Abstract
Helen Safa has been a leading program builder and pioneer in research that examines the complex intersections of gender, race, class, and nation in Latin America and the Caribbean. Her comparative research culminated in her influential book, The Myth of the Male Breadwinner: Women and Industrialization in the Caribbean (1995), which examined gender, family, and employment across three Caribbean societies. Over several decades Safa has inspired scholarship throughout the Caribbean and the Americas and her work is exemplary of engaged anthropology in the region. Here I present work I conducted in Cuba that was guided, like my work in Peru, Nicaragua, and southern Mexico by the writings of Safa and others who saw the critical need to bring gender into meaningful discussion in the field of Latin American and Caribbean studies. In what follows, drawn from my broader research on tourism in four nations, I explore and reflect on the contemporary dynamics of sex and romance tourism in Cuba. I suggest that the allure of this domain of tourism may be enhanced by Cuba’s global political identity, and that Cuban women participating in commodified and intimate exchanges reveal an ability to get along in a market economy that generally excludes them.

Keywords
Cuba, tourism, sex work, gender, race, sexuality.