“Souvenir Babies” and Abandoned Homes: Tracking the Reproductive Forces of Tourism

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Abstract: Reproduction occurs through processes of tourism and travel and across borders. This article explores the phenomenon of Euro-American women as mobile social actors bearing children out of relations with local men in Costa Rica and the various material-relational effects of their reproductive decisions. By looking at the pregnancies and bicultural children born out of transnational relations from various actors' perspectives—foreign mothers, Costa Rican fathers and townspeople—contestations over the social and cultural meanings and motivations for cross-border reproduction become apparent. “Reproductive mobility” depends on how places are imagined and can lead to new opportunities for, as well as new inequities and rifts over, kinship formation.

Keywords: global tourism, mobilities, reproduction, reproductive tourism, transnational motherhood

Résumé : Les voyages transfrontaliers peuvent constituer des facteurs de reproduction. Cet article explore le phénomène des femmes Euro-Américaines en tant qu'acteurs sociaux mobiles portant des enfants suite à des relations avec des hommes locaux au Costa-Rica, ainsi que les divers affects matériels-relationnels de leurs décisions liées à la reproduction. En observant les grossesses et les enfants biculturels nés de relations transnationales, à partir des perspectives de divers acteurs — mères étrangères, pères costaricains, et citadins — les contestations relatives aux significations et motivations sociales et culturelles de la reproduction transfrontalière deviennent apparentes. « La mobilité reproductive » dépend de ce que l'on imagine des lieux, et peut mener à de nouvelles opportunités, aussi bien qu'à de nouvelles inéquités et dérives à l'égard de la formation des liens de parenté.

Mots-clés : Tourisme mondial, mobilités, reproduction de tourisme, maternité transnationale

Introduction

Tourism has a reproductive force. Like many single women in the 21st century setting out on long-haul travel abroad while in their “reproductive years,” 25-year-old Adele left Canada to backpack through Latin America for several months. Four years later, over the course of several visits to Costa Rica, Adele had experienced multiple, shifting relationships to the community, townspeople and nation—as a tourist, foreign resident, business owner, landholder, undocumented worker and transnational mother—before returning permanently to Canada. In the process, she abandoned the cement foundations of a home she had started to build in Costa Rica. As I would observe when I conducted fieldwork in a small village on the Caribbean coast, by 2011 hers was among several partially built homes of foreigners now grown over with weeds that left a visible testament to the presence and reproductive agency of the many Euro-American women *extranjeros* (“foreigners”) who had formed connections of relatedness, or tried to, with local people (see Figure 1).[1] Bicultural babies with kin ties to Costa Rican fathers and local families, along with the dwellings that were intended to house them, were a tangible corporeal-material outcome of women's embodied travels and their participation in sex, intimacy and motherhood away from home.

Adele first travelled to Costa Rica on an organized tour. She returned for a second visit a few months later to visit a Canadian friend who was living with her Afro–Costa Rican boyfriend.[2] During that second visit, when Adele's interest in “the local boys” (her term) was piqued, she hatched the idea that she too might live and work there. As a single, heterosexual, young, white foreign woman she began to regard the local men as exotic and sexually attractive and also as gatekeepers to the local Caribbean culture she longed to know intimately. Returning to Canada to quit her job and tie up other loose ends before she returned once more to Costa Rica on the standard three-month tourist visa, this time Adele

Figure 1: One of many unfinished house foundations to be seen in the area—serving here as a visible trace of women's reproductive mobility. Author's photo. By permission from owner to use the photo.

aspired to remain in the country beyond that legal proviso.

It was during that third visit, in 2007, that I first interviewed her. Adele was "obsessed" (her own term) with an evasive young man, a local surfer popular with foreign women. Describing her torment in being stymied in her romantic interest in him, she expressed a pervasive feeling among Euro-American tourist women. Many women tourists I interviewed were fascinated by the young male townspeople and, in staying beyond the duration of a holiday, would discover that local men were interested in foreign women for reasons that, initially at least, conflicted with their own interest in holiday romance. As Adele put it, "They want to have sex with you or they want to have babies with you." When I asked if she could imagine herself as one of the many foreign women, visible in the public spaces of the village and on the nearby beaches, who have had children with local men, Adele had resisted the suggestion: "No, I don't think so!"

But at that time the reason she rejected the idea of having a child with a local boyfriend was because of what she perceived as *machismo*. She did not believe that notions of Caribbean and Latino masculinity could allow a local man ever to be faithful in a relationship. Over time, while living in the community, however, her views on sex, marriage and family changed (also see Frohlick 2013b). She began to view the town as "a perfect place" to raise a child, whether alone or in a partnership. The reproductive potentiality of sexual relations was such that she found herself thinking, "If I want to have a baby, well, I'm just going to have one!"

I draw out how Adele's transformation—from not being interested in local men, to having a piqued interest in them that was a prime motivation for returning, to eventually having a child with one of the town's "players"—can be seen as a trajectory where travel and reproductive aspirations closely intersect. In 2009 Adele had given birth to a daughter. During my second interview with her then, she recounted her experiences as a white, middle-class Canadian mother raising a biracial child whose black Afro-Caribbean father and family members were involved, especially the grandmother and aunties. However, the transnational family that she had envisaged aloud in that interview did not pan out. When the baby was a year old, Adele left Costa Rica with her boyfriend for Canada to try and build a life with him there. But her boyfriend had soon returned to his family in Costa Rica. By 2011 Adele was raising their child on her own, choosing Canada over Costa Rica for her principal domicile and therein severing everyday ties with her daughter's Costa Rican kin. She sold her land and the weed-infested house foundation to another foreign woman, who was hoping to finish the construction and share the home with her Afro-Caribbean boyfriend.

Adele's story—and the abandoned dwelling and local kin left behind—illuminates especially clearly what I am calling in this article the "reproductive forces" of tourism. The main point I explore is how global tourism and transnational/lifestyle migration are processes that profoundly impact human reproductive activities (Browner and Sargent 2011:1), which, in turn, affect entire communities. That women's travel practices have an impact on procreation and wider reproductive patterns is not something we commonly think about, but it is the case that pregnancies, abortions, child-bearing and child-rearing are all outcomes of the intimate and sexual relations that ensue within contexts of international travel and being away from home. Yet these experiences have not received much attention by anthropologists, where debates over sex tourism have tended to be concerned with a much narrower concept of sex than that which allows reproduction issues to surface (Frohlick 2010). Following anthropologists Browner and Sargent, who argue that it is by examining "local, regional, state and global structures as they shape and in turn are shaped by reproductive behaviour, [that] we gain new insights into the means through which men and women exercise initiative and intent" (2011:2), I focus on the particularities of how Euro-American women have generated reproductive desires and realized those desires by using their agency (bound with race, class, gender, sexuality and nationality) in the Caribbean region of Costa Rica, a middle-income Latin American country. I

situate these occurrences in the wider context of globalization, the politics of reproduction and the ways in which international leisure travel as population movement gives rise to new forms of "stratified reproduction" (Colen 1995).

Gender, Travel and Reproduction

To put the situation in Costa Rica exemplified by Adele's story in perspective concerning interlinkages between gender, international travel and reproduction, looking briefly at other scenarios is helpful. During the colonial era, European women were routinely sent to colonies as brides for colonial men to reproduce the nation (McClintock 1995; Stoler 2002). Since the 20th century, "mail-order brides" and Internet-mediated international marriages have resulted in east–west and south–north flows of women from the Philippines, South Korea and Russia to form marriage ties with men in Australia, Canada, Germany and the United States, many of whom wish to have children with women who enact "traditional" femininity (Constable 2003). More recently, relatively elite women in the market for fertility treatments and new reproductive technologies buy travel packages to sun and holiday destinations like Barbados, India or the Czech Republic to combine vacationing with in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatments (Speier 2015; Whittaker and Speier 2010) or go to other select countries where travel is affordable and the laws governing medically assisted pregnancies and surrogacies are more advantageous than the laws in their home countries (Melhuus 2003; Pande 2015; Spar 2005).

These various cross-border practices of procreation, changing across time and place, each involve the movement of women across international borders in their realization: colonial brides, mail-order brides, reproductive tourists. Gendered mobilities, where women are agentive travel subjects, have been at the centre of global reproduction historically, and the articles in this themed issue so powerfully demonstrate the contemporaneous phenomenon. Yet offspring born out of Euro-American tourist women's participation in transnational sex and intimate unions are distinct from colonial forms of bride migration and Internet-mediated international marriages, and they are also distinct from late-capitalist forms of reproductive tourism, the focus of my article.

Recent debates about reproductive tourism (also referred to as fertility tourism and procreative tourism) have drawn attention to the ways in which "new forms of patient mobility" are manoeuvred within contemporary ever-changing travel routes that create distances for some and shrink distances for others (Bergmann 2011:282). Reproductive tourism is "a practice in which people travel significant distances, often across national borders, in order to access such reproductive technologies and services as in vitro fertilization (IVF), gamete (sperm and egg) donation, sex selection, surrogacy and embryonic diagnosis" (Martin 2009:250). Although the literature to date focuses on assisted pregnancies or surrogacy for infertile couples or fertile single women and lesbians in need of sperm donations, reproductive tourism is a category that Martin believes "may even, arguably, include transnational adoption, abortion and conception" (2009:250), which I agree with to some degree. Facilitated by globalization, citizenship-based travel mobilities and consumer capitalism, reproductive tourism exists because some women (and men) are privileged in their capacities as reproductive tourists. That is, they are empowered as passport holders and by their relative wealth to embark on "fertility journeys" (Hudson and Culley 2011) and "global quests for conception" in search of reproductive technologies, knowledges and substances that are unavailable, unaffordable or too restrictive in their home countries. These journeys can nevertheless be difficult and even disempowering experiences of "exile" (Inhorn and Patrizio 2009:904). My interlocutors were seeking neither medically assisted conception nor access to international adoption and, as such, were not patients or clients purchasing a legal service. Nevertheless, as I suggest, they were entangled in globalization processes allowing them "more ways to conceive and bear children that go beyond the limits of national and cultural boundaries" (Martin 2009:262). However, there are also important limitations to seeing them as reproductive tourists, which I return to in the conclusion.

This article sorts through some complexities of cross-border procreation and pregnancies made possible by global tourism and raises new anthropological questions: Is this an example of tourists extracting resources from the native people in sun-sea-sand-sex destination countries (Cabezas 2009) but, instead of transactional sexual exchanges, which predominantly but not exclusively involve tourist men as sexual consumers (Frohlick 2013a), we see reproduction as a form of extraction by foreign women? Or, because tourism, as "asymmetrical movement between different "locals" (Amit 2007:2), is a process that is thoroughly permeated with supply-and-demand for touristic intimacies (Harrison 2003), should we be surprised that global tourism shapes new kinship formulations and the creation of reproductive possibilities, especially when relatively elite women in their "reproductive years" are mobile social actors as international travellers? How are "souvenir babies," a term that I will explain, related to other forms of reproductive

tourism where women acting as "reproductive opportunists" (Whittaker 2011) cross national borders for the purpose of accessing reproductive technologies and bio-substances?[3]

As I begin to document and analyze the nuances of reproductive mobilities, I view Euro-American tourists, transnationals and expatriates as gendered reproductive social actors using travel and cross-border sexual and intimate sociality as a means to ameliorate personal concerns about involuntary childlessness and to realize reproductive dreams. More specifically, women from the global north can be seen as reproductive agents with aspirations for "natural" (not medically assisted) pregnancy, "mixed-race" bicultural children and transnational residency. In the rest of the article, I provide an ethnographic account and analysis of how global tourism and tourism-informed mobility—what sociologists call "lifestyle migration" (Benson and O'Reilly 2009)[4]—has impacted the human reproductive activities of Euro-American women and also how, in turn, local processes in the Caribbean region of Costa Rica have influenced these practices. In doing so, I offer some preliminary answers to these larger questions.

Ethnographic Context

This article builds on my ethnography about Euro-American women's relationships with Costa Rican–born men and migrant men in Costa Rica and the ways heterosexualities and erotic desires are produced and transformed in touristic spaces and cross-border encounters (Frohlick 2013b). I have conducted fieldwork in Costa Rica since 2005 and continue to do so as my research has evolved to pursue different aspects of sexuality, intimacy and tourism over these past eight years. For the first four years, I focused on understanding the dynamics of these cross-border relations largely from the perspective of European and North American heterosexual white women (although several of my interlocutors were black women and bisexual women). I also conducted interviews with local men and got to know several local men fairly well, thus gaining knowledge of their lives. However, my emphasis has been on foreign women's experiences, allowing me to maintain long-term ties and form enduring friendships with several interlocutors and to gain a longitudinal life course perspective as they have changed and gone through phases as girlfriends, spouses, mothers, daughters-in-law and ex-partners separated from their children's fathers.

I have published several articles addressing different aspects of tourist women's experiences of transnational sex and romance in Costa Rica (see Frohlick 2007, 2009, 2013a). This is the first article where I draw explicitly on knowledge gained over time about Euro-American women who became mothers in the course of their travel and relocation trajectories. These are post-holiday stories related to transnational sex. They recount a different set of experiences that are nevertheless related to those of the short-term-stay tourist women who hook up with local men and understand these sexual relations through the framework of spontaneity, much like other aspects of their holiday experience. The ethnographic details in this article are gleaned from interviews with women conducted between 2005 and 2010, some who were already mothers and some who were not yet mothers at the time of the interview but who would eventually have children out of unions with local men. I also use ethnographic material from interviews with local Afro–Costa Rican women conducted between 2008 and 2011 as well as from conversations in situ since 2005 about the topic of motherhood with Euro-American women whose children are Costa Rican and who have become my friends as well as research interlocutors.

I piece together these fragments of ethnographic details gained over time because I see this as an important topic worth thinking through and entering into the conversation about kinship travel with the caveat that further ethnographic research is under way to gain a fuller account. For instance, women who left Costa Rica permanently after becoming pregnant are missing from this picture yet are lodged in the memories of many local men whose stories call attention to the absence of their children begotten with foreign mothers.

Costa Rica Imagined as a Possibility for Procreation ... Naturally

Costa Rica is seen as a safe destination for solo women travellers, which, in combination with its trope of nature, is a powerful draw (Frohlick 2013b; Frohlick and Johnston 2011). Along with its reputation as an "exceptional" and peaceful Latin American country, Costa Rica is stitched closely to an "aesthetic of pristine unpeopled nature" (Ackerman 2010:412), thereby promising an array of embodied experiences within rejuvenating spaces that are represented as remote from civilization. Branding itself as an ecotourism destination with "no artificial ingredients" (Rivers-Moore 2007), which carries implications for the growing medical tourism industry, Costa Rica has become transformed into a "feminized healing landscape" of happy, caring nurses, massage therapists and altruistic doctors (Ackerman 2010:411). Although no women I knew travelled to Costa Rica for cosmetic surgery or other medical procedures, many were drawn

Figure 2: One example of how the trope of nature is deployed to create a "healing landscape" (Ackerman 2010:411) in Costa Rica. Author's photo.

to the spiritual and health tourism found in an abundant cottage industry of yoga retreats and spas. "Pure nature" looms large in tourism media and in tourists' imaginations of what Costa Rica provides, in contrast to the cement, technology and artificiality that constitute everyday life in cities back home in North America and Europe (see Figure 2). I suggest that this particular gloss of how the local community and spaces are understood through such a "tourist imagination" (Crouch et al. 2005:1) extends to how women eventually came to understand their reproductive subjectivity and agency in the national and local Caribbean context.[5]

Costa Rica is located on an isthmus with the Pacific Ocean to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. The Atlantic-Caribbean side is imagined as a particularly fecund—and hedonistic—space, depicted as a "wild jungle" contrastive with other, "tamed" regions. Like many western backpackers since the 1980s, who actively produced the "Caribbean" as much as they "discovered it" (Anderson 2004), Euro-American women in the 2000s preferred the Caribbean because it promised closer contact with local Afro-Caribbean culture than did the "over-developed" "Americanized Pacific" (words often used by the women to describe the Pacific region). The "laidback vibe" of the Caribbean culture offered apparent opportunities to transgress the conservatism of dominant Costa Rican society. Non-normative heterosexualities in the form of sexual and romantic encounters with black Afro-Caribbean and mixed-race (*mulato*) local and migrant men from backgrounds much different from their own—often much poorer, with fewer opportunities for formal education—yet with a shared cosmopolitanism and mutual attraction, could be realized in such spaces (Frohlick 2015). The cultural and economic underpinnings of these local–tourist relations, where some men aspired to have babies with foreign women as a means to secure economic ties, in addition to essentialized, primitivized masculinities both performed by local men and imagined by foreign women (Frohlick 2007), rendered the Costa Rican Caribbean a place of possibility for "natural" procreation.

Amid the diversity of the Afro-Caribbean, *Tico* (Spanish word for Costa Rican national), expatriate and Central American immigrant resident population in the southern Caribbean, white foreign mothers and their brown- and black-skinned children were visible around the town and nearby beaches. When I was there in 2010, one of my interlocutors, Cynthia, referred to a "baby boom" taking place. In her view, more foreign women than ever before were pregnant out of relations with local men, influencing one another to take advantage of the reproductive possibilities available to them because of how the men's own interest in "sowing their seeds," bound up with *machismo* notions of masculinity, aligned with the women's wishes to have their children. Not all local men who go out with foreign women hold this interest, as I will show. Yet a salient procreative mythology that circulated widely among foreign women was that local men, especially but not exclusively Afro-Caribbean men, wanted babies with foreign women. With condom usage not widespread, the chances for a "natural" pregnancy were seen as much greater than in women's home countries, where condom use was more prevalent.[6]

These trajectories of natural procreation, often couched as "an accident" or "surprise" but also in more agentive terms, were in some sense in alignment with the nation's reproductive governance (Morgan and Roberts 2012). Strongly influenced by the Catholic Church and international pro-life organizations, the government takes a pronatalist, non-interventionist position on women's reproductive rights, while at the same time promoting smaller nuclear families headed by married

heterosexual couples as an index of "greater national development" and "higher morality" (Goldade 2011:559). Although contraceptives and tubal ligations are available under the national health care system, abortions are not allowed. In 2000 IVF was banned, making the country one of the strictest with respect to the reproductive governance of its citizens and immigrants (Morgan and Roberts 2012).

Within a country that champions "natural" (medically unassisted) and "planned" rather than "uncontrolled" pregnancies (Jenkins 2002), foreign women both aligned with and contravened societal norms. Because foreign women were having babies without medical intervention (i.e., natural conception), they aligned with the state's ideal reproductive narrative. But because they were forming families outside the ideal nuclear (and monoracial) family upheld by the Catholic vision, they also contravened these norms. In this way the notion of "circumventive routes" (Bergmann 2011) might apply to Euro-American women whose own championing of conception, pregnancy and childbirth "the natural way" circumvents less desirable options for child-bearing available for them as women who had rejected marriage or partnerships back home and who felt that age was diminishing their chance at conception. Morgan and Roberts cogently state in their article about reproductive governance in Latin America that "the activities of the biological body—especially the reproductive and sexual body—are at the centre of these regimes and are hence critical sites of contention" (2012:242).

I now turn to two examples of how touristic imaginations of a natural Costa Rica, as well as migration as an impossible quest for "the good life" (Berlant 2011), shaped the reproductive mobilities of Euro-American women.

"It Just Seemed Natural to Have a Brown Baby"

While Adele waited until she was in a union to plan a family, other tourist women fostered the possibility soon after, or even before, their arrival. Mattie was a white German woman who moved to Costa Rica after she had holidayed in the southern Caribbean. She articulated her decision to start a family with an Afro-Caribbean man through the cross-cutting discourses of a paradisical Caribbean and transracial motherhood. Mattie travelled to Costa Rica for the nature. In hearing that, in her words, "25 per cent of the country is under conservation," as a 25-year-old backpacker she found that nature conservation proved to be a powerful motivator in her destination choice. Because she had always been enchanted with what she imagined as a Caribbean landscape—"the smells and the flowers and the fruits"—as well as Caribbean culture—"everywhere music and merengue and people really poor but they have such a lifestyle that the whole time they're happy"—once she arrived in Costa Rica, she headed straight to the Caribbean coast. Early on in her travels she had envisioned starting a family, ideally with a black Caribbean man. In her words,

> Well, first time when I came [to Puerto Viejo], I remember that I tell my Caribbean brother [friend], I tell him, you know when I'm going to be 25 [years old], I'm going to be living here and I'm going to give birth to a little boy and he is going to be mixed black and white. He's going to grow up here on the beach.

When she did become pregnant, which Mattie regarded as an "accident"—the result of an "adventure"—after learning that the father was black, her white family in Germany urged her to have an abortion. Meanwhile, the father, a second-generation Afro–Costa Rican, distanced himself from Mattie because he doubted the baby's paternity. Mattie's parents, reeling from the news of a "half-black" grandson, refused to communicate with Mattie for some time. Eventually, Mattie and the child's father formed a live-in, off-and-on union for several years, during which she had another baby with him. Once the union ended, Mattie was resolved to remain in Costa Rica. Buying land and building a house, she forged roots in the local community both to allow her children to grow up in close contact with their father's kin—grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and half-siblings—and to fulfil her childhood dreams of living in the Caribbean.

When I interviewed Mattie in 2007, she explained to me how "natural it was to have brown babies" as a foreign woman in the Caribbean. The sense of "natural" with which she understood her reproductive choices (for instance, her choice to ignore her sister's advice to abort the pregnancy) stemmed from her understanding of local reproductive practices. In this sense, Mattie's interpretation of "natural" referred to reproductive choices deemed normal within the local context that contrasted with the stigma Mattie experienced back home for having a mixed-race child and an unplanned pregnancy as an unmarried mother. For a European woman in her reproductive years, the Caribbean Costa Rica promised her a better life than what she could expect back in Germany. This "better life" was defined partly

by her desire to integrate into the Caribbean community and her resistance to racism and to her parents' belief that "monoracial, monocultural and monoethnic families are assumed to be the norm" (Twine 1999:729). Yet, while engaged in "transracial mothering" (Twine 1999), when her son became seven years old, she had begun to question her earlier romanticized notions of a paradisical life in the Caribbean. Concerns around the influence of his half-brothers, who were involved in sex as adolescents and the youth scene of partying, drugs and alcohol, heavily influenced by tourism, had made her think about returning to Europe as a better environment for raising children.

I turn to one further example before providing a glimpse of how transracial pregnancies and foreign women's reproductive activities were received by the local townspeople. Cynthia's story is similar to those of many of my interlocutors who were in their 30s, single, financially independent, established in careers and single when they travelled to Costa Rica. They spoke of their disillusionment with the realities of heterosexual dating back home, where online dating proliferated and men were consumed by their digital electronics and other commodities, and of the ways decisions made in their 20s, not to have children, now negatively affected them. Motherhood seemed an uphill battle given the apparent futility of future marriage or relationship prospects. Some women were pondering international adoption as a viable route to single motherhood at the time of their travels to Costa Rica.[7]

When I interviewed Cynthia in 2005, she had first travelled to Costa Rica three years earlier. Now she was making plans to relocate from the United States to Costa Rica's Caribbean coast, to buy land and build a home. After travelling back and forth between her business and home in the United States to vacation in Costa Rica and continue a relationship she had started with a local man on her first trip, Cynthia was ready to make a more permanent move. As we spoke, I began to see how her reproductive activities and desire to become a mother were entwined in her assessment of Costa Rica for its potential for realizing a life for herself (a single, professional, white American woman) that could be much better than what she felt was dead-end dating and consumerism back in the United States. While she had broken up with her Costa Rican boyfriend before I met her, she was deeply invested in remaining in Costa Rica—in good measure because the area held potential as a place to have children and start a family. In her words:

> I see myself doing my project here and, you know, having a child. Not that I really have to have it myself, maybe, maybe not, but that's something I would like to have, a family. You know, it's ... Although, I think I see myself more with a child than I do with a man right now. So we'll see. I think that one is probably going to land on my doorstep, some baby that needs a home, that's what I think. Or, you know, the idea of adopting, I'm open to that as well. I'm thirty-six. I figure in these next couple years I'm just going to see where life leads and then, who knows?

Years later, Cynthia found herself pregnant while in a casual relationship with a Costa Rican man. Her North American family, like Mattie's family in Germany, demonstrated racism and sexism in their reactions to her decision to continue with the pregnancy and to raise a mixed-race baby as a single parent, rather than in a marriage or relationship. The Costa Rican father and his kin remained in regular contact with Cynthia and made regular visits to see her and the child. In many subsequent conversations with Cynthia, I gained a sense of the ongoing negotiations that transracial parenting involved for her as she sought the lifestyle that appealed to her as an expatriate rejecting "the American dream," while under constant scrutiny by her child's Costa Rican family members for violating codes of respectability and cultural competency in mothering. Such violations included her lack of knowledge about how to properly dress the baby and avoid risks of colds or dengue fever. At the same time, Cynthia gained a sense of belonging to and admiration from Caribbean, Nicaraguan, Columbian and Panamanian women who were her neighbours. By becoming a mother through natural conception (where "accidental" pregnancies are a common, legitimate means of human reproduction), Cynthia was no longer alone, and therefore her neighbours were greatly relieved—for to be alone was seen as significantly more stigmatizing and pitiful than raising a mixed-race baby as a single mother.

As the stories of Adele, Mattie and Cynthia are meant to show, the desire for and manifestation of babies with black Afro-Caribbean men was one pathway to reproduction that was naturalized by my interlocutors. Getting pregnant "naturally" rather than through adoptions or donor insemination, a route that a few women mentioned and most were loath to embark on, meant a great deal to them. This naturalization, however, while expressive of anti-racist ideologies on the one hand, also, on the other hand, reveals racialized and exoticized undertones as well as white privilege. Euro-American

women made sense of their pregnancies through notions about destiny, inevitability and beneficence: men seemingly "gave" them the babies they always wanted and the opportunity to be mothers. The "Caribbean" was, to them, a naturally hospitable, unrestrictive and ultimately tractable place to become pregnant and have babies. These ideas contrasted with what they regarded as the limited or restrictive cultural practices back home, in the United States, Canada or Europe, where birth control and condom use was more socially entrenched and the role of men was tightly scripted into heteronormativity or the legal framework of shared parental custodian rights and therefore difficult to manoeuvre. Costa Rica, with a marketed global image as a haven for self-renewal and transformation, was recast in women's minds as a society and place, in particular the Caribbean coastal towns and inhabitants, amenable to their maternal aspirations.

"Souvenir Babies"

As mentioned earlier, women's reproductive bodies are "critical sites of contention" (Morgan and Roberts 2012:242), not only for the nation's reproductive governance and bolstering of the monoracial family but also at the level of everyday life and sociality across ethnic-racial-national groups within communities affected by global tourism, such as Puerto Viejo. I explore here these cross-cultural contentions, where groups were at cross purposes regarding relatedness and social reproduction. When the privilege of international mobility, citizenship and relative wealth empowered Euro-American women to pursue reproductive quests, the meanings of their actions were not always well understood. Some townspeople interpreted Euro-American women's transracial pregnancies as circumventive routes where the women seemingly evaded obligations to the babies' fathers and the wider local social organization of kinship. Sometimes the mixed-race transnational babies seemed like an opportunistic transaction—almost a commodity, as I learned from a local woman who knew many townspeople whose sons had fathered children that were, in her words, "forever lost" to foreign women.

Ms Mary, a 50-year-old Afro-Caribbean mother, auntie and grandmother, whose roots to the community go back generations, illuminated a long-standing problem she had with foreign women's reproductive practices. She used the label "souvenir babies" to describe what she considered a "style" of social reproduction that was deeply troubling to her:

> Many womens [sic] come with that idea they never have a kid and they come with that idea to have a child in the Caribbean. And many of them, after they don't have the father there for that baby but they have that baby some of them mostly they go back to their country, I say, like with a souvenir! A lot of strange womans [foreign women] have their little 'brown babies' by themself, so it pass from, what do you say, a 'little adventure' to a serious problem ... womens very mature, but they just have the idea, too, maybe it's a style, maybe they want to make a change, I don't know.

Not a new term or a phenomenon limited to Costa Rica, *souvenir babies* has been used to describe different socio-historical contexts where babies are born out of cross-border, transient intimacies. Two well-documented cases of souvenir babies are the thousands of American-Asian children in the Philippines, seen to be, as one scholar puts it, "casually begotten and casually forgotten by their [American GI] fathers" (Lee 2010:167), and the children born after World War II in France out of liaisons between French women and American soldiers. In Canada, too, Ruth Roach Pierson has written about "the sexual exploitation suffered by Innu women [in Goose Bay during the 1980s], such as the increase of rape and 'souvenir babies,' fathered by British, American and German [NATO] military personnel" (1993:210).

In these instances, the term underscores a dominant western idea that the repository of genetic material from the father is patently recognized. As American and European military men left behind biogenetic traces of themselves, as well as bitter memories of sexual and emotional abuse, in countries such as the Philippines, babies of mixed parentage and their mothers bore "the social costs of imperialist sexual relations" (Capino 2010:57). The scenario in Costa Rica presented by Ms Mary disrupts the social history of souvenir babies as a story only about subjugated mothers in cross-border procreation. In contemporary gendered travel practices, Euro-American women are instead the itinerant subjects who now threaten the social order by "taking" genetic substance from local men and becoming mothers via the clout of mobility they exert as citizens from northern countries. Instead of being "left with," they leave with (or are free to leave with) the souvenir babies they desire. Thus, the way that Afro–Costa Rican locals deploy the term *souvenir baby* picks up on what local people regard as the crass consumerism, self-interest and quickly formed tenuous relations tourists pursue in their intimate forays into Caribbean culture.

White women bearing mixed-race babies are sometimes regarded negatively, even slandered, for putatively "watering down" black Afro-Caribbean culture, marginalized within a country that sees itself as a "white nation" (Sandoval-García 2004). While it is also the case that foreign white women are often lauded for what they contribute to the economic well-being of local men, extended kin and the wider community (Frohlick 2013a), the problem, as Ms Mary explained, was their "style" of procreation: put simply, Euro-American women's independence and autonomy disregard kin relations. Such seemingly hyper-mobile women who "take" the "seeds" sown by Caribbean Costa Rican men and set their sights on "brown babies" as a kind of memento of their Caribbean vacation thus serve as a volatile flashpoint that pits some women against other women (and men).

Yet these travel journeys that transform into reproduction opportunities, regarded with disdain by some of the town's residents, could not be achieved without local men's complicity. Accusations that tourist women are using men like "sperm donors" suggest that the men fall easy prey to the wiles of tricky foreigners, an idea that some Euro-American women contest but that others believe.

A 23-year-old Canadian and semi-permanent town resident, Isabel, enjoyed living in Puerto Viejo because she appreciated its multi-ethnic, international population. One of many young foreign residents aspiring to integration into the local culture, she shared her perceptions with me about how local men are put into positions of having to deal with foreign women who con them into impregnating them. For Isabel, a surfer who prided herself on the friendships she had formed with the local well-travelled male surfers, this happens all too often, according to the many stories she had heard over the years from her male Caribbean friends. I recount one such story, in Isabel's words:

> I have a friend, a local guy, when he was 18, he had a 29-year-old woman come for a week from Canada. Within the week, she bought him a plane ticket and he went to Canada. Spent a month there with her. She bought him new shoes, new clothes, gave him the Blockbuster card, going out for dinner every night. And it came to the end where she was like, 'I want a baby.' He was like, 'Nope, I'm going back to Costa Rica.' Jumped on the fucking plane. He was like, 'That bitch wanted a baby.' I was like, 'Hell, no!'
>
> For me, I was just like, okay, 'you took, you know, you took …' (Whether I want to place judgment on the fact that he used a woman to go outside and experience, I cannot. Because he got to go outside, he got to see the outside part of the world.) Yet, it came to a point where it was going to change his life, he said, 'Uh uh, I'm going home.' And, okay, I respect him for that. Whether I want to judge him for going away with a woman just because it was his opportunity, I can't. Because in the end he made a choice; 'No, I will not change my life, I will not do anything to do … anything.' The second the woman came and was like, 'I want your baby because you're a beautiful black man from Costa Rica and this is a good opportunity,' you know? He was like, 'There's no love here. I don't wanna have a baby with you.'

This story is fascinating to me because it contradicts the prevalent narrative about local men as *machistas*, sowing seeds with many women of different nations. Elements of Isabel's friend's experience, where a tourist woman attempts to bribe him to win over his biogenetic substance as a duplicitous progenitor of a souvenir baby, are also common, however. The claims about receiving a free trip abroad ("outside"), meals and all expenses paid, as a romantic ruse for a manipulative pregnancy, give credence to Ms Mary's assertion that the affective and relational ties of local people are disregarded by childless, manipulative foreign women.

Isabel's local male friend had managed to resist the opportunistic ploys of the cunning Canadian woman, while being opportunistic himself. Yet countless numbers of local men have negotiated, in the broadest sense of the term, monetary exchanges with Euro-American women who desire "brown babies," want to be transracial mothers or merely want to get pregnant in the most non-interventionist or "natural" method available to them. Many more local men have fallen in love and then been hurt when relationships with their children's foreign mothers did not work out as they had hoped. In short, these two groups of social actors (the foreign women, on the one hand, and the local men, on the other), involved in what amounts to highly complex human reproduction structured by economical asymmetry as well as asymmetry of mobility, are both mired in a reproductive politic that transcends their own decision-making.

In her analysis of the polemical narratives of "rescue and kidnap" that are trafficked in transnational adoption debates, Karen Dubinsky (2008) cautions against thinking about reproductive rights in terms of abstract binaries such that adoptive and birth parents are in a tug of war with one another and squeezed into reductionist oppositional categories. That circumspection is apt here: the story of souvenir babies should be interpreted neither as the agentive cold-hearted pursuit of an opportunistic reproductive strategy on the part of

Euro-American women to take Costa Rican offspring away from their Costa Rican blood kin and the victimized relinquishing of fatherhood rights by hyper-fertile Costa Rican men, nor as the savvy beguiling by desperate and cunning poor black and mixed-race Latino and Caribbean men who utilize their sexuality to get into the pocketbooks of innocent and easily duped white foreign women. Instead, the story speaks to the ever-widening means by which some men and women can initiate reproductive options as a result of globalization (in this case, global tourism) and to the resultant frictions and gaps that such global and transnational reproductive mobilities create within and across individual social actors and the local communities in which their reproductive actions are played out.

Conclusion

From a transnational feminist perspective, it becomes apparent that European and North American heterosexual women of relative privilege and wealth are in disputed relations with the local community as they are seen by some townspeople as "takers" of children who are potential kin (and national citizens of the host country). At the same time, local townspeople also admired many of these foreign women for being economically independent and enterprising and also as transracial mothers who positively challenged heteronormative monoracial reproduction, a point that I have only touched on in this article. The women I met did not travel to Costa Rica with the express intention of seeking out a Costa Rican progenitor, although I did hear rumours about many such women. For the women with whom I spoke, the possibility of getting pregnant with a local man became imaginable as they stayed on or returned, their eyes opening to a normalized feature of transnational social organization—the presence of foreign women and mixed-race children and their integration, however partial and contested, in the local community.

Whether my Euro-American interlocutors had made decisions jointly with their local boyfriend, unexpectedly became pregnant or tried to influence a local man into impregnating them, all of these actions hint at a privilege of mobility that I conceptualize as reproductive mobilities. If they had not travelled or did not have the means or the authorization to do so (e.g., the right passport), such options would not have befallen them to act upon. As women's travel trajectories intersected with sexual and reproductive possibilities in contingent ways, such mobilities carried consequences for the other social actors implicated in reproduction. Kin relations formed through processes of international leisure travel and the geographical mobilities enjoyed by women tourists and transnational residents moving between Costa Rica and countries in the global north were structured thoroughly by asymmetrical movement across national borders that reflects the governance of travel in late modernity. In other words, foreign mothers could travel practically at will back and forth with their children in tow, who became holders of multiple passports, while for the most part the fathers did not enjoy such privileges because of their Costa Rican passports and (often unemployed or impoverished) economic statuses that made obtaining travel visas into western countries very difficult.[8] Moreover, the mobility of the bicultural, binational children hinged on the denial of the fathers' paternity and paternal rights, such that some women circumvented the need for a father's signature on a passport application for a child by not naming the father on the birth certification.[9] It is therefore both the reproductive mobilities of the foreign mothers and their children's mobilities that fostered ongoing incommensurabilities and disjunctures between local and translocal meanings and practices of kinship, as the trope of souvenir babies so strongly suggests. It was not that foreign women had domiciles elsewhere that was contentious to local Afro-Costa Ricans and migrant families residing in the southern Caribbean towns whom I interviewed, as they too had kin dispersed across a wide Caribbean diaspora. Rather, at the heart of the matter for local residents was the way in which the procreation took place within the context of travel mobility and, therefore, the way in which kin relatedness between the offspring and the local male progenitor and his family members was always already a mobile relationship in which they had little say to define and little power to control.

In addition, cross-border procreation (getting pregnant through relations with a local man) was a way in which "natural conception" was championed over adoption and medically assisted pregnancy. Therefore, access to travel as a regular tourist, versus travel as a reproductive tourist, provided Euro-American women in Costa Rica with opportunities to manoeuvre outside of the reproductive options within their home nation, which they felt were limited, and to explore other options as privileged mobile subjects. In doing so, they also negotiated heteronormativity because they were seen to be pursuing relations and forms of reproduction and family creation outside of the societal norms back home, as well as in Costa Rica, although in different ways. Entangled in these complex micro and macro politics of reproduction and "proper" procreation, women held up their pregnancies and child-bearing of bicultural, interracial babies on a kind of pedestal, claiming such pregnancies to be superior to the other options available to women

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like themselves (in their 30s or 40s, childless and single). I felt at times it was as though the babies were a triumph of the women's canny and cosmopolitanism because they were willing to cross boundaries to acquire their brown-skinned offspring. One American expatriate woman described how, although it was difficult for her to admit, she felt superior to other foreign women without "brown babies" of their own because of what she felt was a tacit social currency—an insider status—that accrued to being a transracial mother.

The reproductive tourism advertised on websites for assisted reproductive technologies offered up as packaged tours, along with the enticing invitation to "lounge around a gorgeous tropic beach while completing your IVF cycle," is impossible in Costa Rica.[10] The national socio-legal infrastructure, which limits the kinds of pregnancies that women in Costa Rica can imagine and access, places Euro-American women whose pregnancies are born out of liaisons and relationships with local men in positions of reproductive mobility vis-à-vis Costa Rican women who may have fertility quests that cannot be met within the nation. Those who wish to seek fertility treatments and reproductive technologies outside of Costa Rica may not have the resources. Other childbearing women, such as unwed mothers, single mothers and teen mothers (Jenkins 2002), as well as undocumented Nicaraguan migrants living in Costa Rica who are subjected to tubal ligations, are held under scrutiny for their "perceived irrational reproduction" (Morgan and Roberts 2012:242).

Travel to Costa Rica may well have been an escape, a metanarrative of tourism, for women who were drawn to the safety and the promise of nature it held as a "woman's destination" (Frohlick 2013b). However, for many heterosexual women I interviewed, escape was initiated out of wanting to get away from relationships gone sour, boyfriends with work or substance addictions, and bad dating prospects and the like, by way of romantic and intimate relations. Therefore, Costa Rica represented a promise of new connections, a sense of belonging and a remaking of home. As I stated earlier, many of my interlocutors had bought land, once they had decided to make Costa Rica their primary residence, and were in the midst of construction projects to build small homes for themselves, local boyfriends and new families. Like the half-constructed foundation and its encroaching weeds depicted in Figure 1, many similar structures were visible along the roads in various neighbourhoods in Puerto Viejo and surrounding towns. Many women had held the notion that if they were going to live in Costa Rica, even temporarily, they would be having sexual relations with local men. Desires for local men, for land and housing and for mixed-race babies were thus, in some sense, interlinked, and were also gendered and generative affective dimensions of tourism and its intimacies. I suggest that Adele's story is not unique, neither in Puerto Viejo nor in other towns and villages in Costa Rica or Latin America and the Caribbean. Countless numbers of foreign women over the past decade have had children with local men, "planned," "unplanned," and "sort of planned," according to women's interpretations of their cross-border pregnancies. In contrast to masculinist notions of touristic travel as a trope of escape from home and domestic responsibilities (Frohlick 2006; Kaplan 1996) and, by definition, of "touring," which involves by necessity a return home, Euro-American women viewed their travels to Costa Rica quite differently, as I have shown here. Rather, aspirations to become mothers and to create physical homes, as well as to imagine home as multiracial and international/transnational spaces of cross-cultural intimacy and legal and social kin ties, were inextricably linked to how they understood their travel experiences in Costa Rica as a particular place. Distinct from reproductive tourists who utilize tourism services and infrastructure in their quest for reproductive technologies and medical treatment located elsewhere, the mobility of my interlocutors as tourists enabled them to gain unforeseen ideas about the possibilities of conception and motherhood in another country. Hence, they can be seen as a prime example of how "contemporary mobilities have had a profound affect upon understandings of tourism," as Allison Hui (2009:307) has suggested in her critique of the binary between home and away that continues to be held up in tourism scholarship. As I have shown, such effects are also profoundly gendered and can and do include women's reproductive desires bound up with heterosexuality, sexual pleasure, sexual spontaneity and transnational erotics and procreative sex, as well as negotiations of condom use and "safer sex" and notions of "unplanned" pregnancies, all of which are shaped by local gender norms, social organization and formal and informal economies. Physical homes were also the aftereffects of tourism and not the initial motivating reason to travel and were linked to women's reproductive aspirations and, paradoxically, to both deeply held western feelings about "home" as a particular place and site for nuclear family and also feminist resistance to those patriarchal ideas and, therefore, empowered economic independence from men as breadwinners. What remains to be examined through further ethnographic research are precisely the new forms of kinship they were creating while they resisted the heteronormative monoracial notions of family espoused back home in their European

and North American families and societies. For now, their stories reveal much about the gendered reproductive outcomes, potentialities and limitations fostered through processes of global tourism, which are, as with the consequences of globalization processes more broadly, entirely uneven and not without contestation.

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Notes

1 I use the term *Euro-American* to refer to predominantly white tourists, return visitors and expatriates from European and North American countries, Australia and New Zealand, a broad social category that in Costa Rica is referred to as *extranjero*, which translates to "stranger" or "foreigner." I also use *foreigner*, although in Costa Rica this term indexes any number of foreign groups, including immigrants and visitors from other Latin American and Caribbean countries. Pseudonyms of research participants are used throughout the article. Place names are not changed.

2 *Afro–Costa Rican* is one term among many marking the Caribbean heritage of an ethnic-racial minority population whose ancestors settled in the Atlantic region during the 19th century to work on railway construction and banana plantations. Other local terms include Afro-Caribbean, Caribbean, black, *negro*, *cholo*, *culi* and *mulatto*, each indexing relational categories of difference vis-à-vis white (also a relational category). See Vandegrift for a discussion of how the "racial/ethnic lexicon in Puerto Viejo draws from multiple referents and intertwines tightly with nation-based categories" (2008:782).

3 While the position of the men is not the focus of this article, it is worth raising a few questions for future research. For example, while my ethnographic research has shown that local men are also pursuing reproduction with foreign women, their reasons for doing so are not entirely clear to me although I suggest some provisional answers here. Also, local men are sometimes crossing borders, although for work and travel, and not for reproductive technologies or bio-substances. Yet some have accessed medical and cosmetic procedures, such as dental work in Germany, with assistance from their foreign girlfriends. Thanks to Frayda Cohen for pointing out these gendered dimensions to travel and reproduction that remain to be studied further.

4 Lifestyle migration refers to the contemporary phenomenon of relative elites relocating to idyllic places in search of a better way of life (Benson and O'Reilly 2009:609). What is important in this article is how this search for an idyllic place by my interlocutors was realized in Costa Rica by virtue of ideals of nature, health and lifestyle intersecting so well with ideals of maternity and motherhood. Babies were imagined as part of the "idyll" that shaped foreign women's decisions to live there. The conceptualization of lifestyle migration as a "project" and "search" (Benson and O'Reilly 2009:610) aligns with women's understandings of their reproductive dreams to be fulfilled in Costa Rica.

5 I use the concept "tourist imagination" here, following Crouch, Jackson and Thompson, to capture the loose relationship between media, the imagination and tourism practices; more specifically, the ways in which "the activity of tourism itself makes sense only as an imaginative process which involves a certain comprehension of the world and enthuses a distinctive emotional engagement with it" (2005:1). How tourists "build dreams" and "arrange practicalities," "in making journeys and in being there," is negotiated individually but also in relation to public discourses/media that construct places, as well as the boundaries between tourism (as escape, play, etc.) and the everyday (Crouch et al. 2005:12).

6 In 2012 I conducted fieldwork with Dr Lopez-Ruiz and research assistant Carolina Meneses (University of Costa Rica) on local sexual health practices. In interviews with 25 local people, we found that condom use was not prevalent. The reasons for this are complex and include both the prohibitive cost of condoms locally, as well as discrepant meanings for why they should be used in the first place (i.e., only for sex with prostitutes).

7 Costa Rica does not permit international adoptions; therefore, Euro-American women were not travelling to Costa

Rica to adopt but, rather, were thinking of travel more generally in terms of reproductive options. On the other hand, several women had become involved in informal forms of fostering local children.

8 It is also the case that some Euro-American women experienced tremendous difficulties in trying to leave Costa Rica with their transnational children, for instance, because obtaining the required signatures of fathers on the children's passport applications was impossible.

9 Thanks to Sam Wild-Chick for pointing this out to me.

10 Words like these appear in advertisements abounding on the Internet, such as for the Barbados Fertility Clinic, featured in the in-flight magazine for Caribbean Airlines. For example, Jacob (2011).

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