



# **Producing Knowledge, Protecting Forests: Rural Encounters with Gender, Ecotourism, and International Aid in the Dominican Republic**

*Light Carruyo*

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Development studies has not yet found a vocabulary to connect large structural processes to the ways in which people live, love, and labor. *Producing Knowledge, Protecting Forests* contributes to such a vocabulary through a study of "local knowledge" that exposes the relationship between culture and political economy. Women's and men's daily practices, and the meaning they give those practices, show the ways in which they are not simply victims of development but active participants creating, challenging, and negotiating the capitalist world-system on the ground.

Rather than viewing local knowledge as something to be uncovered or recovered in the service of development, Light Carruyo approaches it as a dynamic process configured and reconfigured at the intersections of structural forces and lived practices. In her ethnographic case study of La Ciénaga—a rural community on the edge of an important ecological preserve and national park in the Dominican Republic—Carruyo argues that Dominican economic development has rested its legitimacy on rescuing peasants from their own subsistence practices so that they may serve the nation as "productive citizens," a category that is both racialized and gendered. How have women and men in this community come to know what they know about development and well-being? And how, based on this knowledge, do they engage with development projects and work toward well-being? Carruyo illustrates how competing interests in agricultural production, tourism, and conservation shape, collide with, and are remade by local practices and logics.

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