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Women's human agency and self-determination in Guatemalan tourism development

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Abstract: Tourism is often identified as a strategy to ameliorate the wellbeing of poor communities and their most vulnerable members – women and their children. Women's ability to get involved in and benefit from tourism is, however, conditioned by traditional gender roles and consequent education handicaps. Development programs often target women to mitigate these disparities. This paper examines whether an intervention by the Peace Corps resulted in improved human agency and self-determination among indigenous Q'eqchi' women in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala. The paper reports the accomplishments and shortcomings of the intervention and elaborates on the practical and theoretical implications of the findings.

Keywords: Tourism development; Agency; Gender analysis; Guatemala; Peace Corps.

Resumen: El turismo es a menudo identificado como una estrategia para mejorar el bienestar de las comunidades y sus miembros más vulnerables - las mujeres y sus hijos. La capacidad de las mujeres para participar y beneficiarse del turismo está condicionada por los tradicionales roles de género y consiguientes desventajas educacionales. Los programas de desarrollo a menudo intentan mitigar estas disparidades. Este artículo examina la intervención de los Cuerpos de Paz como resultado de la mejora en el desarrollo humano y la autodeterminación de las mujeres indígenas Q'eqchi, en Alta Verapaz, Guatemala. El artículo trata los logros y deficiencias de esta intervención así como sus implicaciones prácticas y teóricas.

Palabras clave: Desarrollo turístico; Agencia; Perspectiva de género; Guatemala; Cuerpo de Paz.

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Introduction

Tourism has long been considered an effective tool for poverty alleviation and debt relief for developing countries (Enloe, 2000; Kinnaird, et al., 1994). The UN World Tourism Organization, for example, deliberately links tourism development to poverty relief (Blake, et al., 2007). With any tourism development, however, scholars agree that gender dynamics have to be considered (Kinnaird, et al., 1994; Swain, 1995; Wilkinson & Pratiwi, 1995). Gender dynamics impact how women are able to participate in the tourism industry (Garcia-Ramon, et al., 1995; Swain, 1995; Wilkinson & Pratiwi, 1995). Therefore, while women (and their children) are usually the segment of society that suffers the most from poverty, they generally play a limited formal role in their communities' involvement in tourism development and they retain few benefits from this industry (Ringer, 2007).

Gender dynamics affect tourism marketing, motivations for travel, and host responses and actions (Swain, 1995). In economically developing countries, gender roles tend to be more traditional. Wilkinson and Pratiwi (1995) reported that "...female and male roles are neither equal nor fixed; they differ from place to place and this spatial variation is most marked in developing countries" (p. 286). In western Jamaica, women often receive money to establish guesthouses for tourists because it is viewed as an extension of their role as caretaker, housekeeper, and mother (Momsen, 1994). In lesser developed rural areas of Spain, women were reported to experience easy transitions when extending their domestic roles of caring for their families, to caring for guests in their rural bed and breakfast establishments (Garcia-Ramon, et al., 1995). With women's added involvement in tourism, Garcia-Ramon, et al. (1995) note that women's greater business responsibilities can lead to increased leadership roles in the community. Wilkinson and Pratiwi (1995), however caution that this greater responsibility can lead to a greater burden on women because outside work only adds to their duties of childcare, housekeeping and food production.

Gibson (2001) provides additional cautionary comments regarding women's involvement in tourism business noting that women in tourism-related domestic roles perpetuate male-dominated social norms instead of trying to promote gender equality. Women tend to occupy low-skilled, low-paying service jobs in tourism that involve cleaning, cooking and serving because tho-

se are the ones society claims they naturally can do (Enloe, 2000; Gibson, 2001). These occupations require little training or education, they are unstable and often marginally legal, and consequently yield limited merit (Enloe, 2000; Gibson, 2001).

This leads to another marked difference found between women and men in developing countries that are trying to embrace tourism, the amount of education they receive. In examining tourism development in Nepal, Lama discusses how girls are not sent to school because of the lack of family funds and because they are needed at home to care for younger siblings and to help with chores (2000). Consequently women tend to become involved in the informal sector of tourism, because those jobs do not require much education or training (Wilkinson & Pratiwi, 1995).

Several authors have noted however, that community involvement in tourism may lead to changes in traditional gender roles. Nyaupane, Morais and Dowler (2006) found that, in China's Yunnan Province, income earned from tourism trade helped women gain financial independence from men. In addition, their interactions with tourists led them to feel that they should be more equal to men (Nyaupane, et al., 2006). Likewise, Lama (2000) reported that in Nepal's Langtang Ecotourism Project (LEP), women gained new skills, confidence and increased empowerment through involvement in community-based tourism. Moreover, their status within the community increased because their women's skills were valued as assets to the local tourism industry.

Much of the tourism literature provides a critical examination of the role of women in the tourist industry and tourism development. If tourism is a tool of poverty alleviation, then a conceptual framework using development theory might be considered. Gibson (2001) remarked that early work with gender and tourism was largely guided by a development framework with a liberal-feminist perspective which does not recognize that women's contribution to the public sphere is invisible much of the time and that class distinctions may condition women's involvement in tourism (Gibson, 2001). Swain (1993) commented that modernization theory and underdevelopment theory which comment on the adoption of Western ideas and technology and global capitalism are not necessarily useful conceptual frameworks to analyze gender issues in tourism. Thus, in this paper we explored the concept of human agency, in-

roduced into development theory by Nobel Prize winning economist Amartya Sen, to examine gender dynamics in tourism development in Guatemala.

Conceptual Background: Human Agency and Self-Determination

Human agency is the concept that people (when given the opportunity) are actively involved in shaping the outcome of their lives and not just recipients of what development programs hand out (Sen, 1999). Sen further explains “agency” as “...seeing people as agents rather than as patients” (1999, p. 137). Empowerment is crucial in development work because it can increase the opportunities that people have to take action in their lives. Empowerment is defined as “...the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives” (World Bank, 2002, p. 11). The notion of empowerment makes a considerable conceptual contribution to understanding agency.

Sen (1999) noted that the predominant development perspective focuses on increasing economic expansion and looks at communities as “human capital”. He argues that development experts should instead focus on fostering “human capability”: “the ability-the substantive freedom-of people to lead the lives they have reason to value and to enhance the real choices they have” (Sen, 1999, p. 293). This position is supported by numerous development experts and scholars, such as Polak (2008) who argues that people are the ones who should have the power to change their situation. More specifically, Polak stipulates that greater income generation is the critical factor in getting people out of poverty because income will direct individuals to engage in a virtuous cycle toward improved living conditions (e.g., better nutrition, education, and health care) and, consequently, to increase empowerment and agency (Polak, 2008). Nevertheless, scholars have noted that income alone cannot ensure wellbeing. For example, Sen (1999) reported that in the United States, African Americans earn more income but have lower life expectancies than many people in developing regions. Sen holds that while economic prosperity can lead to increased availability of desirable options, factors like education, access to quality health care and political voice are also critical in shaping individuals’ wellbeing. For people to become active agents in improving and bettering their lives, they must live in a society that allows them to do so (Sen, 1999). If

individuals do not have access to quality education, healthcare, political voice, and human rights (for women especially), their ability to shape their lives is compromised (Sen, 1999). Polak (2008) contends that increased income will lead to better nutrition, education, political influence and healthcare.

Self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) follows along the lines of Sen’s insistence of creating environments in which people can thrive. Self-determination theory maintains that people have three psychological needs that have to be fulfilled to achieve their potential of curiosity, self-motivation and growth: competence, autonomy and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). If one of these needs is not fulfilled or obtainable in their social environment, individuals will lose motivation and will become uninterested in activities or jobs (Ryan & Deci, 2000). All of these have to be present for people to internalize their actions and accept them as part of their beliefs and values (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Competence, or even perceived competence, can influence people’s choices (Bandura, 1986). If individuals feel capable of doing something, they will do it; conversely if they do not feel capable of doing something, they will not do it and will fail to benefit from enriching environments and experiences, and will prevent themselves from realizing their full potential (Bandura, 1986).

Sen (1999) discusses four factors that positively contribute to increasing women’s voice and agency: “...women’s earning power, economic role outside the family, literacy and education, [and] property rights...” (Sen, 1999, p. 191). As Figure 1 illustrates, gender dynamics in a society strongly influence these four factors. Many development initiatives attempt to increase women’s earning power, economic role outside the family, education and property rights. As Sen (1999) noted, once these improve, women experience greater independence and become empowered. Empowered women experience greater agency and, as a result, they tend to engage in behaviors that help to improve their lives and the lives of their families.

When women are empowered through greater access to financial resources, they tend to use it to better their families and communities (Kevane & Wydick, 2001; Lama, 2000). Lama (2000), for example, stated that in Nepal, in comparison with men, “women tend to be more careful and responsible about managing money, using it for family needs rather than personal use” (p. 236). According to Lama’s (2000) study, women used money earned from tou-

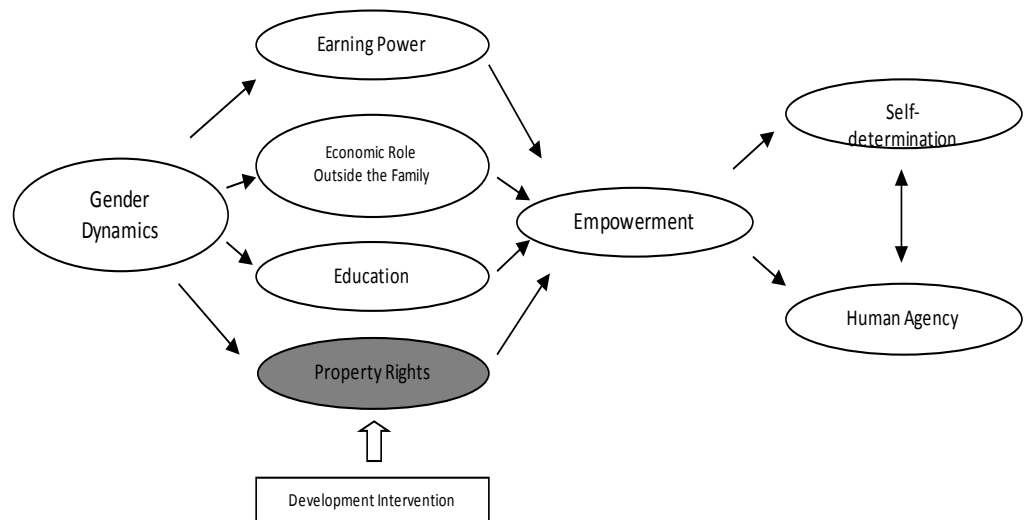


Figure 1. Gendered model of self-determination and agency.

ristic performances and trash clean-up to renovate the village monastery. In Bangladesh, credit provided to women had a significant effect on girls' and boy's schooling, men's and women's labor supply, and women's non-land assets (Pitt & Khandker, 1998). Interestingly, by comparing data from Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Swaziland, and Guinea-Bissau, Blumberg (2001) found that women with increased income were more concerned with their children's welfare, health, education and food than men. Further, women in microenterprises were also found to be more reliable in loan repayments than men (Blumberg, 2001; Kevane & Wydick, 2001). As shown by these cases, women's agency and involvement can have a powerful effect on communities no matter what the development initiative might be.

Tourism scholars agree that gender dynamics must be considered when examining tourism development. Women often hold low-level jobs in tourism due to their limited education and due to traditional gender roles that relegate women to care for their family (Enloe, 2000; Kinnaird, et al., 1994; Lama, 2000; Wilkinson & Pratiwi, 1995). Tourism has been found to reinforce gender roles and gender disparities but it also can foster gender equity (Garcia-Ramon, et al., 1995; Gibson, 2001; Nyaupane, et al., 2006). In development practice there seems to be agreement that the most effective interventions should emphasize empowerment of the most vulnerable segments of impoverished communities (Blumberg, 2001; Kevane & Wydick,

2001; Pitt & Khandker, 1998; Polak, 2008; Sen, 1999), because increased levels of autonomy, competence and relatedness can create the level of self-determination agency people need to become active agents in their rise from poverty (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to examine how gender dynamics can influence the level of agency and self-determination of women involved in tourism development projects in Guatemala. The study was conducted in Lanquin, a small mountain town in central Guatemala. The development agency working in the community was the Peace Corps. The first author was a Peace Corps volunteer assigned to the site for 2 years. The historical background of the study area and of the Peace Corps organization is provided to increase understanding of the context of the study and associated findings. Therefore, following are descriptions of each.

Indigenous Identities and Poverty in Guatemala

In 1524 the Spanish conquest began in Guatemala, an effort characterized by heavy resistance and fighting from the indigenous Maya groups (Lovell, 1988). Before the arrival of the Spanish, much of the Mayan empire was divided into different groups that claimed dominance over various land areas in the region (Lovell, 1988). Therefore, the Spanish were required to defeat multiple groups of indigenous people to control Guatemala (Lovell,

1988). Many of those groups still survive today as part of Guatemala's 23 different indigenous groups (Lovell, 1988; Segesvary, 1984). As of 1992, 60% of the population was considered indigenous, according to a report by the National Commission on the Environment (Linares & Estrada, 2002; Lovell, 1988). In Alta Verapaz, the province encompassing the study site, colonial control was ultimately not established through fighting but through missionaries led by Fray (Friar) Bartolome de las Casas (King, 1952).

The Spanish ruling elite and later the minority ladino (Guatemalans of Spanish and indigenous descent) elite dominated upper class society and exploited the indigenous population's land and labor (Le Bot, 1995; Lovell, 1988). The Spanish exercised considerable control over the indigenous population through the organization of towns and villages that used churches as their focal points (Lovell, 1988). Families were coerced out of their mountain homes and into these new valley communities (Lovell, 1988). Disease, which drastically reduced Maya numbers, also assisted the Spanish in gaining control over the Maya population (Lovell, 1988 #180).

Central American independence from Spain was proclaimed on September 15, 1821, but it was not until 1847 that Guatemala declared its independence as a nation in Central America (Martino, 1963). Beginning in 1945, democratically elected presidents Arevalo and Arbenz began reforms (formation of cooperatives, land redistribution and improved social welfare services) that would bring relief to the indigenous population (Schlesinger & Kinzer, 1982; Segesvary, 1984).

Beginning in the 1930s, an indigenous movement for freedom and modernization began engendering economic, political and cultural reforms, changing the way communities were organized (Le Bot, 1995). However, due to interests of the United Fruit Company (based in the U.S.), the Guatemalan government was overthrown by the CIA in 1954 and military rule and internal conflict dominated the country for the next 36 years (Schlesinger & Kinzer, 1982; Segesvary, 1984). The military forcibly organized some villagers into civil defense patrols to guard the countryside where many of the guerrilla forces were based (Guatemala Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH), 1999). From 1962, the Commission for Historical Clarification (1999) found that 83% of the victims of the conflict (believed to be 200,000 according to various reports) belonged to the

23 indigenous groups. The conflict "ended" with the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996 (Guatemala Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH), 1999).

Currently, Guatemala is one of the poorest countries in Central America. As of 2005, it had a human development index of .689 and was ranked 118 worldwide in a United Nations Development Programme (undl) report. According to the UNDP (undl), in 2004 the country had a human poverty index of 22.5, ranking it 55 in a list of 108 developing countries. Guatemala's Gender-Development Index is .675 and when compared to the human development index, 126 countries have a better ratio than Guatemala; revealing that in addition to being poor, Guatemala has tremendous gender inequality manifested in women's lack of access to basic life necessities (UNDP). Moreover, the "...index of gender empowerment...is (0.46), the lowest in Central America, which is an indication of the condition of disadvantage faced by Guatemalan women" (Linares & Estrada, 2002, p. 6).

The Peace Corps

The Peace Corps is an independent government organization within the executive branch of the government which was started by John F. Kennedy in 1960 (Peace Corps, 2008). The goals of the organization are: "1) Helping the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women. 2) Helping promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served. 3) Helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans" (Peace Corps, 2008). There are Peace Corps volunteers in 76 countries worldwide (Peace Corps, 2008). Each Peace Corps office has a full support staff for volunteers consisting of directors, administrative assistants, financial officers, medical officers, a safety and security coordinator, training directors, staff, and language instructors.

The Peace Corps has different projects in each country, as those projects are determined by each country's expressed needs and the Corps ability to help mitigate them. In Guatemala, these included healthy schools, environmental education, ecotourism facilitation, small business development, youth development, municipal development, agricultural marketing, agricultural production, and appropriate technology. The first author participated in the Environmental Conservation and Income Generation Project, which provided assistance in ecotourism, environmental educa-

tion, and agro forestry. This project had four goals:

Goal 1: Communities will identify and develop environmental and sustainable projects to generate financial revenues (tour services, crafts, plants, recycled material, etc.). Goal 2: Local teachers, boys and girls and youths will increase their skills, attitudes and values concerning environmental conservation and protection.

Goal 3: Communities and schools will develop disaster preparedness, prevention and mitigation. Goal 4: Communities will adopt and apply agroforestry and forest management systems for the conservation and promotion of natural resources (Linares & Estrada, 2002, p. 16).

As a Peace Corps volunteer, the first author completed a standard three-month training prior to her assignment to the town of Lanquin in the department of Alta Verapaz. This training, conducted by local and American Peace Corps staff, included Spanish language training and ecotourism technical training (Usher, 2008b). Additionally, during the course of the following two years of service in Lanquin, the author attended classes with a local teacher to learn to speak Q'eqchi', the language spoken by the local indigenous people.

The Municipality of Lanquin, in the department of Alta Verapaz (Figure 1) incorporated a town of about 3,000 people and 44 neighboring villages with about 13,000 people (Usher, 2008a). Approximately 93% of this population is Q'eqchi', one of the 22 indigenous Maya groups living in Guatemala (Usher, 2008a).

The Municipality of Lanquin is respon-

sible for the administration of two protected areas: a 300 meter long limestone land bridge called Semuc Champey, and a cave system known as the Lanquin Caves (Usher, 2008a). These attractions draw more than 40,000 tourists to the town fueling the growth of numerous small tourism businesses. As of April 2008, there were approximately 9 hotels, 7 restaurants, 6 transportation services, and 2 internet cafes in Lanquin and Semuc Champey. The author was the third ecotourism facilitator Peace Corps assigned to Lanquin, but Peace Corps had been active in Lanquin since 1980 placing and supporting the interventions of 15 volunteers. Peace Corps intervention in Lanquin was terminated in April 2008, based on input and discussions with the departing volunteers, the APCD of their projects and the local community counterparts (Usher, 2008a).

Method

The study used methods consistent with tenets advocated in Participatory Action Research. Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a methods and a philosophy that combines ideas from action research (developed by Kurt Lewin) and participatory research (developed in Tanzania in the 1970s) (Bargal, 2006; Khanlou & Peter, 2004). This, and other forms of participatory research, involve approaches that empower community members and increase their involvement and voice in the research process (Taylor, et al., 2004). All forms of participatory research aim to produce social change and involve advancement of knowledge through a formal process that includes

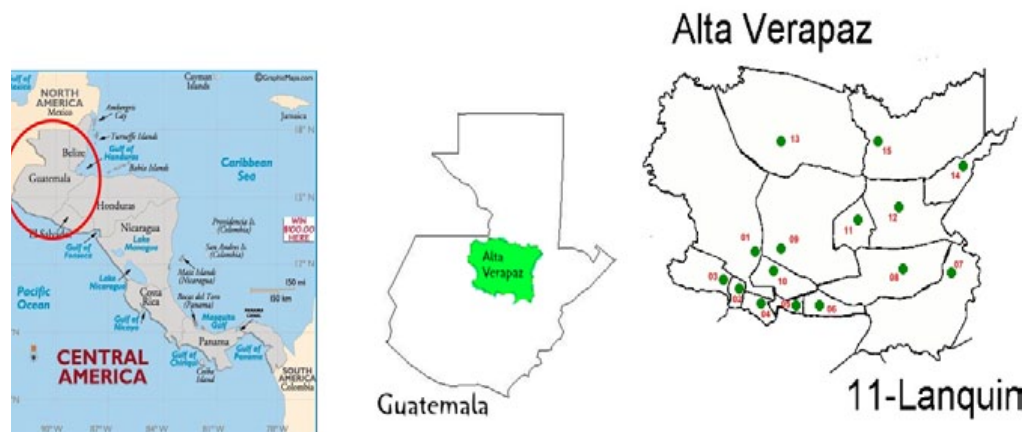


Figure 2. Study Site.

participation of non-scientists (Wilmsen, 2008).

Some scholars claim that PAR distinguishes itself in that it not only involves community members as researchers, but it facilitates achievement of goals that communities themselves formulate (Wulffhorst, et al., 2008). PAR fosters agency through creation of goals on the part of the community because they make decisions about what is being researched and about what changes will occur as a result of that research (Phillips & Vavra, 2008). PAR incorporates planning, an intervention, and an evaluation but it also involves an educational component for all those involved (Bargal, 2006; Green et al., 1997; Khanlou & Peter, 2004). Constant cooperation between parties involved and a commitment to sustainability is also a key component of PAR (Bargal, 2006; Israel et al., 2005).

The relationship Peace Corps volunteers enter into with their communities is very similar to the one that researchers and communities enter into through PAR. Peace Corps volunteers serve host communities for 2 years usually integrated in much longer institutional collaborations with those communities. Volunteers conduct needs assessment surveys upon arrival to their host communities: they are there to achieve community improvement goals not a previously determined agenda. Peace Corps projects entail heavy community involvement so that ownership is retained by community members and can be continued once the volunteers depart. Volunteers work closely with a local community member, called a counterpart, to achieve goals identified by the community. Volunteers and counterparts are involved in project evaluations, management, Peace Corps workshops, reports submitted to the Peace Corps, and site visits conducted by Associate Peace Corps Directors (APCDs).

Education is a large part of Peace Corps projects because volunteers are trained on the local culture, language and ways in an attempt to improve their integration within the community and ultimately their effectiveness. Volunteers also train community members through various forms of workshops that generally attempt to help them achieve their goals of improving their lives. Through better education and improved cross-cultural understanding, community members and Peace Corps volunteers can better make decisions about the most important community needs and the best strategies that will help meet them.

Volunteers are responsible for submitting monthly calendars which detail their daily activities to their Associate Peace

Corps Directors (APCDs). APCDs are highly educated, bilingual host country nationals who oversee the volunteers involved with their particular projects. Volunteers also submit quantitative reports every 3 months summarizing activities in their communities. These reports detail amount of income generated by local artisans, number of workshops or classes conducted, number of promotional materials created and published and various other dashboard indicators. In addition, the APCDs visit volunteers periodically (Lanquin was visited six times during the course of two years) and meet with their counterparts and with other community members who may be involved in the projects.

At the end of their service, volunteers are responsible for submitting a Close of Service Report, which details their personal experience and the challenges and accomplishments of their work in the Peace Corps. Those reports are kept in the national Guatemalan Peace Corps office accessible to future volunteers assigned to the same region or same community. Volunteers also submit a Description of Service Report written in the local language (Spanish for Guatemala) detailing their community's accomplishments toward meeting select community needs. The Peace Corps and their local counterpart agency receive a copy of this. Another Description of Service Report (in English) is sent to the main Peace Corps office in Washington, D.C., containing quantitative information about the volunteer's training efforts, projects pursued, progress towards objectives, amount of training provided to the community, and number of meetings attended.

The Intervention

Through informal dialog with community members, site evaluations, structured stakeholder meetings, and informal group and individual meetings, a set of interventions were identified that aimed to improve Lanquin's tourism capacity and to increase women's access to the tourism economy. Regarding improvements in the region's tourism capacity, interventions included assisting with management planning for the Semuc Champey protected area; aiding in completion of a trail project in that protected area; and working to improve the other locally managed national park, the Lanquin Caves (Usher, 2008a). Regarding improving gender equity in the tourism industry, interventions included assisting a Q'eqchi' women's group (ALDECI) in developing and selling products to tourists (i.e. chocolates, cardamom, palm hats, woven

bags); conducting workshops to improve customer service and food quality and variety with several of the women who operated the restaurant in the Semuc Champey Visitor's Center; holding workshops for local women who ran comedores (restaurants) in town; and encouraging those women (as well as others' in the community) to participate in food service workshops conducted by a national tourism training organization (INTECAP) (Usher, 2008a).

Evaluation

Women's earning power. Sen (1999) suggests that women's earning power is a critical factor affecting women's agency. In comparison with men, women working in tourism in Lanquin had low earning power because most high-paying jobs were allocated to men while women dominated informal sector occupations (e.g., food and hotel service, paid domestic work, shop keepers). This gender gap in employment opportunities is evident in the complete exclusion of women from protected area park worker jobs. This job was not an option for women because the job of a park guard is not seen as "women's work" in Guatemala, especially among Lanquin's indigenous community. Due to the violent nature of Guatemala's post-colonial history, the job of park "guard" includes responsibilities beyond acting as a guide, interpreter and friendly host for visitors. Park guards often perform seguridad (security) duties and are issued a rifle. According to a USAID report, "Because most of the protagonists in Guatemala's armed conflict were men, most of the victims of state violence were men" (Garrard-Burnett, 2000, p. 5). In Guatemalan society, being in the army or in one of the Civilian Defense Patrols was not considered appropriate for women, likewise, being a guard assigned to protect natural areas is still not considered appropriate for women because it is seen as a "tough" and often violent job.

Most of the higher paying municipal office positions were also occupied by men. The technical director of Semuc Champey, the forestry technician, and the map technician were all men (Usher, 2008a). They were Peritos Agronomos (literally, "agriculture experts"), a certification higher than a secondary school education that allowed them to hold these positions. There was one woman with a good job in the municipal office, the mayor's secretary, who was a licenciada (equivalent of a 4-year college degree), but she was the only woman in such a high level position in the municipality. The planning, management and administration of a national park and other duties invol-

ved with these jobs were possible because these men had been trained to handle those specific responsibilities. They had high levels of competence, their agency was high and they were self-determined. These men also seemed capable of acquiring new skills and remaining engaged in the continually evolving challenges and opportunities faced by the community. For example, the technical director of Semuc Champey learned to manage a website and manage projects such as the completion of a trail project.

Considering constraints imposed by local social beliefs about the appropriateness of certain jobs, efforts were made to involve women groups in entrepreneurial tourism business activity (i.e., ALDECI women's business cooperative and workshops for managers of comedores). The objective of these interventions was to increase women's earning power; however, while the interventions did generate extra income for participating women, they made limited progress in narrowing the community's gender income gap.

Women's economic role outside household. The second factor important to women's agency is their economic role outside the family (Sen, 1999). In 2000, 20.8% of Guatemalan young or adolescent girls were economically active (in domestic employment, agriculture or factory jobs); out of those that were not economically active, 10.1% of girls ages 7-14 were involved in household duties, as were 40.6% of the adolescent girls (Villagrán, et al., 2002). In the lowest socioeconomic levels, it was found that the majority of time for young and adolescent girls is dedicated to household chores (Villagrán et al., 2002). Due to the gender divisions in Guatemalan society, women's work is thought to be the work they do in the home. For the women of ALDECI, the formation of the group provided an opportunity to earn money outside of the home by selling products to tourists such as chocolates, woven bags, palm hats and chili (Usher, 2008a). By being part of a group outside their household, the need for relatedness in achieving self-determination could have been met because the women could support and encourage each other.

Both groups used skills learned at home (weaving, food preparation, and maintenance of the household) to earn money by applying it to jobs which generated income. Much like women in other parts of the world (Garcia-Ramon, et al., 1995; Momsen, 1994), women in Lanquin used the skills socialized in them as Guatemalan women (caretakers, food produ-

cers, etc) to increase their income independence. Guatemalan society condoned these activities as ones they could do which positively reinforced their efforts and provided relatedness. The women who managed the restaurants were well-known members of the community and their children were all able to attend school and they even had the means to attend the INTECAP workshop which furthered their education. Their domestic roles and skills enabled them to earn money and gave them more responsibility as they had to manage the restaurants and the workers. Instead of serving food to their family, they were serving food to tourists and getting paid for it; this increased control over income provided women with responsibilities beyond managing their families' subsistence.

Women's literacy and education. Literacy and education is another factor found to contribute to women's agency (Sen, 1999). This factor also seemed to have the greatest influence on their level of competence contributing to their self-determination. If women do not have a high level of education, they cannot get higher paying jobs, and making money outside of the home can be difficult if household chores have taken a priority over obtaining an education. In Lanquin, much like in other predominantly indigenous rural areas of Guatemala, the number of children frequenting school is extremely low. Nationally, less than 50% of children from rural Guatemala attend school (Villagrán, 2002). The highest level of education any of the women in ALDECI had was 6th grade (Usher, 2008a).

These women's limited access to education and limited meaningful contacts with outsiders hindered their ability to speak Spanish – the *lingua franca* for any kind of formal income generation in the region. Consequently, most women from rural villages surrounding Lanquin had very limited Spanish language skills. The undermining impact of limited communication skills has been observed elsewhere in regards to women's ability to benefit from tourism. Swain (1993), for example, reported that in Panama: "Bilingualism is an important factor in [Kuna] women's economic roles outside of the household..." (p. 39). Additionally, Morais et al. (2005) reported that gradual involvement in tourism services allowed Mosuo and Bai women in China's Yunnan province to learn more about outside languages and cultures and, as a result, helped these women break free from their traditional dependence on males.

Interaction between education and income earning. The women of ALDECI all had a very low level of education and thus com-

petence. The group provided women opportunities to earn income outside the home; however, after a few years of development, the group disbanded due to lack of interest among its members. While early efforts to develop the group involved a higher level of intervention by the Peace Corps volunteer, the planned completion of the local project led to active efforts to turn management and operations of the group activities to its members. The stated reason for reduction in the group members' interest in the group was its insufficient generation of income due to low sales volume to tourists; however, evidence suggests that this women's business cooperative group failed because its members became too dependent upon the contribution of the outside development organization.

Earlier Peace Corps volunteers had helped the women with tasks like wrapping their chocolates, selling their products at the national park entrance, and managing their group financial account (Usher, 2008a). The women in this group had low levels of competence due to their low education and limited Spanish language skills, so seeing outsiders do the work for them instilled a feeling of dependence instead of increasing their competence. Workshops that focused on Spanish language and sales and management skills were not enough to overcome the women's education gap or to empower them to continue the business cooperative.

The women in Lanquin who managed restaurants were educated and thus competent, earned more money and had a significant economic role outside of the household. They also spoke Spanish fluently. Spanish was widely spoken in the town because most of the people living in the town had more money for schooling than those that lived in the surrounding rural villages. Similar to findings reported in other studies (Blumberg, 2001; Pitt & Khandker, 1998), empowerment of these women with additional income earning benefitted their families (children attended school) and the community (they hired people to work in the restaurants and care for their children while they worked).

Conclusion

Tourism is often identified as a strategy to reduce poverty in economically underdeveloped countries, especially in geographically peripheral and socio-politically marginalized regions. Development programs often focus their interventions on providing women better opportunities for education and income generation. Many programs

focus on women because they are often the most vulnerable segment of these societies, they generally play a crucial role in the well-being of the young, and they are often managers of families' subsistence resources. However, women's ability to get involved in and benefit from tourism and other development opportunities is generally conditioned by traditional gender roles and by education and capacity handicaps resulting from constraints posed by those roles. Consequently, development experts and scholars continue to strive to improve understanding about the processes that lead to more empowered and self-determined women. This paper examines whether an intervention by the Peace Corps accomplished these goals among indigenous Q'eqchi' women in the province of Alta Verapaz, Guatemala.

Findings revealed that, in this region, men hold most technical and higher paying jobs, whereas women hold occupations consistent with their traditional roles as family caretakers. These occupations include managing comedores, cooking food, producing and selling crafts, and cleaning tourism and lodging facilities. As critiqued by other scholars, however, these jobs do not generate as much income and do not yield as much social prestige (Enloe, 2000; Gibson, 2001). Generally, the intervention from the Peace Corps increased income generation, service skills, and communication skills among Q'eqchi' women from the town of Lanquin and from neighboring rural villages. Among women groups from Lanquin, there was evidence that the skills acquired by these women were well-leveraged to improve their agency and self-determination. However, women from neighboring villages, had much lower initial levels of education and agency, and the temporary gains in income and empowerment were lost once the development agency departed.

Conceptually, the findings provide some support to Polak's (2008) tenet that income generation is related to other dimensions of poverty and dependence. However, a temporary increase in income generation among the women of ALDECI did not result in a sustained increase in access to education, quality healthcare, and other basic life necessities. For these women, access to extra income was possible through the close assistance of an external development agent which brought some temporary relief but did not sufficiently prepare the women to help themselves once the agency departed. Relying on Self-determination Theory (Bandura, 1986; Ryan & Deci, 2000), we argue that ALDECI women gained more income but their competence did not improve substantially. As a result, they did not feel

prepared to tackle their tourism businesses independently and, instead, found reasons to quit and retreat to their traditional lives.

Contrastingly, the women from Lanquin, exhibited higher baseline levels of education and empowerment and were able to leverage the interventions to advance their social position even further. Overall, the findings suggest that, consistent to Sen's (1999) thesis, education and income are interdependent in their influence on agency and self-determination; however, the findings also suggest that their relationship may be hierarchical. Namely, when the education level of the group is very low, income generation may not result in sustained improvements in agency or self-determination – a topic deserving of inquiry in the future.

This paper reports the impacts of a long term intervention by an international development organization attempting to improve the living conditions of a poor region with tourism capacity and gender equity initiatives. Similarly to previous research, the study revealed that benefits from tourism development are very unequally accrued by segments of the community in Lanquin (Lama, 2000; Nyaupane et al., 2006). Others have proposed that sustainable and equitable community development through involvement in tourism requires the intervention of government, host communities; non-governmental agencies; and the tourism industry. In this study site, all these groups were actively engaged in the process of tourism development and all intervened reasonably within the boundaries proposed in the development and tourism literature; and nevertheless the study revealed several shortcomings and inequities in the way the local community benefited from tourism. Therefore, more than providing conclusive answers for theory development and for practice, this paper provides sobering evidence for the theoretical and implementation complexity of the process of fostering self-determined community development through tourism.

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