

# Tourism, Gender, and Globalization: Tourism in Cuba During the Special Period

*Elisa Facio,\* Maura Toro-Morn,\*\* and Anne R. Roschelle\*\*\**

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I.	INTRODUCTION.....	120
II.	METHODOLOGY .....	121
III.	PLEASURE ISLAND: TOURISM IN PRE-REVOLUTIONARY CUBA .....	122
IV.	THE CUBAN REVOLUTION: GENDER AND WORK .....	124
V.	RECTIFICATION PROCESS: TOURISM AS A GLOBAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY .....	125
VI.	THE SPECIAL PERIOD AND TOURISM.....	128
VII.	THE CONSEQUENCES OF TOURISM AS A GLOBAL STRATEGY: RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	131
	<i>A. Women Workers in the Tourism Industry .....</i>	131
	<i>B. Respondents' Perceptions of Tourism .....</i>	134
	<i>C. Respondents' Perceptions of Jineterismo.....</i>	138
VIII.	CONCLUSION.....	140

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\* Elisa Facio is an associate professor of Ethnic Studies and Chicana/Chicano Studies in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of Colorado, Boulder. She received her B.A. with honors in sociology from Santa Clara University and her M.A. and Ph.D in sociology from the University of California, Berkeley. Professor Facio is the recipient of several research and teaching awards, including a National Institute of Mental Health fellowship, a National Institute of Aging postdoctoral fellowship, an American Sociological Association Minority Fellowship, and the Chicana Dissertation Fellowship at UC Santa Barbara.

\*\* Maura Toro-Morn is an Associate Professor of Sociology in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Illinois State University. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on the intersection of race, class, and gender, feminist theory, research methods, introduction to Latino/a Studies, and immigration. She edited *MIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION: A GLOBAL VIEW* (2004) with Marixsa Alicea. Her areas of research include global migrations from a gendered perspective, Latino/a immigrant families, and gender and work in the Caribbean.

\*\*\* Anne R. Roschelle is an Associate Professor in, and the Chair of, the Department of Sociology at the State University of New York at New Paltz. She received her Ph.D. and M.A. in Sociology, from the State University of New York at Albany. She is the author of numerous articles on the intersection of race, class, and gender with a focus on extended kinship networks and family poverty.

## I. INTRODUCTION

*I am not so happy with my work. I studied for five years to be a translator. I studied English literature and language for five years to become a translator. Now I work as a secretary. I type letters, organize documents, send faxes—not very satisfactory.*

—Niurka

*I work as a guesthouse owner. I rent rooms to foreigners. In Cuba this type of work costs a lot of money. There are people who do it legally and illegally. I do it legally. It is very hard work. My estimated income is hard to determine. It depends on the number of clients I receive. Monthly I may have guests for twelve days, depending on the number of clients I have it could be as much as \$200 U.S. There are months when I have no clients and have still had to pay for clients.*

—Laura

The previous quotes, collected during a summer of ethnographic research in Cuba, highlight some of the realities Cuban women experience while employed in the tourist sector. During the last decade, Cuba has turned to tourism as an economic strategy to gain much-needed capital to deal with the country's economic crisis, which resulted from the fall of the Soviet Union. In our previous work we documented how Cuban women and men workers struggled to make ends meet during the Special Period.<sup>1</sup> We drew attention to how the growth of jobs in the tourist sector led to worker redistribution and occupational downward mobility, as workers moved from professional to less skilled jobs in the tourism industry with few opportunities for mobility. We also captured how the Special Period has impacted Cuban families. Here, we extend and deepen our analysis of the tourism industry.

This paper examines social and economic consequences of Cuba's tourism strategy. We focus on Cuba's most recent effort to develop tourism as a global strategy, we analyze the repercussions of this strategy for Cuban workers (particularly women), and we examine the perceptions of tourism among Cuban citizens. In addition, we discuss *jineterismo* (prostitution), an unintended consequence of Cuba's current tourist policy. We begin our discussion with a general description of tourism in the 1950s, Cuba's golden age of tourism. Although Cuba was a society besieged by social problems and inequality in the 1950s, for foreign visitors it was a tropical paradise of beaches, casinos, music, and exotic prostitutes. Unfortunately, for the average Cuban, poverty, illness, and disease made life very difficult. In 1959, Fidel Castro sought to eradicate such rampant inequality and eliminate the perception of Cuba as the "Las Vegas of the Caribbean."

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<sup>1</sup> Maura Toro-Morn, Anne R. Roschelle & Elisa Facio, *Gender, Work, and Family in Cuba: The Challenges of the Special Period*, 18 J. DEV. SOCIETIES 32 (2003).

With the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 and the tightening of the U.S. blockade in the early 1990s, Cuba found itself in dire economic straits, which dramatically affected the organization of the tourist industry. Economic hardships in the 1990s forced the Cuban government to develop policies to salvage the economic, cultural, and social gains of the revolution. Thus the "Special Period," a wartime economy in times of peace, included a radical and abrupt plan of rationing food, oil, and material resources needed for daily survival. Most importantly, Cuba also opened up foreign tourism to generate hard currency needed for food imports, medicine, machinery, and much more. The most troubling consequence of tourism as an economic strategy has been the rise of *jineterismo*. The economic crisis of the 1990s was so severe that it drove men and women of all educational levels, political viewpoints, and family backgrounds into prostitution.<sup>2</sup> Cuban men and women once again became actively involved in global sex work. In our paper we raise questions about the gendered and racialized dimensions of the Cuban sex trade.

Theoretically, our goal is to contribute to a much-needed dialogue on how tourism as a globalization strategy impacts the lives of women and men. Feminists have made significant contributions in our understanding of gender and globalization;<sup>3</sup> however, very little work has addressed the relationship between tourism and globalization. Our research contributes to this body of literature by focusing on Cuba, the most recent example of a socialist country undergoing a transition to a market economy.

## II. METHODOLOGY

Our desire to engage in collaborative work about Cuba emerged while we were attending a Women's Studies Conference at the University of Havana in the fall of 1999. Although we were busy with other research projects that occupied our time, we were fascinated by the situation that we saw developing in Cuba as the country moved from a socialist to a market economy. While attending the Women's Studies Conference, we met with Cuban academics and began to ask questions that intrigued us about what we saw. At the hotel, we took notes and reflected upon what Cubans were telling us about their lives at the time. As our trip came to an end, we began to discuss the possibilities of returning to Cuba to conduct further research.

In keeping with social science protocols, we reviewed the available literature and talked to colleagues who studied Cuban society, economy, and

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<sup>2</sup> Elvira Diaz-Vallina & Julio Cesar Gonzalez, *The Self-Emancipation of Women in Cuba*, in CUBAN TRANSITIONS AT THE MILLENNIUM 15, 27-28 (Eloise Linger & John W. Cotman eds., 2000).

<sup>3</sup> See generally Valentine Moghadam, *Gender and the Global Economy*, in REVISIONING GENDER 128 (Myra Marx Fereee et al. eds., 1998); GLOBAL WOMAN: NANNIES, MAIDS, AND SEX WORKERS IN THE NEW ECONOMY (Barbara Ehrenreich & Arlie Hochschild eds., 2002); Maura Toro-Morn, *Globalization, Gender, and Migration: A Historical Overview of Migratory Movements* (1999) (presented at the *Women's Employment: Linking the Local and Global Conference*, Illinois State University) (on file with author).

politics. We found that while there is much written about politics, economic restructuring, and development, there is very little research about gender issues facing men, women, and families. We used these preliminary research strategies to acquire the necessary background knowledge as well as an understanding of the material, cultural, and interpretive circumstances to allow us to return to Cuba to conduct more research.

In the summer of 2000, we traveled to Cuba to conduct our research. In general, we were concerned with the social and economic repercussions of the emergence of a two-tiered economy. In addition, we were interested in investigating the gendered dimensions of the newly implemented economic reforms on both the workplace and the family. We conducted thirty-five interviews with Cuban women and men across a broad range of socio-economic levels. Interviews were conducted in Spanish but translated into English throughout the course of the interview. This was necessary because one member of the research team had some knowledge of Spanish, but was not fluent. For example, one researcher asked a question in Spanish, another researcher translated it into English, and the third researcher wrote it verbatim in English. In addition, field notes were simultaneously taken in Spanish. Interviews took place in the homes of respondents and our temporary residence in Cuba. We purposely stayed with a Cuban family at their guesthouse to gain a first hand account of Cuban life. By staying with a family, we participated in the daily routine of Cuban life, attended parties, and witnessed neighborhood life, something that would not have been accessible to us had we stayed at a hotel. Depending on where the interviews took place, we either walked, took a *botero* (Cuban taxi), or hired a medical student on summer vacation to take us around the city. Such arrangements led us to critically evaluate our places in the tourist industry as both researchers and privileged tourists. Thus, the contradictions of conducting research within the context of Cuba's 'tourist apartheid' were poignantly revealed.

### III. PLEASURE ISLAND: TOURISM IN PRE-REVOLUTIONARY CUBA

By the 1950s a variety of trade agreements facilitated U.S. business access to and control of Cuban markets.<sup>4</sup> During the regime of Fulgencio Batista, Cuba became subservient to the United States economically, politically, and culturally. Havana gained a reputation as the "Las Vegas of the Caribbean." Tourists from the United States were drawn to casinos, exotic nightlife of music, drinking, and beautiful Cuban women.

The U.S. Cuban foreign minister of the 1950s, Andres Vargas Gomez, boasted of a Havana that spent as much on parties "as any great capital of the world."<sup>5</sup> Writer Lalo de la Torre stated that Cuban women had reached, in the course of the present century, great social and political

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<sup>4</sup> SUSAN EVA ECKSTEIN, *BACK FROM THE FUTURE: CUBA UNDER Castro* 17 (1994).

<sup>5</sup> LOIS M. SMITH & ALFRED PADULA, *SEX AND REVOLUTION: WOMEN IN SOCIALIST CUBA* 7 (1996).

importance. But, underlying the glitter and façade of this “pleasure island” was another reality. Pre-revolutionary Cuba was a society with many social problems and tremendous social inequality. For example, only 9.8% of Cuban women held jobs.<sup>6</sup> Economic underdevelopment was reflected not only in high unemployment rates for women but also in the kinds of jobs women performed. Some women worked as secretaries, nurses, or teachers. Others worked in the textile or tobacco industries. But the overwhelming majority of working women, 70%, were domestic servants.<sup>7</sup>

Women who worked as maids were often treated like slaves by their employers. Domestic servants worked excessively long hours, were required to live with their employers so they were always available, and were often sexually abused. Many domestic workers were young women from rural areas, driven by the poverty of the countryside, in search of work. Women suffered the most from the effects of Cuba’s underdeveloped economy because they did the majority of housework and childcare. In addition, Cuban women did not have the luxury of electricity or running water, making household tasks extremely difficult. Women had significantly higher rates of illiteracy than men. Economic stagnation and limited industrial development made it nearly impossible for undereducated, unskilled women to work in occupations other than domestic service.<sup>8</sup>

Mirta Rodríguez Calderon, a leading journalist of the Revolution, recalls the misery of poor women in the countryside. Rodríguez Calderon argues that the prototypical woman of the Batista regime was Yina, the prostitute born to a family of eight, with no father and no hope, and sold into vice at age eleven to service poor men in backwater towns for forty cents.<sup>9</sup> In the countryside, prostitutes made their annual migration to service cane cutters during the sugar harvest.

The tourist boom in the 1950s was enhanced by Havana’s reputation for tropical sensuality. *Tropicana*, the world’s largest outdoor nightclub, with chorus girls in feathers and G-strings, fomented the eroticization of Cuban women for commercial purposes. Young men advertising the availability of their sisters gave visitors disembarking from steamships in Havana “business cards.” In the city of Santiago, bar girls eagerly awaited the arrival of American sailors on weekend leave from the naval base at Guantanamo Bay.<sup>10</sup> As Cuba increasingly marketed pleasure to fill its hotels and restaurants, advertising agencies and even tour guides slanted the appeal accordingly. For example, *Terry’s Guide to Cuba* informed tourists on how to

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<sup>6</sup> ELIZABETH STONE, *WOMEN AND THE CUBAN REVOLUTION* 6 (1981).

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> Mirta Rodríguez Calderon, *Yo Fui una Prostituta: Apuntes Para la Memoria Necesaria*, *BOHEMIA*, Mar. 2, 1990, at 8-9, reprinted in SMITH & PADULA, *supra* note 5, at 8 (1996).

<sup>10</sup> ROSALIE SCHWARTZ, *PLEASURE ISLAND: TOURISM AND TEMPTATION IN CUBA* 86 (1997).

purchase sexual services in Havana's officially nonexistent "indecorous quarters," an "unfragrant" section of the old port area. Teenagers, described as ranging in color from peach to coal, roamed the streets alongside ebony antiques winking "with incendiary eyes" at passing men.<sup>11</sup>

Havana became a site of personal leisure and pleasure for North Americans with time and money. Leaders of Cuba's tourism industry constructed images of an exotic and erotic island devoted to satiating the desires of North American tourists. Elements of Afro-Cuban culture such as music, dance, and religion were manipulated, exploited, and racialized for the promotion of Cuban tourism. Representations of Afro-Cuban culture as sensual, exotic, and mystical created an essentialized image of *mulattas* or Afro-Cuban women that was exploited solely for profit. Consequently, the racialization and sexualization of Afro-Cuban women, constructed and promoted by the tourism industry, solidified images of Cuba as a "pleasure island."<sup>12</sup>

#### IV. THE CUBAN REVOLUTION: GENDER AND WORK

Although twentieth-century Cuban women defied traditional gender roles by joining the revolutionary struggle, the Revolution was slow to address gender inequality in Cuban society. While Fidel Castro made some statements about women's equality prior to the declaration of socialism, the "woman question" was never part of the revolutionary struggle. It was not until the creation of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), occurring on August 23, 1960, that the "woman question" was first addressed. The FMC was created to bring women into the revolutionary process. In 1961, the FMC launched a massive literacy campaign in which 70,000 volunteers traveled throughout the country teaching people to read and write. In addition, they raised over a million dollars for daycare in 1963 and developed a national daycare system.<sup>13</sup> Members of the FMC organized militias and Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) throughout the country. Because the FMC was an organization made up of and led entirely by women, individuals who had never participated in public life felt comfortable in its ranks.<sup>14</sup> The FMC also provided a place where women could discuss gender inequality and advocate for social change. As a result of the FMC's social movement activity, women obtained rights to education, jobs, paid maternity leave, childcare, and abortion on demand. In addition, the FMC was instrumental in ending such degrading customs as sexist advertising and beauty contests. By 1989, the FMC "had nearly 3.4 million members."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> SMITH & PADULA, *supra* note 5, at 23.

<sup>14</sup> STONE, *supra* note 6, at 23.

<sup>15</sup> Sheryl L. Lutjens, *Reading Between the Lines: Women, the State, and Rectification in Cuba*, 85 *LATIN AM. PERSP.* 100, 108 (1995).

One of the most significant struggles facing the FMC was raising awareness of the importance of incorporating women into the labor market. The Cuban leadership encouraged women's workforce participation, but this effort was not motivated solely by the needs of the Revolution. The revolutionary government acknowledged that women's oppression stemmed from their confinement to the home, isolation from broader social life, and economic dependence on their husbands. An important first step toward the integration of women into the work force was the voluntary labor that women undertook throughout the 1960s. By 1968, a new stage of women's incorporation into the labor force began with the initiation of an FMC campaign designed to bring 100,000 women into full-time work each year. During this campaign, stereotypes about the kinds of jobs women were capable of doing were subverted. Women became doctors, engineers, lawyers, university professors, and technicians. Women also began to work in sugar mills, factories, and in other light industries.<sup>16</sup> As a result, women's participation in the labor force increased from 24.9% in 1970 to 44.5% in 1979, representing a 78.7% increase within a nine-year period.<sup>17</sup>

Women's increased participation in the labor force was partially a result of the state's moral campaign to get women to work and the increased social supports it extended to working women during the 1970s. Women responded positively to the state's efforts to change their social and economic situations. By 1980, forty-one percent of postsecondary students were women.

In 1976, the Constitution stressed women's equal rights in marriage, employment, earnings, and education. The legal formalization of women's rights was embodied in the Family Code, which stressed that men were to share in housework when women were gainfully employed. Fidel Castro referred to woman's incorporation into the workforce as the "revolution within the revolution."<sup>18</sup>

#### V. RECTIFICATION PROCESS: TOURISM AS A GLOBAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY

In 1959, the Cuban state and class structure were radically transformed with the triumph of the Revolution. Fidel Castro set in motion policies that contributed to state ownership of most property and resulted in a major redistribution of wealth. These radical reforms were justified as necessary and appropriate for building Cuban socialism.

With respect to tourism, Fidel Castro eliminated prostitution by integrating former prostitutes into the new socialist economy. In 1961, Law 993 was passed, which outlawed prostitution. Authorities had three options

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<sup>16</sup> See Therese Jennissen & Coleen Lundy, *Women in Cuba and the Move to a Private Market Economy*, 24 WOMEN'S STUD. INT'L FORUM 181 (2001); SMITH & PADULA, *supra* note 5, at 111-12 (citing the increasing number of women working as agricultural engineers and as technicians employed in industries such as the construction industry).

<sup>17</sup> SMITH & PADULA, *supra* note 5, at 101.

<sup>18</sup> Toro-Morn et al., *supra* note 1.

in sentencing convicted prostitutes: therapy, reeducation, or imprisonment. The government viewed prostitutes as “hapless victims” of North American tourists and sent them to schools to be rehabilitated. These schools provided ideological and vocational training.<sup>19</sup>

Further, the government abolished privileges for foreign tourists. The state regulated tourism, making the industry readily available to all Cuban citizens. For the first time all Cubans could enjoy the cultural treasures and natural wonders of their own country. The right to have unlimited access to public places was so important to the Revolutionary government that it incorporated the right into the 1976 Constitution. Article 42 establishes the right of “all citizens” to “be served at all restaurants and other public service establishments,” and to “enjoy the same resorts, beaches, parks” and other recreational facilities.<sup>20</sup>

Beginning in 1977, market reforms defied nationalist as well as socialist principles. The price of sugar, Cuba’s main export, dropped to a yearly average of eight cents per pound, down from a yearly average of thirty cents in 1974.<sup>21</sup> Cuba was left with the problem of repaying Western loans contracted when world market sugar prices had been high, and with few goods that hard currency customers would buy. Foreign investments, such as contract manufacturing and joint ventures, were subsequently encouraged. In 1982, the Cuban government issued a foreign investment code, which formalized its efforts to attract private capital from abroad. Sectors opened to foreign investors included tourism, light industry, medical equipment, medicine, construction, and agro-industry. Fidel Castro initially opposed tourism on moral grounds because of its prior association with gambling, gangsterism, and prostitution under Batista. But, in the late 1970s, Castro modified his stance by arguing that tourism could be regulated to avoid the degenerating effect it had had before the Revolution. Castro hoped foreign investment and tourism would stimulate hard currency earnings.<sup>22</sup>

In 1986, the government launched the Rectification Process, a campaign to “rectify errors and negative tendencies.” The Castro government argued that the Revolution had gone astray. The Rectification Process involved a “battle of ideas,” political and ideological work to correct “negative tendencies” such as mercantilism and petty-bourgeois ideology. Castro pointed to the injustices committed in the early 1980s by people who had put their own interests above the collective good, when the government tolerated market reforms. In spite of the Rectification Process, the government aggressively pursued Western economic ties in the form of Western management expertise, Western assistance in export markets, and Western

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<sup>19</sup> STONE, *supra* note 6, at 23.

<sup>20</sup> ECKSTEIN, *supra* note 4, at 57.

<sup>21</sup> *Id.* at 51.

<sup>22</sup> *Id.*



investment. Joint venture agreements were reached in electronics, mechanical engineering, petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, textiles, and once again, tourism. Julio Garcia Oliveras, then President of Cuba's Chamber of Commerce, stated that the "Russians turned our technicians into captains and sergeants of industry but now we are looking to the West to turn us into business executives."<sup>23</sup>

Despite ideological contradictions to the socialist project, tourism became an increasingly important source of hard currency during the 1980s. *Sociedades anonimas* (SAs), semiautonomous state agencies, grew in number and significance in the foreign trade sector. The SAs operated with considerable autonomy from day-to-day budgetary constraints of state ministers, at home and abroad, for profit and hard currency. In 1987, Cubanacan was established to attract foreign investment for hotel development. In addition, Contex, a fashion enterprise, and Artez, a promoter of live music and performing arts, invested in the Cuban economy. Cubanacan promoted package beach holidays, conferences, and health tourism. It was responsible for the construction of most new tourist accommodations and for bringing in a quarter of all foreign visits at the end of the 1980s. Companies from Spain, Venezuela, Mexico, and Italy invested in Cubanacan hotels to the tune of around \$40 to \$100 million each. In 1988, another mixed-enterprise tourist agency, Gaviota, was established, aimed at the high-income tourist market. It opened a health resort in the Escambray Mountains and a small hunting reserve in Pinar del Rio province. Havanatur, a Cimex subsidiary with tourist offices abroad, brought half a million tourists to Cuba between 1979 and 1989. It became the biggest tour operator selling holidays in Cuba. The number of tourists rose from some 130,000 in 1980 to 326,000 by the end of the decade.<sup>24</sup>

Partly through the promotion of SAs and foreign investment, the government aggressively encouraged Western tourism during the Rectification Period. Tourism had been the island's second largest hard currency earner at the eve of the Revolution. However, it was subsequently discouraged, as previously noted, on moral grounds, for contributing to societal decadence. Nonetheless, tourism was tolerated during the Rectification Period because it generated hard currency. In 1989, the government earned around \$200 million in convertible currency from tourists, a fivefold increase over 1980. As of the late 1980s, only sugar, fish, and oil exports brought in more hard currency than tourism. Tourism came to generate about 12% of the value of hard currency merchandise trade, up from 3% in 1981.<sup>25</sup> Cuba's competitive advantage came not merely from its

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<sup>23</sup> Melinda Gonzales, *Today's Youth, Tomorrow's Future: Cuban Youth into the Twenty First Century* 43-52 (2004) (unpublished B.A. thesis, University of Colorado, Boulder).

<sup>24</sup> Richard Dello Buono, *Rising Food Production Brings Relief to Cuban Consumers*, 15 *CARIBBEAN INSIGHT* 1 (1995).

<sup>25</sup> MARIFELI PEREZ-STABLE, *THE CUBAN REVOLUTION* 73 (1999).

beautiful beaches, but the cost of a holiday, on average, was less than elsewhere in the Caribbean. In 1988, Fidel Castro announced that Cuba would put into effect policies aimed at attracting 600,000 foreign tourists by 1992.<sup>26</sup> With respect to Cuban women's relationship to tourism during this time, many were now working in the lower levels of the industry as secretaries and office clerks. The Confederation of Cuban Workers recognized the need to promote women into management and to give them full access to training programs in tourism.<sup>27</sup>

#### VI. THE SPECIAL PERIOD AND TOURISM

Strong economic ties with the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe maintained Cuba's economic growth during the first thirty years of the Revolution. Although the U.S. blockade made the situation in Cuba difficult, it was manageable with support from socialist countries. After the fall of the Soviet Union, nearly seventy-five to eighty percent of Cuba's international trade was eliminated. "This dramatic change in Cuba's international economic relations coupled with internal economic shortcomings led to a serious economic crisis—one that this island is still striving to overcome."<sup>28</sup> Passing the Torricelli Law of 1992<sup>29</sup> and the Helms-Burton Act<sup>30</sup> strengthened the U.S. blockade passed in order to derail the Cuban Revolution. The Torricelli Law abruptly "cut-off Cuba's purchases of food and medicine from subsidiaries of U.S. companies based in Third World countries and establish[ed] strict prohibitions against ships entering Cuban ports."<sup>31</sup> The Helms-Burton Act "sought to prevent foreign investment in Cuba"<sup>32</sup> by "decreeing compensations of claims by Cuban Americans, or restitution of their property"<sup>33</sup> that was confiscated during the nationalization of Cuba.

Although Fidel Castro led a revolution that sought to end the tourism industry's corruption in Cuban society, the fall in the international price of sugar, the country's chief export, left the government with little choice but to pursue tourism as a reanimation strategy. The government hoped its beautiful beaches would generate even more hard currency than it had in the latter 1980s. The tourism sector grossed an estimated \$500 million in 1992

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<sup>26</sup> ECKSTEIN, *supra* note 4, at 104.

<sup>27</sup> SMITH & PADULA, *supra* note 5, at 114.

<sup>28</sup> FRANK MCGLYNN, CUBA IN THE SPECIAL PERIOD: CUBAN PERSPECTIVES at x (1997).

<sup>29</sup> Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, Pub. L. 102-484, 106 Stat. 2575 (codified at 22 U.S.C. 6001 to 6010 (2004)).

<sup>30</sup> Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Helms-Burton Act), Pub. L. 114, 110 Stat. 785 (codified at 22 U.S.C. 6021 to 6091 (2004)).

<sup>31</sup> MINISTERIO DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES DE CUBA [Cuban Ministry of Foreign Relations], CUBA'S REPORT TO THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 57/11, July 8, 2003, *available at* [www.cubaminrex.cu/bloqueo/Eng/intro\\_eng.htm](http://www.cubaminrex.cu/bloqueo/Eng/intro_eng.htm) (last visited Sept. 1, 2004).

<sup>32</sup> *Id.*

<sup>33</sup> PEREZ-STABLE, *supra* note 25, at 209.

and \$700 million the following year. Cubanacan boasted 100% returns on investments in five years. Over 424,000 tourists came, and the government aimed to more than double the number by the mid-1990s.<sup>34</sup>

In its drive to attract tourists the government played on the image of the “old Havana.” In 1991, for example, the government opened a Tropicana nightclub in Santiago, a club capitalizing on the name of Havana’s most famous pre-revolutionary nightspot. More importantly, despite objections from the FMC, the Cuban tourist board sponsored advertising campaigns featuring dark-skinned women in bikinis to lure foreigners to Cuban beaches. According to Smith and Padula,

[I]n the spring of 1990, the government allowed *Playboy* to photograph topless *Cubanas* romping on the beach at Varadero. Three of the main Cuban enterprises that operate resorts—Cubatur, Cubanacan, and Cimex—hosted a *Playboy* trip around the time the special period was launched. The government allowed the magazine to feature the article on the “Girls of Cuba,” contingent on coverage of the island’s tourist facilities.<sup>35</sup>

The author of the article claimed that while the FMC had protested, authorization had come from men high in the government. A top FMC official later reported that the leaders of her organization “had been furious . . . calling the fiasco a ‘disaster.’ . . . By 1994 even foreign hoteliers were becoming worried that Cuba’s growing image as a destination for sexual tourism would prejudice the possibilities for family vacationers.”<sup>36</sup>

In addition to the sexualization and racialization of dark-skinned Cuban women, *jineterismo* re-emerged in Cuba. The opening of Cuba to foreign tourism and investments, the free circulation of dollars within the Cuban economy, and the establishment of market mechanisms indirectly facilitated the reemergence of *jineterismo* during the Special Period. The opening of Cuba to tourism and foreign investment constituted the so-called emergency economy, aimed at stopping the economic crisis of the 1990s, while attempting to maintain the Revolution’s greatest achievements, such as free education, free health care, and a comprehensive social security system. Nevertheless, these new economic measures have generated social inequalities and unintended consequences including the re-emergence of *jineterismo*.

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<sup>34</sup> Elisa Facio, *Jineterismo during the Special Period*, in CUBAN TRANSITIONS AT THE MILLENNIUM, *supra* note 2, at 64; Dello Buono *supra* note 24, at 5; Pamela Falk, *Cuban Tourism Continues Apace*, CONDE NAST TRAVELLER, 1996, at 40.

<sup>35</sup> SMITH & PADULA, *supra* note 5, at 186.

<sup>36</sup> *Id.*

The international politics of debt and pleasure became intimately intertwined in the 1990s.<sup>37</sup> Essentially, Cuba became another formerly “socialist” government forced to rely on tourism for economic sustenance and development. Cuba was previously dubious about tourism as a route to genuine development, especially if “development was to include preservation of national sovereignty.” This belief in the logic of fueling development and economic growth with tourism underlies the full-page color advertisements in tourist brochures. Many of the ads that lure travelers to sunny beaches and romantic ruins are designed and paid for by government tourist offices. Most of these bureaucratic agencies depend on femininity, masculinity, and heterosexuality in making their appeals and achieving their goals.

In March 1996, the Central Committee of the Communist Party examined the impact of the government’s tourism policy on revolutionary ideology. The Committee openly criticized prostitution as “humiliating” and noted the changed values of its citizenry brought about by access to dollars.<sup>38</sup> In addition, the Committee expressed discontent with Cubans leaving their jobs for less skilled work in the tourism industry. Informal networks emerged that facilitated prostitution and an ever increasing black market economy. Taxi drivers, bartenders, and hotel workers began to procure sex for customers, which made prostitutes more readily available to international tourists. Even though the sex shows and brothels, characteristic of pre-revolutionary Cuba, no longer existed, the selling of sex became more common. The recent rise in prostitution is extremely troublesome for a government that has promoted non-exploitation and gender parity for more than four decades.<sup>39</sup>

Clearly, President Fidel Castro is faced with a major conflict. Cuba needs hard currency not only to alleviate the country’s economic crisis, but also to salvage the Revolution. Tourism, although regarded as a necessary evil, is flourishing and is more profitable than sugar production. Schwartz states that “travelers from capitalist countries do generate expectations among Cubans, but the government cannot risk the internal upheavals that unavoidably diminish the number of visitors.”<sup>40</sup> Thus, Cuba must remain flexible in catering to tourists’ needs in order to avoid negative publicity and dissatisfaction among its clientele while maintaining socialist ideals. In his desperate quest for dollars to alleviate a bankrupt economy, Fidel Castro has unintentionally recreated the very inequities he sought to eliminate.

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<sup>37</sup> CYNTHIA ENLOE, MAKING FEMINIST SENSE OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS: BANANAS, BEACHES AND BASES 40 (1990).

<sup>38</sup> SCHWARTZ, *supra* note 10, at 210-11.

<sup>39</sup> *Id.*

<sup>40</sup> *Id.*

VII. THE CONSEQUENCES OF TOURISM AS A GLOBAL STRATEGY:  
RESEARCH FINDINGS

In our previous work we have documented how the Special Period has hit women workers particularly hard.<sup>41</sup> Women have moved into occupations in the service sector that are frequently part time, temporary, low paying, and lacking in opportunities for mobility. In our research we found that women also left established jobs to work in the tourism industry because it offered higher wages. We point out that the entrance of Cuba into the global economy has not followed the traditional route of development via export processing zones. Like other Caribbean nations, Cuba has turned to tourism as a quick fix to generate the capital needed to reanimate the economy. This move has undermined the successes that women have achieved in the labor market as a result of the Revolution. Here we want to extend our analysis by examining the experiences of women workers in the tourism industry. We draw from our interviews and fieldwork to show the struggles women encountered as workers in the tourism industry. We also had an opportunity to interview Cubans about their perceptions of tourism and its accompanying problems, such as *jinetismo*. Cubans were very candid with us with respect to tourism as an economic strategy. They understood the contradictory nature of Cuba's tourism policy. They described in fuller detail the problems of the tourism apartheid and the realities of living in a two-tier economy.

A. *Women Workers in the Tourism Industry*

One of the most important consequences of the re-emergence of tourism has been the movement of workers from skilled, professional work in the formal labor market to the formal and informal tourism sectors. In addition, underemployment and unemployment have increased during the Special Period. For example, Niruka,<sup>42</sup> a respondent in our research who studied for five years to be a translator, now works as a secretary for a French tourist agency. Even though women like Niruka have found work in one of Cuba's most profitable sectors, she is tremendously dissatisfied with her work and feels she is overqualified for her job.<sup>43</sup>

Women who work in the tourist industry are now faced with sexual harassment, a workplace obstacle nearly eliminated after the Revolution. Laura speaks to the issue of sexual harassment in the following quote:

Yes, it is true that the state protects women from sexual harassment, but the one place where the state doesn't protect women from sexual harassment is in the tourism industry—not the entire tourism industry—mostly hotels. If the manager *se pone para ti* (is interested in you), if he continues

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<sup>41</sup> Toro-Morn et al., *supra* note 1.

<sup>42</sup> All names used in this paper are pseudonyms.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Niruka, Cuban secretary (Summer 2000).

to harass you, he will make your life sort of impossible. Mostly harassment is in terms of work. He chases and accosts you—this sort of thing happened to me. The harassment is so you give up and become sexual prey, or you get fired.<sup>44</sup>

Further, working women in the tourism industry complained about the lack of childcare. Another respondent, Maria, makes reference to the contradictions of state laws or socialist ideals where programs, supposedly monitored by the FMC, are intended to facilitate women's full participation in the labor force by providing childcare. Maria provides the following information:

Equality exists in the law but it doesn't exist in reality. There is an unequal gender division of labor. Theoretically the state supports women. There is the FMC (Federation of Cuban Women). The cost of childcare is based on a percentage of your salary. (It cost me about thirty to forty pesos per month when my daughter was in childcare). The State supports women in limited ways. I can take one year off after having a child and I cannot lose my job. At seven months pregnant, I can stop working and get paid. During the year of maternity leave you get three months salary. You may not find childcare right away—it is very selective.<sup>45</sup>

Laura also states:

From the perspective of work before we were protected—now women do anything not to lose their privileges at work. For example, in the past if your child got sick you could be absent with no worries. Sometimes they didn't even notice. Now if the child gets sick you can't take them to the hospital. You must take them to a friend's home who will then take them to the hospital. We get very worried. In the past you lived with a peace of mind concerning the future of your children. Today that is no longer the case.<sup>46</sup>

Niurka states that those women who work in the tourism industry simply cannot be absent if their children become ill. She says that "[t]he tourism industry has some protections as other work but there is much less flexibility."<sup>47</sup> The lack of childcare support has led to forced unemployment for some women.

Maria also notes how gender ideology regarding women and work has contributed to women being forced out of the labor market. Maria stated that

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<sup>44</sup> Interview with Laura, Cuban citizen and former physics student (Summer 2000).

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Maria, Cuban lawyer (Summer 2000).

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Laura, *supra* note 44.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Niruka, *supra* note 43.

“[t]here is a lot of unemployment in Cuba now. If I, as a lawyer, compete against a man for a job, he will get the job because there is an assumption that I have children.”<sup>48</sup> She told us of a woman at her workplace with two daughters who lasted a few months because they overworked her. When the woman’s child got sick, everyone in the household got sick. The woman came to work crying one day and was forced to resign from her job because management perceived her as a troublesome worker. Maria described it aptly, “If you bring too many family problems to work, you’re considered problematic.”<sup>49</sup>

Finally, Maria stated that Cuba has a large number of unemployed workers. Whether workers were forced to resign or “chose” leave their jobs “voluntarily” is difficult to determine. Additionally, gender differences in unemployment rates are equally difficult to assess. However, based on our research, a number of women such as Maribel involuntarily left their jobs or were pushed out of the formal labor market. For example, Maribel no longer found it economically practical to continue working as a nurse. Maribel is officially unemployed. She states:

I work in the house. I don’t work anymore as a nurse. It is very difficult for health care workers. I earned about 230 pesos which is about twelve dollars a month. That is without any days absent to take care of my daughter. It isn’t worth it. I worked as a nurse for ten years. I haven’t worked in four. It is more work to work than not to. Taking into consideration that I don’t actually even make ten pesos—but if I worked it would cost more than ten pesos to eat breakfast, lunch and a snack for the week. Even if you don’t eat anything all day long and stay hungry, it is not enough to purchase other necessary stuff.<sup>50</sup>

Many unemployed people, including university graduates and professionals, became self-employed in the informal sector of the tourist industry with the establishment of *paladares* (home restaurants). This is an important source of self-employment for older Cuban women. Maria describes this situation as follows:

One thing that did not exist before is taxes. Law 77 regulates the new tax law—the possibility for unemployed people to open their own businesses. The most critical issue that existed here was food. The idea for self-employment came from Telenoudas, from Brazil. The word *Paladare* comes from a Brazilian woman who was poor and opened her own small business (food and products) called Paladare. So, *Paladares*

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<sup>48</sup> Interview with Maria, *supra* note 45.

<sup>49</sup> *Id.*

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Maribel (Summer 2000).

must pay taxes. Shoemakers, carpenters (all trades) must now pay taxes. Professionals who graduate from the university are prohibited by the State to be self-employed. So people lie and become self-employed. There are ways to skirt all the laws in Cuba.<sup>51</sup>

Our findings regarding the impact of the tourist industry on labor revealed complexities and contradictions. Despite the challenging and difficult socio-economic conditions confronted by the Cuban people, the government remains committed to using tourism as a major vehicle for its economic development. Given this situation, we were curious to learn about people's opinions regarding the ramifications of tourism, the topic of the next section.

### *B. Respondents' Perceptions of Tourism*

During our research, Cubans became very animated while speaking about tourism. Carlos, for example, exclaimed: "*Capitalismo de mentira!* Fake capitalism! Capitalism for foreign industry only. The economic crisis had such an impact on the youth. The possibilities of growth, no opportunities for entertainment. No traditions, too many changes too fast. Before the 1990s, tourism was very small . . . mostly technicians from socialist countries."<sup>52</sup> Previously, Carlos could go and stay at a local hotel for rest and relaxation. However, during the Special Period, the privilege of going to a hotel for personal pleasure had been eliminated for all Cubans.

Cubans refer to the disparity between the high life of tourists and their own austere, declining standard of living as "tourism apartheid." Foreign tourists frequent dollar restaurants and dollar stores, use dollar taxis, eat food and use transportation that Cubans cannot, and spend no time standing in lines for goods and services. The government's need for hard currency has led it to reverse its anti-tourist stance and to give foreigners preferential treatment. Maribel expresses her thoughts about tourism as follows:

My impression is that I think tourism is good. Unlike other places, foreigners and tourists here are privileged. But in Cuba, the foreigners are privileged and the Cubans are disadvantaged, discriminated against. Cubans don't have access to things whereas tourists do. I can't go to a hotel. When tourism wasn't part of the national economic agenda we could go where we wanted. The only thing we have left to enjoy is the beach, which they can't prohibit because it is public. In the past, one of our favorite pastimes was to go out and eat; and now it is not available. Previously, we could go out and see the tourist sites; but no more. In addition, Cubans

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<sup>51</sup> Interview with Maria, *supra* note 45.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Carlos, Cuban citizen (Summer 2000).



feel discriminated against because the Cubans in the tourist industry—when you are a foreigner, they treat you like a queen or king. When Cubans do have the money to go to those places, the Cubans treat you poorly. When Cubans do have the money to go out, it is truly a sacrifice—it is very rare to go and enjoy the tourist sites accessible to tourists. The money I get from abroad is not for fun. One of the benefits is that tourism has given other Cubans access to U.S. dollars for those who don't have family in the United States. To some extent it has been good; in others, it is bad.<sup>53</sup>

Janet, another participant, expresses similar feelings by stating:

[T]ourism has become a way for economic development and that's what the State tells us. The idea is to develop Cuba as a tourist island. I don't see the light at the end of the tunnel—maybe future generations. Maybe my son feels differently. "The big one" states that even though we will have tourism that we will remain independent and provide free health care and education. Tourism is the base for development . . . our road to development. Tourism has created a hotel industry, but the people feel excluded and marginalized because Cubans can't participate in tourist activities.<sup>54</sup>

In addition to the creation of tourism apartheid, Janet also mentioned the unexpected creation of class differences. She said that "[a]s a result of tourism, there are now different classes of people . . . workers who live on the margins of society. Workers who get money from abroad can purchase goods in these shops and are doing much better."<sup>55</sup> While remaining publicly committed to "equality of sacrifice," Cubans with close ties to émigrés are the main beneficiaries of financial help in the form of remittances, as are workers in the tourist-sector who have access to U.S. dollars. Émigré contacts have become a major material asset in other ways as well. On visits to Cuba, exiles bring suitcases full of consumer goods for their relatives to whom they also give money. However, many Cubans do not benefit from relatives nor do they benefit directly from the tourism sector. Thus, tourism and the policies implemented during the Special Period have led to class distinctions between workers in the informal and formal tourist sectors, those who regularly receive material support from relatives, and those dependent on peso-based salaries or state workers. These new class cleavages have resulted in a two-tiered economy and a "new working class."

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<sup>53</sup> Interview with Maribel, *supra* note 50.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Janet, Cuban citizen (Summer 2000).

<sup>55</sup> *Id.*

The following statement by Laura, formerly a physics professor now operating a guesthouse, expresses her insightful opinions about the realities of tourism.

Tourism as a way for economic development is a long-term project. Tourism is good to resolve economic problems, but since there are a lot of things the Cuban people don't contribute to, like health care, education, and construction of special schools, things that rightfully belong to the people. Since there are so many daily economic needs, like cooking oil, they don't see the possible benefits that tourism brings—since tourists have so much. Tourists benefit indirectly from the infrastructure of Cuba—they use electricity, etc. That's logical and the money they pay trickles down to education, health, etc., which then benefits all Cuban people. From the perspective of the people, what they need most immediately is food and clothing. Daily life is very difficult and Cubans do not see the improvements and benefits tourism brings. Life from the perspective of the people from the lower class is very hard. I think that indeed capitalism is a threat to the values of socialism. Something you can witness in the population because of the class differences that you can already observe. Economically speaking tourism is one of the most important sectors of the economy but our people are not truly prepared for it—everything it entails. We lived a very wholesome life without consumerism and all the evils that consumerism brings. There is societal degradation. The pillars of Cuban society are health and education. Doctors and teachers are truly the pillars of our society and the government has not been able to compensate them in a good way and consequently these two components of Cuban society are threatened. In the past there was tourism but doctors and teachers had the same buying power as those that worked in the tourist industry. That doesn't happen today. Today children don't want to go to school to improve themselves because professionals don't make a lot of money. A rug layer in a hotel makes more than an engineer. On the other hand there is also a lot of marijuana consumption. Delinquency is on the rise and I think that the government has a strong hand with respect to delinquency and has done a lot of things to eliminate it. That is an aspect of tourism I deplore.<sup>56</sup>

In Laura's discussion of the contradictory nature of tourism and implications for daily life, she refers to the "disintegration of societal values

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<sup>56</sup> Interview with Laura, *supra* note 44.

and to the increase in delinquency.”<sup>57</sup> When asked if tourism created delinquency, Carlos replied:

No, economic problems created delinquency. Fidel never wanted tourism. At the beginning, tourism was limited to Varadero and Vinales. There was no tourism in Havana. Now, tourism has surpassed the harvest of sugar as the first source of income in Cuba. Fidel has opened tourism because of the economic problems. In the 1990's, there was no paper, no gas, nothing, rock bottom. Fidel turned *el pueblo* into a bicycling country—500,000 bikes from China. There were periods of no electricity from eight to four.<sup>58</sup>

In addition to expressing their opinions about tourism as an economic strategy, respondents also provided further insight into the realities of accessing dollars. The Cuban people were expected to survive on meager salaries based on pesos and limited rationing in a dollar-based economy. In other words, peso-based salaries and rationing did not meet the daily needs of the Cuban people. In order to compensate for daily shortages, Cuban people were forced to purchase goods in dollar stores. According to Carlos, possessing dollars during the 1980s was considered a criminal activity.<sup>59</sup> In 1993, the Cuban government legalized the dollar because the black market was undermining the domestic economy. Carlos described the resulting dollar-based economy in the following terms: “All those who went abroad brought dollars to buy stuff. Today, you need dollars to buy practically everything. Cubans must access dollars in order to eat. Cuban money is used for food. Food and resources are shared.”<sup>60</sup>

Individuals who cannot access dollars struggle to survive and sometimes live miserably. Carlos explained:

One strategy people use is to accumulate dollars and then exchange [them] for pesos. There is an informal exchange rate among people. Most places sell foodstuffs at American prices. One's ability to take money from a salary to change for dollars is not that great. Also, women are encouraged to retire by fifty-five and men by sixty. Today, house repairs are charged in dollars. Another strategy people use is to come from the countryside to the city to sell chickens, eggs, and other food. Foreigners don't really understand what life is like in Cuba.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> *Id.*

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Carlos, *supra* note 50.

<sup>59</sup> *Id.*

<sup>60</sup> *Id.*

<sup>61</sup> *Id.*

Maribel also commented on the necessity of accessing dollars. She described the current economic situation by stating:

[T]hings are worse now than before. I don't ever remember in my life the scarcity of food people talk about. I lived through the Special Period and the situation then was horrendous, but that was ten years ago. But it is worse now. Then there was no food. Today there is food; the problem is that you have to buy it with dollars. Now you have to access dollars. You see, there is stuff in the market but you can't buy it. People in this country live to eat!<sup>62</sup>

### C. Respondents' Perceptions of *Jineterismo*

Dire economic conditions and the accessibility of dollars generated by tourism have contributed to a reemergence of *jineterismo*. Prostitution, which symbolized the old decadent regime, has returned with a vengeance. Growing numbers of *jineteras* hang out near the hotels frequented by foreigners. University students, professional women, and others who never would have dreamed of selling their bodies for sex prior to the Special Period are currently doing so. The needs for dollars, meals in dollar restaurants, and material goods from dollar stores appear to outweigh the social stigma, the degradation, the health risks, and the fear of arrest.

We asked our respondents about their perceptions of *jineterismo*. Laura gave the following response:

When foreign money starts to trickle in, jobs begin to appear that introduce American dollars. They pay in American dollars or else give you the *jabita*, the occasional gift bag with basic necessities such as soap, toilet tissue, oil, etc. It is then that you begin to see marked and serious differences in the population. As a result, you see an increase in prostitution and other social problems.<sup>63</sup>

In other words, Laura is implying that those who do not have access to salaries in American dollars, or receive *jabitas*, have turned to other methods to gain access to dollars for daily necessities. Janet and Maria also provided opinions about *jineterismo* in general. Janet described the following:

[T]hings are made to make foreigners feel at home. Many people come from Spain to enjoy the sensual qualities of Cuban women. Young women feel forced into prostitution. In some cases, people feel the need of food to eat and to buy things in the stores but they don't have the means to buy these things. I had a friend who had a daughter and wanted

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<sup>62</sup> Interview with Maribel, *supra* note 50.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Laura, *supra* note 44.

to enter prostitution. For her fifteenth birthday she wanted a dress and some other stuff and the mother couldn't afford it. I approached her and told her, "You are very young and your mother is suffering a lot. You must take care of yourself and your health." The most important thing is her value as a person and once she is involved in prostitution society would reject her and she would have no future. I warned her she could get AIDS or go to jail. They [the youth] see themselves in a contradiction: "I want it, but I can't get it; I see it but I can't have it." The girl said, "My mother works, but we can hardly eat with that." All they really want is material goods.<sup>64</sup>

Maria also replied that *jineterismo* is a serious social problem. She stated:

"I recognize that Cuban women are seen abroad as easy and as prostitutes. When I was in Spain and Fidel was in the United States, the coverage in Spain was very negative. The perspective presented was so bad I denied that I was *Cubana* because they thought I was a prostitute. When I traveled with Iberia Airlines the plane was packed with Spanish men coming to Cuba for women prostitutes. They are very cheap here. It is like a tourist package—[a] cheap hotel leaves enough money to have a prostitute for the entire day. I think that *jineterismo* was more pronounced during the Special Period. I do not blame them. Professional women use *jineterismo* as a way to marry foreigners and get out of the country. It is seen as a safety valve. Even families pressure women into this as a safety valve. It is a social phenomenon that is allowed by the government."<sup>65</sup>

In the late 1990s, the Cuban government took an active role in attempting to eliminate *jineterismo*. Carlos told us of *ofensiva policiaca*, a measure to deal with prostitution. Essentially, more police officers were placed in neighborhoods to seek out prostitutes. In addition, punishments were meted out to women who were caught prostituting themselves. Finally, legislation was passed that prevented Cubans from entering hotels unless they work there.<sup>66</sup> However, *jineterismo* has not been eliminated. In fact, our research indicated that many men employed in the tourism industry use their positions to procure prostitutes for clients. We found, for example, that if a tourist pays the hotel doorman fifty dollars he will look the other way when the guest sneaks a *jinetera* into the hotel. During our research, we discussed the reemerging problem of prostitution with a focus group. One young man stated that "tourism is very important these days but it generates/brings about prostitution. We have to deal with it because tourism

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<sup>64</sup> Interview with Janet, *supra* note 54.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Maria, *supra* note 45.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Carlos, *supra* note 52.

is our major source of income. For example, in Varadero they have eliminated prostitution, but what actually happened is that they [prostitutes] are more discreet.”<sup>67</sup> We asked the young men present how they felt about Cuban women being involved in prostitution. One of the men present stated, “I see that [prostitution] as disastrous. I’m telling you this because I have sisters, daughters, a mother, and I would not like to see any of them do it.” A young, female Afro-Cuban doctor was present, and she shared the following comments with us: “Here everybody does it. Here it is a lot easier to sell your body, but it is so disgusting, truly disgusting. First, because as a woman I feel bad; it is a dirty thing. I stopped going to the disco because of this reason, and I love to dance.”<sup>68</sup> Because she is Afro-Cuban, men frequently assume she is a prostitute and approach her for sexual services. Thus, the racialization and sexualization of Afro-Cuban women, constructed by the tourist industry, subjects Afro-Cuban women who frequent tourist sites to being degraded as *jineteras* or prostitutes.

#### VIII. CONCLUSION

Tourism has become an important vehicle for Cuba to gain a foothold in the global economy. But as our research indicates, this economic strategy has impacted Cuban society and its people in profound and complex ways. From pre-revolutionary Cuba to the Special Period, tourism has been an important industry for the country’s economic sustenance, development, and survival in global capitalism. In the 1990s, in response to the economic crisis precipitated by the fall of the Soviet Bloc, the Cuban government turned to tourism as a global economic strategy, while simultaneously remaining committed to the goals of the Revolution.

Our research indicates that tourism has contributed to a redistribution and relocation of workers throughout the labor force. In previous research we argued that “both women and men have born the brunt of low wages, unstable working conditions, and unemployment.”<sup>69</sup> However, women have been disproportionately affected by economic restructuring during the Special Period. More importantly, highly trained and educated professionals have left skilled occupations for higher paying unskilled jobs in the tourist industry. For example, women are leaving professional jobs to operate small businesses such as *paladares* (home cafeterias/restaurants) and guesthouses that cater to foreign tourists. A large number of college-educated women are also now working as secretaries, waitresses, and hotel domestics in the tourist industry. Consequently, women are being resegregated and resituated into historically “feminine” occupations or highly gendered work.

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<sup>67</sup> Interview with young Cuban man (Summer 2000).

<sup>68</sup> Interview with female Afro-Cuban doctor (Summer 2000).

<sup>69</sup> Toro-Morn et al., *supra* note 1, at 30.

In addition to experiencing abrupt relocations in the labor market, women who work in the tourist industry commented on the problems they confront, namely sexual harassment and the lack of childcare support. Sexual harassment and the lack of childcare have also forced women into working in the informal sectors of the tourist industry, such as *paladares* and guesthouses. For others, these problems have led to unemployment.

Our research also reveals the repercussions of Cuba's tourism policy as reflected in the country's two-tier society. This distinction is most notable in Cuba's tourism apartheid. Cuba has earned hard currency by attracting foreign tourists. Given that Cuban people, for the most part, are dependent on peso-based salaries, they cannot take part in the tourism industry. For example, as many respondents mentioned, they can no longer go to hotels, restaurants, or major tourist attractions now that the government has institutionalized tourism as a dollar-based industry. Cuban society is faced with harmonizing the imbalance of the disadvantaged Cuban citizen and the advantaged or privileged foreigner. The redistribution of the labor market and Cuba's two-tier society has also led to unexpected class distinctions. Our research indicates that those who receive money from families in the United States along with those who work in the tourist industry have benefited the most from the dollar economy. Those individuals who do not have these advantages are constantly struggling for access to dollars. The majority of Cuba's population is dependent on peso-based salaries and a rationing system, which fails to meet their daily needs.

Finally, our research reveals that the tourist industry has created conditions conducive to the re-emergence of prostitution, or *jineterismo*. In Cuba's attempt to draw foreign tourists, the state has constructed an image of Cuban women as readily available to meet the needs of foreign tourists, primarily men from Spain. The sexualization and commodification of Cuban women's bodies for profit has been mainly of *mulattas*. Tourist brochures are filled with advertisements of dark-skinned women on beaches. Pre-revolutionary racialization of Afro-Cuban women has once again resurfaced and is being reinforced by the state's social construction of Cuban tourism. In a country that has fought to institutionalize respect for women's bodies, intellect, and worth as workers and as human beings, *jineterismo* undermines these values. In this respect, it appears as though the Revolution has come full circle.

Overall, our research indicates that Cuba's tourist policy has created conditions that subvert the goals of the Revolution. Cuba's reliance on tourism as a vehicle for global capitalist development has created profound contradictions for the Cuban revolutionary state. In turn, these contradictions have resulted in material, ideological, and socio-emotional dissonance for Cubans across all social strata.<sup>70</sup> One young man, Raúl, stated

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<sup>70</sup> *Id.*

he wanted the freedom to develop intellectually, to develop new ideas. He explained:

I don't want radical economic change because we could lose all the great social programs we have, just like the Soviet Union did. I would also like to see the gains of the tourism industry trickle down to the common people, more of an abundance of food, clothing, medical supplies, things like that.<sup>71</sup>

Raúl was trained as an engineer and now works as a taxi driver for a major hotel. Another group of university-educated workers stated that Cubans don't want a different system. They exclaimed, "We want what we had before the Special Period, but we want it better! We don't want capitalism and the United States coming here and telling us what to do. We want to develop professionally, have better salaries, and the achievements of health and education."<sup>72</sup>

Interestingly, despite the dissatisfaction among the majority of the Cuban population toward the government, they have not followed the example of their former comrades in Eastern Europe by turning to the streets to bring down the state. Outward quiescence can conceal growing disquietude. Covert acts of defiance have the effect, if not the intent, of weakening governmental authority and governmental control over production, consumption, and everyday life. How people responded to the economic crisis of the Special Period varied with their personal opportunities, both legal and illegal.

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<sup>71</sup> Interview with Raúl, Cuban taxi driver and former engineer (Summer 2000).

<sup>72</sup> Interviews with Cuban university-educated workers (Summer 2000).