican Republic as a result of the racism that existed in Puerto Plata. While “racism” was not a term explicitly used by my informants, the ways in which my Haitian informants described their treatment as construction workers, and the ways my Dominican informants described the treatment of Haitians, painted a picture of the racism that existed within the community. Construction work was described during interviews as

typically being a line of work employing Haitians. Alex, my Dominican-born informant, explained to me that he was in the process of building his own house.

Alex: “I am building a house, you know? I have my construction workers there and I watch them.”

Sarah: “Are they Dominican construction workers?”

Alex: “Well, they are from Haiti; Haitians. I sit in front of my house, in my chair outside with a *cerveza* and relax like a king, and they work on it [constructing the house].”

He described an incident whereby one of his builders would not go to the store to pick up more supplies without being paid first.

Alex: “One time, I had this worker. I said to him, ‘Go to the store and pick this up for the house.’ We needed to get more things (supplies). He looked at me and put his hand like this (holds out his hand). He wanted to be paid first! I said, ‘No, no way.’ I can’t believe this man that I gave food and water to cannot do his job. Haitians will not do anything without being paid first. I’m telling you. Even the Dominican government - do you know how much the Dominican government gave to Haiti during, you know, the hurricane?”

Sarah: “Like Hurricane Sandy?”

Alex: “Yeah, you know? A lot! And still they show no... gratitude! Haiti is poor. Very poor. And the Dominican government gave them so much money.”

Sarah: “So what happened to the construction worker?”

Alex: “I fired him. I said ‘forget it.’ He begged for me to not fire him, but it was too late. I could not see him the same after that.”

Despite the economic assistance the Dominican government provided Haiti, Alex exasperatedly explained that Haitians would not do anything without being paid. My

discussion with Alex provided insight into why the Haitian resort workers I interviewed renounced their work in construction and instead pursued resort work. For instance, Carlos, a waiter and wine specialist of Haitian origin who worked at Hotel de Bachata, shared with me his experience as a construction worker before entering resort work. He described construction work as extremely difficult in that days were long, pay was low, and the work was extremely laborious.

Carlos: “Construction is no good. Too hot and I would be tired and sweat. Construction do no pay good. The resort is much better and more relaxing. There [inside the dining room] it is cool (referring to the breeze that frequently swept through the dining room) and people are nice. I can talk to people and they are nice to me.”

Sarah: “You mean tourists are nice to you?”

Carlos: “Yes, tourists are nice, but people that work there, they are good too.”

Similarly, Hector, a gardener of Haitian origin who also worked at Hotel de Bachata, explained that being employed as a construction worker did not provide him with the economic opportunities, including opportunities for advancement, that work in a resort would, so he decided to change jobs. Knowledgeable in two languages, and in the process of improving his English skills, Hector shared with me his desire to eventually “advance” in the resort and obtain a front-desk lobby job so that he would not have to labour in the sun all day as a gardener. In using their contacts within the resort industry to obtain work, my informants employed agency through *strategic selectivity* in order to escape the racism encountered in jobs available in Puerto Plata, and obtained a position in the resort industry, which they perceived as much more preferable.

iii. The Economic Benefits of Resort Affiliation, and Dependence on Resorts for Access to Tourists

Even affiliation with resorts, such as excursion operators, can provide tour guides with more access to tourists than they may have had access to working with privately owned companies located in the city. For instance, Alex, a tour guide of excursions in Puerto Plata, compared work as an unaffiliated tour guide in the city with tours affiliated with resorts.

Alex: “Working with a resort is much better. Yes, tours in the city can make money, but not as much money as working with a resort. At a resort there are a lot of tourists that want to go on tours. With hotels and reps, well, it’s much, much better.”

Greater access to tourists also translates into greater potential for the earning of foreign exchange through tips. Similarly, Luis explained, “Working inside a resort is much better. Even a waiter working outside won’t make as much as a waiter working inside, because Dominicans don’t tip!” Gloria also described that even though she gets paid based on how many photographs she sells, she would make a lot less, or even perhaps be without a job, if she was a photographer working in the city. Thus, my informants described the *strategic selectivity* they employed in their decision to engage in work that still maintained ties with the resort industry, which provided them with a pool of tourists from whom they could economically profit.

iv. Indirect Economic Benefits of Resort Work

In some cases, I observed the economic benefits of resort work as being less monetary in nature. For instance, during my fieldwork at Hotel de Bachata while I would be observing by the pool, Gloria would frequently sit on my lounge chair with me, with her photographer's camera strapped around her neck, and help herself to the snacks, or sometimes meals, in which I was indulging. Our casual conversations would continue for extended periods of time, sometimes up to half an hour. All the while she would continue to eat and drink my food before getting up to walk around the resort searching for guests to photograph. In a job where Gloria was not getting paid by the hour, sharing meals or snacks with guests provided her with not only a "free meal", but also bought her time to establish friendships with the guests that she was trying to photograph. The time she spent befriending tourists by the poolside not only provided her with free meals throughout the day, but also, as I observed, resulted in her newfound friends purchasing some of her photographs. In exercising *strategic calculation*, Gloria was essentially able to foresee the benefits of not only helping herself to free food, but in establishing relationships with tourists whom would later feel obliged to purchase her photographs.

Similarly, I also noticed *animación* workers at times letting tourists take the lead in the activities they were directing when their supervisor was not around. For instance, sometimes tourists would lead the water aerobics exercises while the *animación* worker, who was supposed to be leading the session, would sit in the shade and watch. In a situation such as this, workers exercised *strategic selectivity* and used an opportunity of low supervisory presence in order to take a break, while still getting compensated for their time.

Work experience that resort workers obtain while working in the industry may also act as a means for employees to economically benefit in the future, should they have the opportunity to move abroad. For instance, Guillermo, a chef of over 5 years at Hotel de Bachata, explained that even though he enjoyed his job, he hoped to reunite with his family in New Jersey in a few years.

Guillermo: “My family is in New Jersey. I am going to live with them maybe next year.”

Sarah: “Oh yeah? What kind of job do you want when you get there?”

Guillermo: “Same job, at a restaurant. There I can make a lot of tips. My brother makes [US]\$500.00 in tips in one week, he says.”

Sarah: “Do you get tipped as a chef here [at Hotel de Bachata]?”

Guillermo: “Sometimes. Not a lot.”

While some informants explained that they did not know what kind of work they would look for if they were to ever leave the country—because of the tourism-specialized nature of their work—work such as a chef, in Guillermo’s case, provided him with the confidence and transferrable skills to be able to foresee a successful future for himself abroad. While a ticket out of the country does not necessarily predict success, Guillermo believed that possessing skills that transfer across languages, cultures, and national borders would be economically beneficial for him, and would guarantee his success in the United States. Guillermo’s ability to foresee his future in the United States and use his personal experience as a chef to obtain employment opportunities abroad points to the *strategic calculation* he is employing in his work as a resort chef.

v. Dependence on Resort Work and Limited Opportunities for Advancement

Alex was a very intellectual man whom I first met during an excursion to a traditional family coffee farm in the Port of Puerto Plata. He immediately struck me as a very aware individual; he frequently discussed quite emphatically and in detail the current political and economic situation in the Dominican Republic, and the political barriers in place that limited Puerto Plata from reaching its full potential. His discussions with excursionists about the ebbs and flows in Puerto Plata's tourism industry prompted my inquiry of what other jobs were available to those who were either displaced from the resort industry, or who were forced to deal with the ebbs in tourist presence during the slow season. During our conversations, Alex described the lack of job opportunities in Puerto Plata, and the Dominican Republic as a whole, which made the resort industry a very appealing line of work for many Dominicans, despite its instability. When talking about his line of work, Alex explained that in order to obtain a specialized job in the tourism industry, such as a tour guide position, one needed to go to school to study tourism, which comes at an additional cost. Despite this additional cost, Alex attributed his ability to receive a tourism education to his organization and his ability to save the earnings he made during the busy seasons.

Alex: "I am a very organized man, comprende? Because I am an organized man I worked hard during the busy season so I can go to school and become a tour guide."

Sarah: "I heard telecommunications is pretty big in the Dominican. Can people get jobs there?"

Alex: "Yeah, sure they can work there."

Sarah: "Do they have to go to school for it?"

Alex: “Yes, of course! And it costs a lot of money!”

I also inquired as to whether Alex could find a second job in order to supplement his tour guide work during the ebbs in the tourist season.

Alex: [shrugs] It’s not easy because when my office calls me, I need to make sure I am free. If I do not take a lot of jobs, and say, ‘Oh, I have this and this,’ they will fire me.”

The unpredictability of Alex’s work as a tour guide—not knowing when he might get a call from the tour office to lead an excursion—meant he was left waiting for a call on those days when he did not work. As a result of this irregularity, Alex did not have the opportunity to find other work, and supplement his income as a tour guide.

Opportunities to pursue an education in tourism, and to advance into management, are also not available to everyone, as described to me by a member of management at Hotel de Bachata. He explained that in order to be eligible for a position in management, a candidate typically needs to have obtained a degree in tourism management, and must also be fluent in multiple languages; the former required money that many of my informants did not have. Despite their economic dependence on the resort industry, then, opportunities for advancement, such as going to school to become a tour guide or advancing into managerial positions, were out of reach for many of my informants.

Analysis of Dependence on Resort Work, and its Perceived Economic Benefits

The single commonality extracted from my informants’ discussions of the economic benefits of their work was their dependence on their work. While our

conversations typically centred on the economic opportunities their line of work in the resort industry provided them, the underlying theme of these conversations was that they depicted their work as economically beneficial as a result of poor previous experiences outside of the resort industry, and this had ultimately resulted in a dependence on the work that resorts provided them. In other words, because of the poor job opportunities available to them elsewhere, or the inadequate jobs they had held in the past, they perceived resort work as being economically beneficial, despite their dependence on it. Cabezas (2006:38) suggests that resort work provides economic access to workers that they would not have been able to achieve as independent entrepreneurs trying to tap into the tourism industry.

Resort work was described to me as a fast-paced, demanding industry. Many of my informants indicated that the most difficult part of their work was “the nerves” or the “acceleration of labour”, as well as the intense sun under which they frequently laboured throughout the course of the day. When I would commend them for their hard work, they would wave their hand in the air as though to say “it’s okay”, and would tell me hard work is a part of life, or a part of “being human”. This justification of long hours and intense labour is a result of not only the acknowledged hardships of work outside of the resort industry—in the local community—but also speaks to the lengths these workers will go to in order to keep their position within the resort industry; the latter also provided the potential for worker exploitation. Burman (2010:46) extends her analysis of governments’ insistence on the success of tourism for economic development when she suggests that this promotion of tourism simply acts as a way for governments to maintain social control of the population, while simultaneously pursuing self-interest. I will

suggest further that it has been the government's focus on the development of the tourism industry, at the expense of the subsidizing of local industries, that has created the dichotomy of resort versus non-resort work, whereby the former is perceived as providing economic opportunities only as a result of the lack of opportunities provided by the latter. Dependency theory contributes to the analysis of the inadequate job opportunities in the Dominican Republic, which has resulted in Dominicans' dependence on the resort industry. The structural adjustments that took place in the 1990s, as encouraged by the World Bank and IMF, resulted in the Dominican Republic abandoning agricultural exports and adopting a neoliberal economy ((Sagawe 1996; IMF 1999). The introduction of export-processing zones and mass tourism meant Dominicans depended on international corporations, such as factories and resort chains, for employment. Despite the shift to a neoliberal economy, Dominicans remained impoverished and were exploited for low wages while foreign corporations generated a significant profit (Itzigsohn 2000:51). With the eventual relocation of the export-processing zones to Mexico, Dominicans became especially dependent on mass tourism, in the form of the resort industry, to generate foreign exchange and replace the industries the Dominican government had abandoned (Padilla 2005:356). As discussions with my informants highlighted, the lack of adequate job opportunities available in Puerto Plata contributed to their dependence on the resort industry. This economic dependence also explains why they rationalized the laboriousness of their work as a part of being human.

Despite this dependence, however, Melvin, José and Pedro were nevertheless able to use *strategic selectivity* in their decision to use their contacts in the resort industry in order to obtain a resort position. Weighing the pros and cons of work external to the

resort industry, my informants concluded that, despite the demanding nature of their work, resort work was much preferred over the other kinds of work they previously had, or that they knew was available to them. However, it should also be noted that their attributing the demanding nature of their work to their humanness points to the limitations of the concept of *strategic selectivity* in recognizing restricted choices, as my informants did not perceive working outside of the resort industry as an option. While they selectively decided that resort work was more beneficial than other work, the perception of having no other option draws attention to the limitations of *strategic selectivity* as a conceptual tool.

In a casual conversation with a beach vendor who walked the lengths of the beach selling massages and hair braiding, as well as manicures and pedicures, she explained to me that as an immigrant from Haiti, she was not treated very well by Dominicans. It was for this reason that she was trying to immigrate to Montreal, Canada, where she could speak her native French language, and where her skin colour would not be an issue. In my discussions with Hector and Carlos, who had both immigrated from Haiti almost a decade prior, the resort industry appeared to protect them from the racism and stereotyping typically experienced by Haitians trying to obtain work in the Dominican Republic. In employing *strategic selectivity* in their decision to use their contacts in the resort industry in order to obtain work, Carlos and Hector managed to evade the hardships they described as characterizing construction work; however, because of this discrimination, Hector and Carlos were both economically dependent on the industry. They both shared with me their discontent in working in the construction industry as a result of the low wages and poor working conditions, which ultimately resulted in their

appreciation of the economic opportunities that resort work provided them. Their past experiences also contributed to their insistence on wanting to remain in the resort industry and potentially advancing within it. In addition to material gain, then, resort workers enjoyed their work because of the sense of pride and fulfillment they received from it (Bourgois 2003:324). However, literature regarding racism in the Dominican Republic, particularly with regards to being able to obtain work in the resort industry, suggests that skin colour determines the types of work an employee will be able to secure (Gregory 2007:26). The data I obtained did not necessarily reflect these findings, as Carlos was a waiter in a front-line position, who also happened to be the only wine specialist employee at Hotel de Bachata. However, whether Hector and Carlos would be presented with the same opportunities for advancement as their Dominican counterparts is unclear. Despite the ability of my informants to successfully obtain work in the resort industry, and although they perceive their work in the resort industry positively, it is the “Dominican paradox” (ILO 2013:1)—high economic growth accompanied by low social spending and poverty—that contributes to the growing economic dichotomy between those able to tap into the resort industry, and those who cannot, making those employed by the resort industry all the more dependent on it. In addition, the racism suffered by Haitians in the Dominican Republic also makes resort work a more attractive employment option. These factors all contributed to the *strategic selectivity* my informants’ employed in their decision to work in the resort industry as the racial context within Puerto Plata influenced my informants’ favouring of resort work over other work. However, although my informants were able to exercise *strategic selectivity*, enduring racism should not be considered a choice, and therefore their decision to enter resort

work represents their dependence on the industry in an attempt to avoid the burden of racial discrimination in local work. This is not to suggest that resorts do not employ discriminatory practices, but rather points to the resort industry's ability to somewhat insulate its workers from local social systems.

Despite the perceived economic benefits that resort work provided my informants with regards to obtaining foreign exchange in the form of tipping, the potential to generate tips appears to serve as a rationalization for the resort industry's distribution of wages. For instance, as described by Maria in her account of why she prefers to be an *animación* worker, waiters make approximately RD\$2,000 less than those employed in her line of work. Despite the vast differences in job requirements between these two positions, it can be assumed that this wage gap is justified because of the potential of those who work in service positions to generate tips. The International Labor Organization (2013:12) also suggests that employees, such as waiters or bartenders, working outside of the resort industry on average make approximately RD\$14 more than those employed in the private sector. This may in part be due to the potential for employees in the private sector to generate tips from tourists, as smaller restaurants typically owned by self-employed individuals do not generate the same tourist presence. It can be argued that it is the potential to generate foreign exchange through tips that explains the difference in wages between those working outside of the resort industry and those working within it. Alex similarly noted that his bosses encourage him to remind tourists at the end of every tour that they can provide tips for him. This also means, however, that those employed in tip-generating positions are more negatively affected during slow seasons (Adler 2004:108). Although resort workers have the opportunity to

exercise *strategic calculation* in their work in order to generate additional income from tourists through tips, as was the case with José, they are also economically dependent on the presence of tourists in order to supplement their low wages.

Despite the perceived economic opportunities that resort work provides, my informants—those who had not already attended further tourism education—did not describe their work as providing them with opportunities to pursue an education in tourism, nor did they describe any intention of pursuing a managerial position. Instead, informants told me they learned, and would continue to improve upon, their language skills through their current line of work, by speaking on a regular basis with tourists. Some hoped that these skills would provide them with opportunities to change positions in the future, but aspirations for advancement were not discussed. In speaking with Alex about the opportunities in the tourism industry to either advance to management in the resort industry, or to branch out into specialized fields, such as to obtain a tour guide position, it became more evident that a glass ceiling encases the resort industry. Although Alex employed a combination of *strategic calculation* and *strategic selectivity* in his work in the tourism industry—exercising the former in his development of foreign language skills as an *animación* worker, and employing the latter in his decision to pursue work as a tour guide because of its “social status” and the better pay it provided him—my informants seemed to recognize the limits of the opportunities available to them in resort work. This exemplifies the current economic context within Puerto Plata whereby the resort industry provides perceived economic benefits to its workers and solidifies their dependence on it as a result of the lack of economic opportunities available in the province. Despite this dependence, my informants nevertheless were able

to employ *strategic selectivity* in their decision to obtain work in the resort industry, and escape the meager positions they previously held in both tourism and non-tourism related positions.

Upon further analysis, it also became apparent that dependence on resort work extended beyond national borders. For instance, in discussions with Guillermo about his work as a chef at Hotel de Bachata, he informed me that when he reunited with his family in New Jersey, he would remain in the restaurant industry in order to have access to more tips as he was well aware that his income from tips would be more than he was typically able to make in Puerto Plata as a chef. Similarly, Alex shared with me his apprehension about living and working abroad. When I asked him why this was, considering he was fluent in multiple languages and therefore, I assumed, would have the confidence to find alternative work, he simply looked at me and said: “I don’t know what I would do.” It was at this moment that I drew the connection between resort workers’ dependence on resort work at not only the micro, local level, but on a more macro, global-level, as well. Because Guillermo possessed transferrable skills, which would allow him to perform the same work abroad, he was confident that he could find a job and be successful. However, working in areas of the resort industry in which the positions are more specialized—for instance, Alex’s position as a tour guide in Puerto Plata—results in workers’ inability to conceive of a successful life for themselves abroad. This uncertainty causes them to remain dependent on their line of work, or defaulting back to resort work after a failed attempt at living abroad. Alex explained, “Dominicans don’t know how hard people work in America. Your parents work hard right? It’s not easy. Dominicans think it’s easy.” Denise Brennan notes a similar example when she cites one of her Dominican informants

as explaining: “You know everyone wants to go fuera—that’s what I thought a few years ago. But it’s a lie; it’s not easy there. Sure you can make a lot more money there, if you can find a job” (Brennan 2007:106). Brennan’s informant, after having been unsuccessful at finding a job in England following his marriage to an Englishwoman, returned to the Dominican Republic to work in a hotel. Thus, while the resort industry at times can result in *strategic calculation*, and the potential for workers to foresee a life for themselves abroad, resort work can also result in dependence on the industry, even when one has moved abroad, as a result of its specialized characteristics.

In Burman’s (2010:46) analysis of the promotion of tourism by the Jamaican government, she argues that governments embellish the success of their tourism industries to not only secure loans and attract foreign investment, but to convince the local population of its success. This analysis was reflected in a discussion I had with Alex. Because I was interested in the visible decline in tourist numbers in Puerto Plata, a phenomenon also noticed by some of my informants, I asked Alex’s opinion on how the Dominican government should respond to the situation. I additionally asked whether he thought the province should try to pursue different economic endeavours besides tourism. Alex emphatically shook his head and told me the problem was not tourism; the problem was that the Dominican government spent too much time and attention promoting resorts in Punta Cana, in the province of La Altagracia, rather than promoting those in Puerto Plata.

Alex: “Tourists are very important in the Dominican Republic. Dominicans love tourists. Here, it’s like, no tourists, no life. The problem is that there is no promotion of Puerto

Plata. The Dominican government loves to promote Punta Cana, so now Puerto Plata has no tourists. The government needs to promote Puerto Plata more.”

Sarah: “The *Dominican* government?”

Alex: “Sí, porque... Tourism is the job of the Dominican government, comprende?”

Sarah: “Okay, so the Dominican government is responsible for tourism in the entire country?”

Alex: “Sí, sí.”

Evidently, resort-based tourism is perceived as economically beneficial for not only international stakeholders, but the Dominican people as well. From a dependency theory perspective, my informants could not imagine their lives, or the future of the Dominican Republic, without resort-based tourism as a result of their economic dependence on core countries to provide them with tourists. Despite this dependence, however, resort workers have the opportunity to employ *strategic calculation* in their work in order to capitalize on the opportunities work in the resort industry provides them. Dominicans also use *strategic selectivity* in their decision to tap into the resort industry, which they believe to be their only solution from the declining quality of job opportunities available in Puerto Plata.

Section 2. The Instability of the Resort Industry in Puerto Plata and Justifications for Continued Employment in Resort Work

My informants acknowledged the instability of the resort industry as an inevitable attribute of tourism. Informants explained this instability as being a result of many things,

including increased crime in Puerto Plata, resort closures, unjustified resort firing practices and the inevitable “slow seasons” that result in low tourist presence and, consequently, mean less opportunity for workers to generate tips and an increase in the chance of being laid-off. Despite these instabilities, however, my informants continued to seek out work in the resort industry, and rationalized the instability of the industry because of their economic dependence on it. In spite of the agency my informants were able to exercise in their work, the instability of the resort industry rendered them helpless. However, in some cases, informants revealed that they prepared for these instabilities by “working hard during the busy season”, in order to “take [it] easy” during the slow season. Or, some welcomed and perceived these periods of instability as an opportunity to physically rejuvenate and recharge from the laborious and demanding nature of resort work. Despite the acknowledged instabilities of resort work, informants always justified their work as being better than not being employed by the industry at all.

i. Crime and the Decline of Resort Tourism in Puerto Plata

The inherent instability of the tourism industry is perceived to be a characteristic that will impede its longevity (Crick 1989:315; Adler and Adler 2004:99). However, it is the access to tourists the resort industry provides that encourages Dominicans to pursue this line of work, despite these instabilities. Deborah, an expatriate to the province, told me of the evolution of tourism in Puerto Plata that she had witnessed over this expansive period of time. I joined her for a beverage during her weekend routine to *el malécon* (the pier) where she visited her favourite beachfront bar. We sat on a modest deck where stray

dogs frequently walked up to us in search of food, and where two armed military men stood about 20 meters to our left. Here, she told me how tourism in Puerto Plata had changed for the worst. As we were talking, she directed my attention toward the military men and explained how the police force and military had amalgamated in order to crack down on the increase in crime and drug trafficking throughout the province, which intensified as a result of the global recession. She explained that Puerto Plata, as a result of its close proximity to Haiti and Mexico, now acted as a middleman for drugs passing through to the United States. Deborah noted that many Dominicans blame each other for the decline in tourist presence in the area, but in fact a key reason for this decreased presence is one that they cannot control: the global economy. Deborah emphasized that because of the increase in drug activity and crime, which have resulted in an increase in military presence, tourists no longer feel safe in Puerto Plata and have therefore begun taking vacations in newer areas of the Dominican, such as La Altagracia. She shared with me a recent conversation she had with her friend in Europe whom she told that there were now more BMWs and Mercedes in Puerto Plata than in Europe as a result of the increased drug trafficking in the province. Although I did not witness an increase in security presence or an increase in the visibility of *la policía turística* (the tourist police) during my observations at Hotel de Bachata—in comparison to my previous travels to the resort throughout the years—I did notice an increase in military and police presence in the Port of Puerto Plata.

ii. Resort Closures and Displaced Workers

Deborah also shared with me her sense of the increasing number of resort closures in the area, as well as the laying-off and firing of resort staff, in response to the low tourist numbers. Juan, who worked as a taxi driver and whom I first met upon my arrival in Puerto Plata in July, confided in me during one of our commutes together that he had worked for over 20 years as a bellboy at a resort in Puerto Plata.

Sarah: “Why did you leave your job as a bellboy?:

Juan: “Oh, I did not leave, no. I was fired. It’s normal here for everyone in the lobby [lobby staff] to be fired when management comes in. That happens a lot. When it’s the slow season a lot of people are fired then too.”

Having visited Hotel de Bachata twice that year, once in February—which is considered to be the high tourist season—and once in August—which is considered to be the low season—I witnessed this fluctuation in staff numbers to accommodate the low tourist presence. For instance, I noticed supervisors and managers of restaurants performing waiter duties, such as clearing, cleaning and setting tables more frequently than usual. I continued to ask Juan what happens to all of those displaced resort workers.

Sarah: “When workers are fired, or resorts shut down, where do they go?”

Juan: [shrugs] “They become prostitutes or they work as *motoconcho* drivers.

Motoconcho work is so dangerous too, you know? Very, very dangerous, but these workers have nothing else to do. Same with the prostitutes. A lot of them, they were working at resorts too, but then they get fired and have no where to go.”

A *motoconcho* is a scooter-like taxi, where one or two passengers ride on the back of the scooter, and the driver, wearing a registered yellow vest with a distinguishable

driver number on his back, will take his passengers wherever they want to go within the area, for a very minimal cost. In my travels throughout Puerto Plata, I would frequently see *motoconcho* drivers parked outside of the resort complexes in *la zona turística*, trying to attract the attention of adventurous tourists who dared venture outside of the resort complex. Juan continued to tell me that he would sometimes ask his female friends, who had resorted to prostitution to appeal to sex tourists, why they decided to work on the street.

Juan: “What they tell me never makes me happy. Never makes me feel good. They say they do not mind their work. How is that a good job? Who would want to marry a prostitute? They will be stuck in that job forever, and alone.”

Juan told me he enjoys his current job as a taxi driver because he can work with various resorts and pick up tourists for a good rate. Despite the instability of the resort industry, displaced resort workers acknowledged the lucrativeness of maintaining ties to tourism, essentially exercising *strategic selectivity* in their decision to remain within the tourism industry. Despite this, however, the dangers of engaging in prostitution and *motoconcho* work, and the frequency in which displaced resort workers did so, points to the instability of resort work and to the dependence of workers on the tourism industry.

In discussing with Alex the increasing number of resort closures in Puerto Plata, I asked him whether the displaced employees were compensated. He informed me that the Dominican government provided these workers with approximately US\$1,000 a month, which, he emphasized, was not enough to survive, especially for those who have families to support. Alex told me that Dominicans have a saying: “Do not give me the fish. Show me to the fish.” To explain this, he told me that a few years prior he had his own radio

segment in which he would discuss Dominican politics. During one of his shows, he inquired with listeners as to whether they preferred government handouts, or whether they preferred to generate their own income. He told me that every one of his callers preferred the latter. Alex explained their answers by comparing the Dominican Republic to Cuba:

Alex: “Dominicans want to be able to make their own money, not have the government tell them how much money they can have. That’s like Cuba. We are not like that here. In Cuba they are not free. In Cuba, everyone makes the same money, but no one is free.”

In other words, being given a predictable government assisted income restricts one’s freedom, and, although my informants were economically dependent on resort work and vulnerable to its instabilities, they perceived resort work as better than no work, meagre work, or a government-assisted income.

As a recognized guest at Hotel de Bachata, resort management and I were on a first name basis, and because of this they would sometimes walk with me around the grounds discussing the resort. It was brought to my attention by management that the resort would be closing down for a period of a month—during what would typically be considered the beginning of the busy tourist season—in order to make improvements to the aging infrastructure of the resort grounds. I was concerned about what would happen to the resort employees during this period of time, and so I asked a member of the management team how they deal with these kinds of situations. He told me that he had vacation time set aside for this period, so he would be getting paid. I inquired about this with one of my informants, Hector, a gardener at Hotel de Bachata, as I was interested to know how non-managerial resort staff are affected by mandatory resort closures.

Hector: “Yes, I know it [Hotel de Bachata] is closing.”

Sarah: “What are you going to do for that month?”

Hector: “Relax, yes? My job is not easy sometimes. It is very hot in the sun and we [gardeners] work all day in the heat, under the sun. Sometimes the sun is already very hot at seven in the morning!”

Sarah: “Will you be paid during the month you do not work?”

Hector: “No, I am not.”

As an observer, it was not difficult to sympathize with him. Wearing a hat, t-shirt, or sometimes a long-sleeved shirt, pants and what appeared to be rain boots, Hector would start his shift as early as 7am, grooming the trees and various plants, raking, and tending to the lawn. He described the overwhelming heat and the discomfort of performing such strenuous labour in the blazing sun, waving his arms to emphasize the intensity of its strength. Despite the economic instability of resort work, then, Hector perceived this four-week period of unemployment as a much needed opportunity for him to recharge.

iii. Instability Due to Arbitrary Firing Practices

In my conversations with Melvin about resort work, he shared with me his experience being fired from his position as a waiter of three years at Hotel de Bachata, and his recent employment as a driver for a construction company.

Melvin: “I was far, maybe... not in Puerto Plata. My boss, he called me on my phone and said, ‘We need you to work tonight.’ I told him, ‘No, I can’t. I am with my family. It is

my vacation.' I was too far to drive. So, the next time I work [makes a rapid slicing motion once across his neck]...no more. Comprende?"

Sarah: "So your manager fired you because you couldn't drive to work during your vacation?"

Melvin: "Sí."

Melvin was forced to find a new job, and found one as a driver for a construction company. I asked him whether this was a difficult job to find, and he assured me it was not, but that he wanted to find work again in the resort industry.

Sarah: "Why do you want to work at a resort again? They didn't treat you very well!"

Melvin: "Resorts is much better, comprende? Better money, and I can work more. More work is more better for me."

He also described to me that he was looking forward to the development of the new cruise ship terminal in the Bay of Maimón where he hoped to work as a waiter on board the Carnival Cruise Ships. Melvin believed that work aboard a cruise ship would provide him with even more economic opportunities than resort work. Despite the instability of resort work and having been fired from his job as a waiter at Hotel de Bachata, Melvin exercised *strategic selectivity* in acknowledging and weighing the pros and cons of various job opportunities in the tourism industry in Puerto Plata.

I met Maria, an *animación* employee, during my travels to Puerto Plata. She had been an employee of Hotel de Bachata for a few years when this research was conducted, and she confided in me about her experiences as an *animación* employee. She had been fired after working as *animación* staff for over six years at various resorts; however, she felt that being fired from her last position was not her fault, and that management will

always take the side of the tourists, even if the tourists are in the wrong. She explained that a group of rowdy tourists had been drinking, and in their intoxication had picked her up and dropped her by accident. She had severely injured her shoulder in the fall, and was not provided days off to heal, but was instead fired. Management justified the decision by arguing that she was roughhousing and playing around with tourists as opposed to working, but she explained to me that they just did not want to give her time off to recuperate. According to Maria, there was nothing she could do than accept the decision and try to find another job.

Maria was also one of my only informants who discussed gender, and the unpredictability of work relationships. During one of our conversations, Maria discussed her opportunity to perform a supervisory role for the *animación* team while her supervisor took some days off. She explained with much exasperation how her friends and fellow coworkers began to treat her differently once she had obtained the temporary supervisory position.

Maria: “My friends in *animación*, they wouldn’t talk to me anymore! I would walk by and they would whisper things. When my boss came back from his vacation I told him, I said, ‘I can’t do it. I can’t be the boss of my friends.’ And I cried to him! He told me I shouldn’t be crying if I want to be a boss one-day, and that I should not care about them. That doesn’t matter to me. I can’t be the boss of them.”

Maria described how *animación* workers are treated the worst by hotel management, yet work harder than any of the other hotel workers, are there from morning to night and have the most interaction with the guests. Maria explained the harsh realities of being a workingwoman in the Dominican Republic, and trying to work one’s way up

in the resort industry saying, “It is not worth it being treated by your friends that way...In the Dominican, the woman is always behind the man.” In describing her *strategic selectivity* in continuing to find employment in the resort industry, Maria was simultaneously describing resort work as emotionally unstable for women, especially in their attempts to advance within the resort structure. Despite her attempt at pursuing advancement, she was held back because of Dominican patriarchal perceptions of the division of labour. In spite of these setbacks, Maria continued to seek out employment in the resort industry because of the economic opportunities it provided her.

While discussing the instability of resort work, I asked Maria why I seemed to notice less *animación* staff in that month—August—than I had witnessed during my visit that same year in February:

Sarah: “Are there less *animación* working than earlier this year? It seems like there are less workers.”

Maria: “No...They all quit.”

Sarah: “They quit? Why?”

Maria: “Bad management. They did not like the management staff here. *Animación* workers really love their job, but they will leave and go somewhere else if they do not like management.”

Sarah: “Are you going to look for a new job?”

Maria: “I am already looking for a new job.”

Sarah: “As *animación*?”

Maria: (nods)

Maria emphasized that despite working the longest hours and working the closest with tourists, the *animación* team was underappreciated by management and that this was the root of the *animación* team's frustration. Despite the perceived lack of appreciation that management had for *animación* staff, as evidenced in their arbitrarily firing workers, my informants continued to seek out employment in the resort industry as a result of their economic dependence on it. The agency they were able to exercise in their line of work in order to socially and economically benefit also contributed to their desire to continuously seek out resort employment, despite not always being well treatment.

iv. Resort Work and Compensating for Losses During the Slow Tourist Season

The instability of resort work was not only evident in my informants' stories of the increasing crime in Puerto Plata and unappreciative resort management. Instability also seemed to exist in workers' ability to generate a reliable income. This especially pertained to workers whose work was more reliant on foreign currency in the form of tips from tourists. Gloria, a hired photographer for the resort, worked alongside three other photographers who earned their money by taking photographs of tourists by the poolside, the beach and other areas around the resort, and attempted to convince these tourists to buy their professional photos later that evening after they had been processed. These pictures were bordered with the resort name and decorated with various designs and motifs specific to the resort chain. Gloria explained to me how she would not get paid unless she sold the photographs she took. She described how the slow months were extremely difficult for her because there was no one to take photos of; however, during

the busy season, she described taking advantage of tourist presence by ensuring she accessed and photographed as many resort tourists as she could.

Luis similarly described tipping as one of the most important ways in which resort workers supplement their incomes. However, during the slow tourist season, and despite the increase in local elites frequenting resorts during this season, the ability for these workers to obtain tips was deemed more difficult, especially because locals never tip. Luis described the slow tourist season as being one of difficulty for him, even as an *animación* worker; a line of work that does not typically generate a significant amount of tips. He explained to me: “I did not like when it was slow. Rich Dominicanos would stay at the resort, and they never, never tip!” Similarly, Alex shared with me that he was in the process of having a house built, but that the progress of the house depended on the tourist season. He explained that during the peak season, typically from November to March or April, tourist presence is high, and therefore his access to foreign currency, or tips from tourists more generally, is more abundant. He explained that, during the construction of his new house, he has been residing with his sister rent-free in order to save enough money to put towards its construction. When I inquired as to how he deals with these ebbs in tourist numbers during the slow season, Alex said, “I am a very organized man and in the busy time I work hard. That’s why I can take [it] easy [during the slow months]”. It appears, then, that agency is exercised through *strategic calculation* during the busy seasons in order to supplement the losses experienced during the slow season. Ultimately, my informants adapted to the seasonality associated with the resort industry by working harder during the busy season in order to compensate for the losses they would incur during the slow season.

Analysis of the Instability of Resort Work in Puerto Plata

Informants explained to me that tourism in Puerto Plata was suffering especially because of the increased crime and drug trafficking in the area. Padilla (2005:368) additionally explains that, based on surveys investigating tourist preferences, Puerto Plata ranked the worst when in comparison to other resort destinations in the Dominican Republic, as a result of tourists feeling less safe in Puerto Plata. In discussing with informants the rate at which resorts in the area were closing, and the work that these displaced workers turned to as a result, the blame for the increased crime in Puerto Plata seems to be misplaced. Although not all displaced resort employees turn to illegal activities to generate an income, my observation of the numerous *motoconcho* drivers in Puerto Plata—sometimes in groups of four or five standing under a tree for shade, while their scooters sat parked on the roadside in front of them, waiting for business—is evidence of not only the limited job opportunities in Puerto Plata, but also of the number of displaced resort workers who turn to *motoconcho* work as a means to replace the resort work they once had. I am suggesting here that crime has not resulted in the instability of resort work. Rather, the instability of resort work, and the resulting displacement of thousands of workers, has resulted in crime. Similar to Deborah’s description of Dominicans blaming each other for the current state of the tourism industry in Puerto Plata, Alex described to me how tourists no longer felt safe in Puerto Plata because they would see local Dominicans physically fighting on the street in competition for tourist business and the potential to secure foreign exchange. My interviews also uncovered that

displaced workers sometimes engaged in illegal activities in order to compensate for the losses they incurred after having been laid off or fired from their resort industry jobs. The decrease in tourist presence in Puerto Plata has resulted in a blame game amongst Puerto Plata locals, and has contributed to the perception that tourism could still thrive if crime decreased, and promotion of the area was increased. Despite these setbacks, however, Dominicans continued to support the tourism industry in Puerto Plata. They stress its importance to strengthening the Dominican economy, and exercise *strategic selectivity* in weighing their economic options and deciding to continue to seek work in the tourism industry.

What struck me most about resort work was its unpredictability. In discussing Hotel de Bachata's renovation closure with management, and how the resort staff would not be compensated, I identified instability as a significant characteristic of the resort industry. Similarly, what I would call "spontaneous" or unjustified firing is another attribute of the instability associated with resort work. As described by Maria and Melvin in their experiences of losing their jobs, resort work is a job in which one can be replaced instantaneously. I would like to suggest that this rate of turnover is a result of the poor employment opportunities in the Dominican Republic, apart from the resort industry, as workers can be replaced just as easily as they were hired for these low-skill resort positions. This results in the instability of resort work and a lack of job security.

The unpredictability of work relationships, as exemplified by Maria's experience with gender inequality and her friends' refusal to respect her as a superior, was another aspect of the instability experienced by my informants. This instability also includes Melvin's experience being fired because he was unable to make it into work during his

time off. In Melvin's case, his friend, who worked as a restaurant manager at the resort, had assisted him in securing a position there, and was also the same manager who fired him. This demonstrates not only resort workers' vulnerability to the economic instability of the resort industry, but the unpredictability of their work relationships, as well, which can contribute to their inability to advance or maintain work at a resort. Despite these instabilities, however, informants perceived work in the resort industry as nevertheless preferable over other jobs available to them external to the industry. In spite of their vulnerability to the instability of resort work, my informants exercised *strategic selectivity* in their decision to remain within the resort industry as they acknowledged the benefits of the *strategic calculations* they were able to exercise in their positions.

Due to the inherent nature of resort tourism to ebb and flow with the seasons, resort work, especially tip-generating positions, are especially vulnerable to these fluctuations. As a result, and because of the characteristic lower wages of these positions, those employed in positions such as wait staff and tour guides, or those in positions of commission, such as on-site resort photographers, are most vulnerable to the economic instability of resort work. Melvin's experience of being fired for not having been able to commute on a whim to the resort where he worked, even though he was on vacation, as well as Alex's explanation of never knowing when he might be called into work by his tour agency, provides an explanation as to why resort employees do not, or rather cannot, find supplementary work during the slow season. Exercising *strategic calculation*, my informants endured the ebbs in the tourist season by compensating for these losses through the tips they could generate during the high season, or by capitalizing on the saturation of tourist presence during these busy periods. For those who had been fired,

strategic selectivity was employed, essentially weighing the pros and cons of being employed by the resort industry and of not. In doing so, they concluded that the instability of the resort industry was tolerable because of the economic benefits it provided them. This also points to my informants' economic dependence on the tourism industry.

According to regulation theory, production and consumption systems, such as the tourism industry, require consistent modification in order to accommodate current demands and expectations. This assists in explaining the recent success of La Altagracia: a much newer, more luxurious, and "safer" province of the Dominican Republic for tourists to travel to (Padilla 2005:368). This may also assist in explaining Hotel de Bachata's closure in order to invest in a month's worth of renovations and upgrades. In attempting to accommodate changing tourist preferences and demands, the resort industry is inherently unstable, not only because of the ebb and flow in tourist presence, but because of such occurrences as the closure of resorts for construction in order to accommodate tourists' faddish tastes. While regulation theory points to the importance of the reinvention of production and consumption systems, such as the resort industry, what it fails to identify and acknowledge are the ebbs and flows of these systems, which also result in instability in the lives of those they employ. Despite the instability of resort work, however, the conceptual framework of regulation theory assists in explaining how my informants rationalized the instability of their work, and the recent decline in tourist presence in Puerto Plata. They frequently explained that tourism was economically beneficial for the Dominican Republic, and that the problem was not tourism, but rather

that the Dominican government needed to invest more in the province's tourism industry in order for the area to reinvent itself as a popular resort destination.

While it became clear through discussions with my informants that they were able to exercise *strategic calculation* in their work as a result of their access to tourists, I also noticed their inability to exercise this agency, beyond *strategic selectivity*, during the slow seasons when tourists were less present. While the resort industry provides workers with an enclave of tourists from whom they can potentially benefit during the busy season, it simultaneously acts as a bubble in which they are trapped during the slow seasons, as they frequently recounted to me their inability to find other work during the slow seasons, because of the potential to be called into work on their boss' whim, because of their demanding work schedules, or because of the inadequate jobs available to them in the area (ILO 2013:6). Informing this analysis within a dependency theory framework, it is evident that as a result of the inherent instability of the tourism industry, the core-periphery dynamic between the Dominican Republic and core countries is exacerbated when there are fluctuations in the international economy. Although my informants were able to exercise *strategic calculation* in their work in the resort industry, their strategically selective decision to work in the resort industry at times inhibited their ability to extract opportunities from their positions, due to the industry's instability. The *strategic selectivity* my informants exercised, however, was always justified, despite their inability at times to exercise *strategic calculation*. This not only points to instability of resort work, but also to my informants' dependence on such work.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The resort industry in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic was once a thriving industry to which tourists flocked during the high season. As a result of factors such as the increase in competition between the province and neighbouring areas, the increase in local crime, fluxes in the global economy and aging infrastructure, tourism in the province of Puerto Plata has visibly decreased. The themes that emerged from the interviews and conversations that took place during this study point to both beneficial and unfavorable aspects of resort work. Despite the overwhelmingly disadvantageous characteristics of the resort industry, resort workers interviewed talked about not only their interest in remaining in the resort industry, but also about the importance of tourism for the overall economic success of the country. In recognizing the socio-economic opportunities that the resort industry could provide them, my informants exercised agency in their work in order to generate more of a personal profit. Using Jessop's (1990, 2008) theoretical framework of structure and agency to inform the analysis of this research, it was evident that my informants exercised both *strategic calculation* and *strategic selectivity* in their work, founding their decisions based on personal experience and desired outcomes.

The decline in adequate job opportunities in Puerto Plata contributed to the attractiveness of resort work for my informants. They employed *strategic selectivity* in their decision to find work in the resort industry, in order to escape the low pay and intensive labour characteristic of work external to the industry, and, if they were Haitian, the racial discrimination they sometimes faced by Dominican business owners. These characteristics of work available in Puerto Plata made resort work all the more appealing

to my informants, and further increased their dependence on the resort industry because of their perception of a lack of other viable job opportunities. Despite the attractiveness of resort work in comparison to other jobs available in Puerto Plata, low tourist numbers in the province as a result of increased crime, inter-provincial competition, seasonality and global economic fluctuations have created an unstable work environment for resort workers. As highlighted by dependency theory frameworks, the tourism industry in the province of Puerto Plata is reliant on global dynamics to supply the province, or the Dominican Republic more broadly, with a flow of international tourists. The success of the tourism industry in Puerto Plata is dependent on core countries exploiting the resources of the periphery, resulting in the periphery remaining in a state of underdevelopment and dependency. As Britton describes, tourism development is the “opposite of self-reliant development” (1978:207), and, thus, Puerto Plata continues to remain dependent on core countries for economic growth.

In spite of this dependence, and the inherent instability of the tourism industry, informants could not describe their lives, or the future of the Dominican Republic, without the resort industry, or tourism more generally. Regulation theory can be used in explaining why my informants rationalized their commitment to an unstable industry, and why they felt tourism could be restored in Puerto Plata. This framework understands production and consumption systems, such as the resort industry, as requiring constant readjustments and modifications in order to accommodate current demands. Despite the instability of the resort industry—my informants had to endure low tourist presence during the slow seasons and therefore had less opportunity to exercise *strategic calculation*—they continued to perceive tourism as imperative to the Dominican

Republic's economic growth. They understood the low tourist presence in the province as not being a result of the inherent instability of the tourism industry, but rather as a result of a lack of rejuvenation and renewal initiatives by the Dominican government, which they argued have resulted in the province's stagnation in terms of tourist visits.

The instability of the tourism industry, however, should not be understood as an insurmountable obstacle for resort workers, as my informants found ways to exercise *strategic calculation* in order to extract benefits from their work, and compensate for these instabilities. Resort work provided my informants with opportunities to interact with tourists, who alternatively provided them with benefits that work in the local community did not. Access to foreign exchange through generated tips, the ability to learn various languages in conversing with tourists on a daily basis, and the potential to establish friendships or romantic relationships with tourists were cited as some of the benefits of working in the resort industry. With regards to the latter, Filby suggests that the sexualization of resort workers should not be interpreted as a form of oppression, but rather as "the potential for creativity, where sexuality is used for a worker's own gain" (1992:30). This access to tourists, and the opportunities associated with these close interactions, seemed to offset the inherent instability of resort work, as my informants continued to find work in the tourism industry despite being affected by the instability that characterized this work. In addition, despite the arbitrary grounds upon which a resort employee could be fired, informants continued to seek out employment in the resort industry because of the opportunities they could acquire from their work. Using *strategic selectivity* my informants strategically pursued resort work, despite its inherent instabilities, because they perceived the resort industry as providing them with more

opportunities than work elsewhere in Puerto Plata. This suggests that oppression should not be perceived as overcoming agency (Ebron 2002:188), as my informants managed to exercise *strategic calculation* within the resort structure, which attempted to render them submissive and compliant.

Ultimately, this research suggests that the poor economic opportunities in Puerto Plata are partly responsible for resort workers' dependence on the resort industry and the increased value in which resort workers attributed to their work, despite its inherent instability. Because of the opportunities that resort work provides workers with respect to the socio-economic benefits they can secure from tourists, issues of instability and dependence were deemed insignificant by informants and rationalized as a result of the *strategic calculation* they could exercise in their work, which compensated for these disadvantages. The conceptual framework of *strategic calculation* and *strategic selectivity*, however, proved inadequate at times in analyzing my informants' behaviour. For instance, occasionally neither concept was independently sufficient in explaining my informants' decisions. Combining components of these two concepts, however, contributed to a better understanding of the agency my informants exercised as opposed to understanding these concepts as mutually exclusive. Similarly, *strategic selectivity* proved inadequate in explaining the decisions my informants made, as this concept assumes that all choices are—although not necessarily equal—viable options. My research points to the “choices” my informants made as not being “choices” at all, such as my informants' decision to work in the resort industry in order to avoid the racial discrimination typically exercised in the workplace in Puerto Plata. This does not eliminate their ability to exercise *strategic calculation* within their line of work, however,

but highlights the limitations attached to their *strategic selectivity* and the importance of not presupposing that all choices are equally feasible.

The results of this research draw attention to the agency exercised by resort workers in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic through their employment of *strategic calculation* and *strategic selectivity*. While tourism studies in the Dominican Republic have focused on the agency of those excluded from the formal tourism industry (Gregory 2007; Padilla 2007), and resort workers' performances of love with tourists in the hopes of obtaining visas to leave the country (Brennan 2004), what is absent from resort tourism literature is an acknowledgement of the agency exercised by resort workers that focuses on the socio-economic opportunities they extract from their work in order to improve their lives in the Dominican Republic. Although my study briefly discusses resort workers' desire to leave the country, I have also indicated in this thesis that life abroad for Dominicans is not always successful as some will return to the resort industry in order to continue to take advantage of the opportunities this line of work provides them, and will continue to live in the Dominican Republic.

Despite resort workers' economic dependence on their work, they nevertheless exercise *strategic selectivity* in their decision to pursue work in the resort industry. Based on the socio-economic context in the Dominican Republic, and their desire to achieve a particular outcome, my informants conclude that work in the resort industry is preferred over the other employment opportunities available to them. These conclusions also influenced their decision to remain in the resort industry. This thesis also acknowledges the *strategic calculation* resort workers exercise in order to overcome the instabilities

inherent of the resort industry, and to take advantage of the opportunities their access to tourists provides them.

This research also points to the importance of follow-up studies. Although Puerto Plata is one of the oldest tourist destinations in the Dominican Republic, the resort industry on which it depends has not grown substantially since its initial development, but has stagnated over time. Puerto Plata's loss of tourists to newer and "safer" La Altagracia highlights the importance of examining social and economic changes that influence fluctuations in the tourism industry, and how these changes are perceived and ultimately managed by tourism employees.

This study contributes to Public Issues Anthropology by drawing attention to tourism as an international phenomenon, and the ways in which tourist presence affects the host communities that they come into contact with, and how hosts alternatively try to capitalize on tourist presence. In analyzing the significance of resort work to the livelihoods of resort workers, this research also attempts to draw attention to how tourists can try to be more responsible, educated, and aware in their travels in order to be mindful of social and cultural contexts. In understanding the significance of their presence in tourism-dependent areas, tourists can assist resort workers in their attempts to generate more of a personal profit from their work. For instance, tipping—a practice typically overlooked as a result of the all-inclusiveness of resorts in tourist destinations such as Puerto Plata—provides resort workers with the opportunity to generate foreign exchange, and additional income. In addition, tourists can engage resort workers in conversation, regardless of language barriers, in order to assist workers in their attempts to acquire

foreign language skills, as these skills can translate into opportunities for workers to advance in the resort industry, or to other areas of the tourism industry.

Limitations of Research

Although an attempt was made in conducting this research to obtain interviews with both men and women resort workers, access to women workers proved to be more difficult. First, it appeared as though there were less women employees at Hotel de Bachata than I had typically witnessed in my previous travels to Puerto Plata. Wait staff and bartenders were typically men, and only two members of the *animación* team were women. Although this imbalance was described to me as an anomaly, as typically there is an even distribution of men and women working at a resort complex, my distribution of men and women interviewees is not representative as a result. In addition, women employees that I managed to befriend during the observation period of fieldwork, when contacted later, declined my invitation to participate in this study. In casual conversations with these women, they frequently shared stories with me of either their enrollment in school or having a young child at home. Whether these are the reasons as to why these women declined participation in this research is unclear.

In contrast to my difficulty locating women informants, I had an easier time finding men participants for this study. I acknowledge that the data collected, as a result, may be skewed, as these men may have been attempting to employ the same strategies with me as they use on women tourists, in order to economically, or socially, benefit. Despite this, the data collected are supported by current literature, and should therefore

not be discounted. Nevertheless, the findings are more representative of men's perspectives than of women's.

In addition, interviews with some participants proved difficult, as they were not as fluent in English as I had expected upon entering the field. This research uncovered resort workers' lack of formal language training, as they are self-taught, and the ways in which they use their access to tourists to improve upon these skills. As a result, some of the interviews conducted were not as in-depth as they could have been, had I had better knowledge of Spanish. In these situations, participants would at times write down their answers for me to translate. In such cases, I did not gain as much insight into the individual's life-story.

My positionality as both a recognized tourist at Hotel de Bachata and as a researcher may be perceived as encouraging inauthentic responses from my informants in their attempts to continue to exercise *strategic calculation* in my presence. My position, however, should instead be understood as a unique one in that I had the perspective of both an "insider"—having become familiar with the dynamics of resort work, including worker-tourist interactions, as a tourist—and a researcher—studying Dominican tourism literature as a student and having only spent pockets of time in Puerto Plata over the years. In comparison to anthropological methodologies of the past whereby "the exotic other" was of interest (e.g. Malinowski 1921), and in comparison to the shift in anthropological focus today to studying ourselves (e.g. Urban and Koh 2013), my research is positioned in an area in between. I investigated an environment of which I was familiar, yet simultaneously an outsider. In order to affirm my position as researcher, I ensured that potential participants were aware that the sole purpose of my presence at

Hotel de Bachata, and Puerto Plata more generally, was to conduct research. In addition, my month-long stay in Puerto Plata—in an apartment away from *la zona turística*—proved beneficial in building stronger relationships with my informants, as I noticed that, the longer I knew them and the more time we spent together, they would divulge aspects of their work they deemed bothersome and frustrating. I also ensured that my interview questions were open-ended in order to encourage meaningful dialogue. These interviews confirmed the observations I made at Hotel de Bachata, which established my confidence in the genuineness of my informants' responses.

Potential for Future Research

As described by my informants, life in Puerto Plata cannot be imagined without the tourism industry. Conversations surrounding job discontent were always concluded with solutions such as working at different resorts, changing positions or looking for work in another area of the tourism industry. As Alex described, the problem with Puerto Plata's declining tourist numbers is not the result of a failing tourism industry, but rather the ways in which Puerto Plata is promoted by the government. Similarly, Melvin, in having been recently fired from Hotel de Bachata, described to me that he hoped to obtain a position on a cruise ship, as a new Carnival Cruise Ship port was being constructed in the nearby Bay of Maimón. As the resort industry in Puerto Plata continues to decline, the ways in which resort workers respond to these changes, and the ways in which those excluded from the resort industry try to capitalize on these developments, should be analyzed. Should the cruise ship industry not provide locals

with the benefits that they were promised by the Dominican government, how will this affect their perception of the industry as a whole? As Burman (2010:46) notes, protests have been documented in areas where tourism has failed the local community, especially in situations where governments have promised tourism as a tool for development.

Similarly to resort hierarchical structures that limit the advancement of resort workers, and the tendency of resort enclaves to insulate profits that prevent the local population from benefiting, the ways in which actors managing the cruise ship industry, or tourism in Puerto Plata more generally, restrict the ability of the local population to profit should be of interest for future research.

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APPENDIX 1: Verbal Consent Script in English

My name is Sarah, and I am an Anthropology Master's student at the University of Guelph in Canada. I am in the Dominican Republic this summer doing research for my Master's project. I am researching the (socio-economic) opportunities tourism has provided resort workers, and how workers benefit from tourism.

I am looking for any resort workers who would like to discuss with me the opportunities their work in the tourism industry has provided them. Participants in this project will be asked questions about the benefits of their work in the tourism industry. This includes, but is not limited to, wages, the establishment of friendships, networking and working conditions. In addition, of interest to this research is whether and how resort workers employ strategies in order to further benefit from the tourism industry.

If you would like to participate in my project, it is completely voluntary. You can request to withdraw from my project at any time, and any information you have already provided me will not be used for my final project. You are also free to not answer any question you would prefer not to answer.

The information that is provided will be used towards my Master's thesis, and my findings might be published. At no time will your name or any other identifying information about you be used in my research. Your personal information will remain confidential. Precautions will be taken in order to ensure the confidentiality of the information you share. However, because this research is not anonymous, information you share may be identifiable.

This research is intended to give tourism employees an opportunity to identify the positive aspects of tourism in the Dominican Republic, especially since the majority of the literature covering tourism in the Caribbean perceives tourism negatively.

If you agree, I would like to conduct an interview. This interview will be audio-recorded. If you prefer I do not use a voice recorder, or if the location of the interview is too noisy, I will take notes of your responses instead.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Office of Research at the University of Guelph.

If you have any questions, you may contact me at yusufs@uoguelph.ca. Or, if you prefer, I can give you the contact information of my supervisor.

Thank you,
Sarah Yusuf

Verbal Consent Script in Spanish

Mi nombre es Sarah y soy una estudiante del programa Master en Antropología en la Universidad de Guelph en Canadá. Estoy viviendo en la Republica Dominicana este verano haciendo el recurso por mi proyecto de Master. Estoy investigando las oportunidades socio-económicas que el turismo ha proporcionado los trabajadores de los centros turísticos, y como los trabajadores benefician del turismo.

Estoy buscando trabajadores de los centros turísticos quienes les gustaría discutir conmigo las oportunidades que su trabajo en la industria turística les ha proporcionado. Los participantes en este proyecto estarán preguntados sobre los beneficios de su trabajo, en la industria turística y las estrategias usadas por ellos para beneficiar a los más de la industria turística.

Si le gustaría participar en mi proyecto, es completamente voluntaria. Se puede dejar de participar del proyecto a cualquier momento y cualquier información me ha dado no la usare por el proyecto final.

La información que es proporcionado estará usado hacia mi tesis y mis resultados pueden ser publicados. Su nombre o otra información personal no se utilizará en mi investigación. Su información personal quedará confidencial.

Me gustaría tener una conversación con usted. Si usted le gustaría participar, yo escribiré notas de sus respuestas.

Este proyecto se ha revisado y aprobado por la oficina de investigación en la Universidad de Guelph.

Si usted tiene preguntas o preocupaciones por favor comuníquese con migo al numero o mi correo electrónico es yusufs@uoguelph.ca. O si prefiere, yo puedo darle la información de contacte por mi supervisora.

Graçias,

Sarah Yusuf

APPENDIX 2: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

1. Can you tell me about your experiences working in a resort (the positives and negatives)?
2. Do you think tourism is good for the Dominican Republic?
 - a. How about for Puerto Plata? Why?
3. Do resorts bring money to the community? How?
 - a. Does resort work help people's families? How?
4. What is the greatest part about your job?
 - a. Why?
5. How long have you been working at this resort (or resorts in general)?
 - a. Why have you stayed for this long?
6. Why did you decide to work in a resort?
7. Have you ever worked in tourism outside of a resort (vending)?
 - a. Is resort work better or worse? Why?
8. How is resort work different from other work in the Dominican Republic?
9. What kinds of things do you do at work to make more money?
 - a. Are these opportunities available in other work in the Dominican?
10. Do you think tourists will always come to Puerto Plata? Why?
 - a. How will this be beneficial to Dominicans?