The Nocturnal Negotiations of Youth Spaces in Havana

Matthew J. Reilly

Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Geography.

Chapel Hill
2009

Approved by

Altha J. Cravey

John Pickles

Joe Scarpaci

Banu Gökariksel

Wendy Wolford

ABSTRACT

Matthew J. Reilly, *The Nocturnal Negotiations of Youth Spaces in Havana*
(Under the direction of Altha J. Cravey)

Based upon ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Havana, this dissertation explores the linkages between youth and public space by arguing that the spatial practices of youth in public space reveal that young Cubans are negotiating the current period of change and uncertainty by creating new social spaces and identities. This project focused on a thirteen-block area of *Calle G*, a centrally located boulevard in Havana that is appropriated every weekend by youth from all over the city. This public space serves as a venue in which to display the various lifestyles of Cuban youth, lifestyles that are often predicated on access to hard currency. The impact of broader socio-economic changes underway in Cuba is clearly reflected in the discourse of these young people and the identity politics they engage in. Youth are creating their own social space outside of the sphere of state regulation and influence, and this venue provides Cuban youth with a space to explore and create their own identities in relation to local as well as transnational cultural flows. Therefore much of this project evaluates the capacity of public space to empower a form of associational life for the youth in the city.

Furthermore this project addresses the role of urban culture through both music and fashion in the evolution of youth subcultures. Findings reveal the importance of these cultural flows in the lives of youth and the ways that youth adapt and appropriate

these cultural references for their own identities. In this way, Cuban youth are also

actively transforming and appropriating global flows of information, culture, and

technology an d not simply negotiating conditions of socio-economic uncertainty. This

work documents the fact that youth cultures are spatially open and are one of the main

entry points for cultural globalization. For the youth of Havana, through their nocturnal

negotiations, their play and their imagination, they have transformed the abstract space of

Calle G into a collectively created alternative social space. Therefore, these youth are

claiming their spatial rights, their rights to be in public and be *a public,* and thus they are

claiming their right to the city.

To my brother David Matthew Reilly, in loving memory.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When all is said and done a dissertation bears the name of a single author, however in reality it is the combined effort and support of a countless number of individuals and institutions that go into producing it. I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to all of those who made this possible. First and foremost I would like to thank my advisor, Altha J. Cravey, who throughout the course of this endeavor has unwaveringly offered her intellectual insight and moral support. I can unhesitatingly say that this would not have been possible without her. I also want to thank the members of my dissertation committee for their participation, suggests, and mentoring: John Pickles, Joe Scarpaci, Banu P. Gökariksel, and Wendy Wolford. Furthermore, I also extend my gratitude to the support of the Geography Department at UNC, including Barbara Taylor and Nell Philips. In Cuba, this work could not have gone forward without the help, guidance, and friendship of a number of individuals, particularly: Jorge Luis, Lili, Mario, Mayra, Enrique, Luis and the innumerable others who shared their time, their lives, and their insight.

Last but not least I would like to thank my family and friends whose constant love and support enabled me to persevere throughout this process. My thanks particularly goes out to, Joseph Palis, Jonnell Allen, Tina Mangierri, Tamara Johnson, Sebastian Corrbarubius, Quintin Mecke, and Dilys Bowman. And most importantly my love and eternal gratitude go to Jackie who never doubted that I could do this, and to my son Tristan who gave me the fortitude to finish it.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter 1

Negotiating Space

> "You are aware that you are the future, and the future will not be easy at all. You admire us, who were pioneers of this revolution, but we admire you more because your generation will have more difficult tasks than those we had….You are the pioneers of the special period, and we are encouraged and motivated by the behavior of the pioneers of the special period" (Fidel Castro's speech to Cuban youth at the closing of Youth Congress, July 20, 1996).

1.0 Introduction

By nightfall on any given weekend in Havana it is possible to find young Cubans from all over the city making their way to the intersection of Calle 23[1] and Calle G[2]. This is the crossroads of a major arterial road that cuts across the city and a centrally located thirteen-block tree lined boulevard in Vedado[3]. The youth arrive on foot, by bus, by taxi, or by car or motorcycle for the lucky few. They begin trickling to this site around 8pm or 9pm on these nights and some will stay until the wee hours of the next day, only to repeat the process again the next night. A sidewalk lined with benches

---

[1] Calle 23 is one the main arterial roads that cuts through the neighborhood of Vedado, linking the western suburbs of Miramar, Playa, and Mariano to the colonial core and central part of the city. Farther east from this intersection Calle 23 becomes *La Rampa*, the modernist commercial and tourist district on the edge of Vedado that is the site of the famous hotels like the *Hotel Nacional*, and the *Habana Libre*, the former Hilton Hotel.

[2] Throughout this dissertation, 'Calle G' will be used instead of the English translation 'G Street'. Calle G is a divided boulevard with a central park running down its middle, which runs thirteen blocks north and south down a terraced geologic slope that goes down to the sea. More information on the history of this street and park will be provided in Chapter 3 and Chapter 6.

[3] Vedado is the municipality where the research site is located. It is a socially and economically mixed district that was originally developed for middle and upper class Cuban families, it lays to the west of the colonial core.

divides the narrow decorative and sculpted park that runs down the center of Calle G, dividing the two opposing lanes of traffic as it gradually slopes northwards to the sea. By 11pm, on these nights, this park is full of hundreds, and at times thousands, of young people. These are boys and girls, and men and women, whose ages range from 14 to 35 years. Some are students at university or local secondary schools, some are unemployed, some work for the state, and others work informally or illegally. Overwhelmingly they are white or light skinned, though not exclusively. It is a very fluid place with all sorts of people constantly coming and going. It is a rendezvous point, a place where people get together before or after they go off to one of the many clubs, restaurants, or cafés that populate the area. This is the place to meet, the place to see, and the place to be seen.

If one were to stand at this intersection and look northwards down the length of this park it would be possible to see these young Cubans walking up and down the sidewalk in pairs and groups, some talking on their cell phones, some taking photos with digital cameras, while others would be sitting quietly together enjoying a romantic moment. It would be possible to see these young people walking along singing with their digital audio players, headphones on, listening to music as they followed their friends. Occasionally it would be possible to smell marijuana drifting in the clouds of cigarette smoke as groups of boys and girls pass. There would also be young people selling hand-made jewelry, clothing, tickets to concerts, CDs, cell phones, cameras, and any other items there are markets for, and others would be passing out fliers for some concert or underground event. Many of these youth would be sitting in tight circles on the pavement drinking rum from bottles passed among one another as they would engage in

animated conversation.   Other youth would be sitting on the benches or on the ground listening to one of their friends play guitar and sing.

If one were to stand at this intersection one would see a variety of consciously crafted styles, shiny belt buckles and shoes, elaborately coiffed hair, designer (both faux and authentic) clothing as well as perfectly ripped shirts and jeans (preferably black) and a whole assortment of t-shirts representing concerts, bands, or performers. There would also be the ever present blue and grey uniformed police officers, as well as the conspicuous undercover cops, walking in pairs through the crowd while intermittently checking IDs, particularly those of the males, and principally of the darker skinned males. If one were to close ones' eyes as they stood on this street corner, one would hear the sounds of laughter, singing, arguing, talking, fighting, music, and screaming. While this scenario may paint a seemingly ordinary picture of urban youth using and enjoying a public space in a large city, it is not ordinary here- because this is Havana, Cuba. These are the youth of the Revolution, these are the children of a socialist experiment, these are the collective heirs of Fidel Castro, and these are the children who grew up only knowing life through the lens of crisis, change, and uncertainty.

Throughout the 1990s, Cuba entered into a period of severe economic crisis that was largely responsible for setting in motion a sweeping transformation of Cuban society and its economy. With the collapse of the socialist project in the USSR and Eastern Europe, and the subsequent loss of aid and trade, Cuba was forced to rapidly restructure its entire economy, the implications of which are still to be fully determined. When the Soviet Union began crumbling in the late 1980s, the Cuban government responded by decentralizing parts of its political and economic apparatus, as will be further explained

in Chapter 4. The loss of subsidized trade with the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA[4]) caused dramatic reductions in production, consumption, and even social reproduction. The Cuban government in 1991 declared that the country was in a "Special Period in a Time of Peace', meaning that although they were not at actual war, the severe rationing and social and economic dislocations that followed would make it feel like they were at war. The demise of the Soviet Union and the onset of the Special Period brought on a period of rapid deterioration of economic and social conditions while simultaneously causing an ideological crisis- the gap between the rhetoric of the revolution and the realities of life on the ground.

While there is a large body of scholarship that addresses the consequences of this socio-economic and political restructuring of the 1990s (Alfonso de Armas 2006; Azicri 2004; Eckstein 2003, 2008; Everlyeny Pérez 2003; Leogrande and Thomas 2003), there is a marked absence of work that examines the impacts of these changes on the youth of Cuba[5]. Van Horn et al. (2000) contend that it is particularly during periods of dramatic social and economic upheaval, such as Cuba experienced during the 1990s, when it is crucial to listen to the articulations of young people and how they experience and understand these social and economic transformations since they are the next generation that will shape the future of their nation. As Van Horn et al. (2000) say, these youth are "the last children of the old system and the first adults of the new" (4). They conclude that the development of the sociopolitical identity of youth in both Poland and Hungary, following the post-Soviet transition, did indeed impact their socio-political views and

---

[4] The CMEA is the organization of the Soviet Union and the former Eastern Bloc countries.

[5] To see some of the scholarship on youth in Cuba since the 1990s, see: Bobes 2000; Domínguez 1995, 1998, 2008; Domínguez and Ferrer 1996; Fernández 1993, 2004; Lutjens 1998.

perceptions, particularly due to the clash between the new social and institutional actors (Ibid.). In the case of Cuba, new social and institutional actors have emerged over the past fifteen years that are directly impacting the lives and expectations of the youth. Moreover, Tienda and Wilson (2002) say that, "throughout the world youth represent a source of cultural innovation and dynamism that is seldom acknowledged in countries around the world, much less nurtured....youth are powerful agents directing the course of social change" (8). Although it may seem obvious that young people are the inheritors of the social, economic, and political orders they are born into, their voices are often silent in the research on large-scale social and economic transformations and transitions. Another factor of importance for understanding why this project is focusing on youth is the fact that fifty percent of the Cuban population are under the age of thirty, and twenty-nine percent of the entire population are between the ages 16-30 (ONE 2007). Of this age cohort, over twenty percent reside in the city of Havana (Ibid.). This project intends to offer a small contribution to Cuban studies and youth studies by focusing on a segment of the youth population in Havana through investigating urban youth geographies and the spaces the youth produce. It is also examining the cultures and identities the youth create in the city during times of uncertainty and rapid change.

This dissertation examines the connections between youth and public space by focusing on Calle G and the youth who appropriate it every weekend. Although this space was used by various youth for well over ten years, the past five years have seen it grow dramatically in size and significance. Calle G is a site that is not only geographical and temporal, as Maira and Soep (2005) would argue, it is also social and political. This public space serves as a venue in which to display the various lifestyles of Cuban youth,

lifestyle choices that are often predicated on access to hard currency. The impact of

broader socio-economic changes underway in Cuba is clearly reflected in the discourse of

these young people and the identity politics they engage in and the culture they are

producing. As global forces and flows continue to reshape local and regional contexts in

Cuba, new youth identities and cultures are being formed in response. These are

processes that can be seen as localizations, or local articulations of globalization.

Public space is of vital importance for the youth of Havana, as it is for youth in

most cities, because it is the space of social interaction, the space of exchange, the space

of identity formation, the space for contestation, and as a result of all of these factors, it is

a space of tension and complexity. Public space in Havana is shifting from notions of

universalistic access under collective ownership and normative control by the state to a

pattern of fragmentation marked by markedly particularistic and individualistic spaces. I

argue that, in addition to economic restructuring, ideological changes that occurred after

the economic crisis of the 1990s are reflected not only in state spaces, but also in the

everyday, *lo cotidiano*, in the ways people are using public space in the city. Streets,

parks, alleyways, nightclubs, cafes, and street corners, are the places and spaces where

youth construct and reproduce their culture and their identities. Claiming public space

and being seen in public space, in other words *being 'public,'* becomes a way for

different groups and individuals to legitimate their right to the city, and it is because of

this fact that public spaces by nature are contested spaces, places of contestation,

confrontation and resistance as individuals and groups contend for access and expression.

This project also addresses the role of urban popular cultural practices,

predominantly music and fashion, in the evolution of Cuban youth subcultures and

identities. Findings reveal the importance of these cultural flows in the lives of youth and the ways that youth adapt and appropriate these cultural references for their own identities. In this way, Cuban youth are also actively transforming and appropriating global flows of information, culture, and technology and not simply negotiating conditions of socio-economic transformation and uncertainty outside of their control. This work documents the fact that youth cultures, as Massey (1998) argues, are spatially open and are one of the main entry points for cultural globalization. Through consumption practices and popular culture, young people create scripts for their lives that localize global influences and cultures. Youth in Havana resist hegemonic culture by adapting, appropriating, and transforming the meanings of their urban landscape through spatial practices such as hanging out, playing, socializing, and even merely occupying urban space.

This dissertation will also examine the growing disengagement and disaffection among Cuban youth. It will show how the increasing presence of market forces and logics are transforming social relations in space. It will also argue that the spatial practices of youth in space represents an alternative youth space that is purposefully outside of the sphere of the state, and is therefore seen by some as a threat or resistance to the state. However, resistance in this context does not necessarily mean organized political 'resistance' to the state project or to the nation, it refers to resistance or opposition to abstract power and to hegemonic culture. Resistance can take the form of any number of other oppositions, opposition to authority, to the social order, to culture, to religion, and so forth. It is also important to note that while the resistance or opposition particularly by youth, may not be directly political in nature, it does not mean that it can

not take on a political character in a roundabout way, or the fact that regardless of

intentions it may be construed as 'political' by others. White and Wyn (2004) argue that,

> "Resistance is not always 'against' something; in some cases it may refer to the efforts
> of young people to be taken seriously, to be part of the mainstream. In some cases,
> resistance is basically a fight for conformity, whether this be in relation to the acceptance
> of graffiti art as art, or receiving respectful treatment at the hands of private security
> guards and the police" (240).

Therefore, perhaps another way to view these youth practices and geographies is to think

of them from the perspective of Lévi-Strauss's (1966) notion of 'symbolic forms of

resistance'. Or as Law (2002) says, "resistance can be understood as overt conflict as

well as symbolic strategies and tactics that can invert or transgress the social relations

reflected by landscapes. But because power is exercised rather than possessed, they

argue, it can also be subverted" (1629). As will be demonstrated in Chapter 6, the youth

who appropriate Calle G for the most part do not see their actions as directly political,

even though in their discourse they frequently they use the words 'resistance,'

'opposition,' and 'contestation' to describe this phenomenon. Yet, many older Cubans

they often speak of the phenomenon of the youth congregating at Calle G as being 'anti-

social' and as a form of 'resistance' as well. However, by focusing solely on identifying

resistance in the actions and practices of youth, there is the potential issue of over-

determining the actions and subjectivities of the youth. Maira and Soep (2005) likewise

suggest that there is a danger of losing sight of the actual meaning and significance of

youth cultures and practices when focusing to much on differentiating the acts of youth

by categorizing them as either 'oppositional,' 'transgressive,' 'authentic,' or 'resistance'

(xxxi). Additionally, it is important to note that these youth are products of the

revolution, and that the successes of the revolution, above all in education, have produced

expectations and aspirations among the youth that are increasingly being unfulfilled. The temporal disjuncture caused by external influences, namely the collapse of the socialist project in Europe and the economic strangulation caused by the US blockade, in addition to internal political and economic stagnation and uncertainty are creating a world for these youth of an eternal present and a future that never seems to arrive. To examine the various issues that are laid out above, this dissertation must first present the questions that are guiding this investigation, as well as the ways these questions will be addressed.

1.1 Ethnography of a Youthscape

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine what youth geographies and youth spatial practices in public space reveal about macro-level social and economic change, and to discover how neoliberal forms of globalization are impacting the geography of these youth cultures and identities in the city. In the process of identifying new youth cultures and practices in public space, this work also examines the significance of public space for young people. Therefore, the problem statements for this dissertation are:

- What do youth spatial practices reveal about macro-scale processes of socio-economic change?
- How are youth in public space engaging and negotiating the forces and flows of globalization that are impacting their lives and impacting their identities and cultures?
- How are processes of political and socio-economic change promoting new ways of inhabiting public space?
    - What new spatial practices and patterns are emerging among the youth of the city?
    - What new youth cultures are emerging in this process?
- How can studying youth in public space be a vehicle for examining the relationship between the state and its citizens?

I will employ data from the ethnographic research I conducted in Havana throughout the summer of 2007 and the winter of 2008, in addition to preliminary fieldwork conducted in Havana during the summer of 2004 and previous research conducted in Havana during 2000 and 2001 for my Masters degree. Respondents for this project included Cuban youth, urban planners and architects, professionals, youth service providers, government officials, and local residents.

During my fieldwork, I conducted forty-six interviews, and three focus groups. I compiled extensive field-notes while observing the field site, and collected one-hundred surveys that accumulated data on Cubans' perceptions of public space and the changes that have ensued since the 1990s. The majority of interviews were digitally recorded when permitted. When interviewees preferred not to be recorded, extensive notes were taken. All interviews followed an open-ended format, whereby a few standard questions were used to begin the interview and then more detailed follow-up questions were asked as dictated by the flow of the interview, see appendix for the standard questions that were used. I developed a flexible, yet consistent, list of questions or general topics that I wanted to explore during each interview (Patai1991). This was prepared to insure that the same information was obtained from each person; however, there were no predetermined responses. Having a question list ensured a good use of limited interview time, in addition to making interviewing multiple subjects more systematic and comprehensive. In keeping with the flexible nature of qualitative research designs, Lofland and Lofland (1984) encourage that qualitative research question lists can and should be modified over time to focus attention on areas of particular importance, or to exclude questions the researcher has found to be unproductive for the goals of the

research. This was also the case for me. As the research progressed some of the original questions did not seem as pertinent while other questions emerged that were not originally used. I conducted random interviews along Calle G in addition to interviewing respondents found through personal connections. In choosing research participants, I tried to have as much diversity in terms of age, class and sex as possible. Random interviews provided a better way of accessing people from different classes and age groups.

Having carried out previous fieldwork in Havana in 2000, 2001, and 2004, I had an already established network of contacts and friends in Havana. This network was invaluable for this project since using a snow-ball technique from my initial network of contacts enabled me to have a diverse pool of participants from almost every part of the city and of all age ranges. An interesting phenomenon that I encountered during the interview process was that when I was interviewed people whom I randomly met in public space, both young and older Cubans, there would often be an initial apprehension during the interview. A number of scholars have noted the particular political issues facing a researcher working in Cuba, such as working in a socialist country that is very sensitive to foreign investigations. (Fuller 1988; Michalowski 1996; Reid-Henry 2003). The interviews tended to be shorter in length and with less developed responses. However, when going through the same procedure of selecting participants and interviewing them in public space along Calle G, the participants would normally be less inhibited and more willing to engage in lengthy conversations.

To assist me with conducting the surveys and interviews, I hired two Cubans assistants, one a university student in journalism, and the other, a professional social science researcher who works for a leading research journal in Havana. The university

student was recommended to me by a professor from the University of Havana, while I personally knew the researcher through a close friend. Both were financially compensated for their assistance, and both assistants were fully informed of the protocol and procedures recommended by the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Ethnographic observation was conducted throughout the research area. The purpose of conducting observation of the research areas is to record the spatial practices of citizens and tourists in these areas. Observation of the research site was conducted at varying intervals and on each day of the week at different times throughout the field-work period in order to gain a more complete sense of the range of spatial activities and the users of the space. However, the bulk of the observation occurred on weekend nights, typically between 8pm and 3 or 4am. While conducting observation of the research site, field notes[6] were compiled. The field notes were coded according to types of activities or spatial practices witnessed. In addition I coded for gender, Cuban/tourist, and age when possible.

As Elwood and Martin (2000) remark, there is little literature handy that addresses issues relevant to interview location. There are always issues of power and positionality inherent in the interview locations, issues which can be viewed as manifestations of the researcher / participant relationship. Therefore, I only conducted interviews in locations where the respondent was comfortable, on a few occasions this meant finding a more private site for the interview, however most of the time this was not an issue. What was interesting about the youth of Calle G is that while many Cubans are weary of being interviewed by a foreigner in public, the youth of Calle G were always

---

[6] Field notes are the written record of the researcher's perceptions while in the field, in essence they are descriptive data observed by the researcher (Rossman and Rallis 1998).

willing to speak in public regardless if a audio-recorder was used or not. This is indicative of how the youth see Calle G as an open space, a free space. Most of the interviews were audio-recorded, however, several individuals preferred not to have the interview recorded. In both cases, notes were taken throughout the interview process.

Following the fieldwork, the interviews were transcribed and then translated. The interview data and the observation data were then coded to identify themes that reoccurred in the data. The interview and field-note data were first open-coded in order to generate more focused codes through identifying, comparing and contrasting codes that overlapped. The data analysis is based on Grounded Theory, utilizing systematic inductive guidelines to develop analytic interpretations of the data (Charmaz 2000; Glaser and Strauss 1967). Grounded theory endeavors to arrive at theory and understanding through an inductive process, utilizing observable experiences and actions with the knowledge and insight of the researcher, thereby making use of both deductive and inductive reasoning. The combination of these methods and forms of data were essential in creating a bottom-up approach to understanding the role of youth and public space at this current historical conjuncture.

1.2 Theory and Praxis in Urban Space

At the core of this dissertation is the exploration of space and social relations in the city, and therefore it is indebted to the work of French Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991). Lefebvre was a prodigious writer whose work covered everything from treatises on Hegel, Marx, and Nietzche to work with Guy Debord and the Situationists. It shifted from the global scale of the capitalist system to the scale of the

city and its rhythms, down to the scale of the human body and its everyday life, dreams, fantasies, and sexual desires. His work is truly cross-disciplinary for it incorporates sociology, psychology and psychoanalytics with art, literature, semiotics, and history. Lefebvre's engaging, imaginative, and at times mystifying way of writing has provided a rich source of material for scholars to interpret and appropriate. However, one of Lefebvre's most important contributions to current scholars is his enhancing of Marx's historical materialist dialectic by adding a spatial dimension, thereby spatializing dialectics.

Of particular importance for this project is Lefebvre's conception of the social production of space, which examines both 'material' and 'mental' space. It is Lefebvre's materialist emphasis on socially produced space that I find extremely compelling, primarily his focus on the materiality of the social, economic, cultural, and political factors that go into creating social space. To 'spatialize' in this context means to locate physically, historically, or conceptually social relations and practices in space, and not a 'production' of material space out of ideological, social, economic or technological means. Space is a product of contemporary social arrangements, social structures such as the institutional practices of the nation state, contemporary capitalism, and individual agency (Gregory 1994; Harvey 1989; Lefebvre 1991; Massey 1993). The process of producing meaning in space and the production of space has been the focus of much recent work in geography and social theory (Castells 1983; de Certeau 1984; Harvey 1985; Mitchell 1996; Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1989; Watson and Gibson 1995; Zukin 1991). These works contributed, in a variety of ways, to the effort of connecting political economy and social and economic relations with the production of urban space and the

urban landscape. Urban space is the fundamental, constitutive terrain of human action

and experience, "the simultaneous coexistence of social interrelations and interactions at

all spatial scales" (Massey 1993: 155). For Lefebvre, urban space "becomes the meeting

place for goods and people, for exchange" (2003: 10). As Lefebvre's work established,

the city has an autonomous reality, one that is both lived and imagined by its inhabitants,

and these inhabitants have a right to this city.

As Lefebvre (1996) says, "the *right to the city* cannot be conceived of as a simple

visiting right or as a return to traditional cities. It can only be formulated as a

transformed and renewed *right to urban life*" (158). In this sense, the city and urban life

are a right that all humans have, and this does not mean merely a right of inhabitation

under the crushing weight of industrial capitalism that constantly seeks to alienate,

mystify, and separate individuals. It signifies that all humans have a right for the playful,

imaginative, creative, and sexual social life that the city can generate. And Lefebvre

argues that one of the urban spaces that is vital for the social production of space is the

street. He says that, "in the street, a form of spontaneous theater, I become spectacle and

spectator, and sometimes actor. The street is where movement takes place, the

interaction without which urban life would not exist, leaving only separation, a forced

and fixed segregation" (2003: 18). This is an important concept for this project since the

street is the study site for this project, the narrow park that runs thirteen blocks towards

the sea is the space of 'spontaneous theater' that Lefebvre mentioned above.

Applying Lefebvre's theory to the city of Havana poses a particular set of

difficulties, although it still presents its own set of rewards. As has been discussed by

several other scholars, using forms of analysis that are generated from analyzing the

capitalist city in the context of a non-capitalist urban form, in this case socialist, is tricky. Harvey (1978) says that trying to understand urban processes in a non-capitalistic setting is limited when comparing it to capitalist processes and phenomena. He goes on to say that the, "urban has a specific meaning under the capitalist mode or production which cannot be carried over without the radical transformation of meaning (and of reality) into other social contexts" (101). Since cities bear the legacies of previous cultural and economic forms through their historic layers, it could be argued that Havana is far from being a socialist city.   In this regard Lefebvre (1991) says, "there is no 'communist society' in existence, and the very concept of communism has become obscure… has state socialism produced a space of its own?... A social transformation, to be truly revolutionary in character, must manifest a creative capacity in its effects on daily life, on language and on space…" (53-54). However, in one perspective the socialist city is quite different from the capitalist cities, and in this regard it is the sphere of collective consumption, a sphere in Cuba that is being increasingly superseded by individual consumption. Returning to Harvey's statement above that the "urban has a specific meaning under the capitalist mode or production", in the case of Cuba, as will be discussed further below, part of the importance of analyzing the production of space in Havana is that over the past fifteen or so years, the modes of production in the city have been in the process of being transformed and as a result so too are social relations in the city.

The work of de Certeau (1988) also examines the significance of everyday life, by focusing on the various ways or modes of operating in and ways of using urban social space. In the process of this work he is also examining the relations between consumers

and the mechanisms of production. What is interesting about de Certeau's theory is that it views the ways in which the acts of consumption can be seen as actually production, in this sense- consumer production. Consumption as production is, "devious, it is dispersed, but it insinuates itself everywhere, silently and almost invisibly, because it does not manifest itself through its own products, but rather through its *ways of using* the products imposed by a dominant economic order" (Ibid: xii, italics in original). De Certeau goes on to say that before it is possible to begin analyzing the significance of the everyday life, "we must first analyze its manipulation by users who are not its makers. Only then can we gauge the difference or similarity between the production of the image and the secondary production hidden in the process of its utilization" (xiii). In the case of the youth and Calle G, it is through their manipulation of this space, their utilization of a normally empty decorative park that they are able to produce a space of their own.

In the work of de Certeau (1988), he sees public urban space as being something inherently political as well as democratic, for his tactics and strategies represent the victories of the weak over the imposed abstract space of hegemonic power from above. The distinction between de Certeau's (1988) 'tactics' and 'strategies' is that 'tactics' are at the core of his theory of everyday practice, they are the articulations of everyday practice, the ad-hoc unorganized practices of the other, while 'strategies' are the calculated formal 'force-relationships' of the powerful, an individual or group that can produce space through the exertion of force on an other (xix). For these 'tactics' of the weak are actualized through the spatial practices that reinscribe the 'dominant space' of 'strategies'. Therefore, the spatial practices of an individual at the scale of the body is capable of resisting domination through the practice of everyday life. Spatial practice

jumps scales for it can be analyzed from the scale of the individual (the body), to the

scale of the collective (the group or the masses), and on to the scale of the city (the *urbis*),

and through each of these scales, spatial practice involves not only the quotidian, but also

the spectacular.

De Certeau (1988) argues that through the practice of living in place and through

spatial practice, one is able to resist the dominant hegemonic strategies that try to order

and control space. As he says, "everyday life invents itself by *poaching* in countless ways

on the property of others" (1988: xii). For according to de Certeau, place is the ordered

and controlled structure of hegemonic power that is always trying to subvert, control, and

define the urban subject and the social spaces of the city. Social space, as Gottdiener

(1993) states, "always transcends conceived boundaries and regulated forms" (131).

What Gottdiener means is that in comparison to the abstract space of power that

constantly tries to regulate and control the everyday life and social practices of its

citizens, spatial practice is constantly subverting, surpassing, and escaping these

boundaries and regulatory controls. Therefore the youth appropriating this space can be

seen as a form of resistance to the ordered place created by the state, this is resistance to

the abstract space imposed from above, a resistance that is manifested through the

everyday practices of creating a social space.

1.3 Public space and Youth

Public space is a fundamental and necessary component of democracy because it

allows individuals to politically and socially engage one another in discussion, and

thereby allows them to share in their humanness and in their mutual recognition of their

citizenship (Ardent 1973). Following this notion, public space therefore has a latent transformative potential through the spatial practices of individuals and groups and the creative and imaginative ways they appropriate and transform public space outside of the boundaries drawn by dominant power. It is this transformative power that lays within public space that is of interest for this project, for one of the arguments of this dissertation is that the spatial practices of the youth of Havana and their collective appropriation represents a manifestation of this transformative power. White and Wyn (2004) claim that youth, "are not passive users of the street, nor are they reticent about establishing a public presence. In many different ways, and on different levels, young people have engaged directly in social processes that are implicated in significant social change" (239). Therefore public space has the capacity to form an integral part of everyday life for youth, and thereby enables and empowers a form of associational life for the youth in the city.

As pointed out by a number of scholars, public space for young people is often one of the only spaces where they can produce a sense of privacy outside of the regulatory environment of home, school, or work. (Aikens 2001; Massey 1998, Ruddick 2004; Valentine 1996, 2004). Therefore, for many young people, public space is one of the few spaces of autonomy they are able to create. Childress (2004) argues that youth appropriating space is a process similar to adults purchasing, controlling, modifying, and marking space through the rights of ownership and tenure. However, he goes on to say that spatial appropriations by youth, "also includes the added aspect of the modification of adult rules of use or engagement, and in this way becomes an implicit political statement as well, a counter-positioning of experiential and modern cultural norms"

19

(199). Essentially this concerns youth struggling to assert their independence and contesting the spatial hegemony of adult society. The ways in which a young person experiences the city plays a crucial role in either promoting or hampering a person's sense of identity, their feelings of place within a community, and a social connection with their wider community (Ruddick 2004). This research is exploring the power of young people to resist the dominant definitions that are imposed on them, it examines the ways in which they create new spaces and meanings that inform their ways of living.

Young people are also doubly disadvantaged, first they have no space of their own within the structures of family, work, and school in addition to the fact that while they are in public space trying to claim a space of their own, they are often seen as a threat, a menace, or as a polluting presence in public space (Aitkens 2001; Ruddick 2004; Sibley 1995; Skelton 2000; Valentine 1996). The interview data from this research supports this, for as one Cuban youth said, "Youth, in general, do not have places where they can be and say 'I am here because I like it, and because I have a right to be here'" (Manolo 2/01/08). On the other hand, several older Cubans and local residents near Calle G that were interviewed for this project saw the youth of Calle G as being 'anti-social', as 'underground', and as being part of a 'culture of resistance'. The spaces young people carve out are very revealing of much larger issues, namely the effects of the economic restructuring and the re-emergence of a service driven economy and the concomitant increase in levels of socio-economic inequality (Whitfield 2008).

Just as White (1990) documented in the case of Australia, the youth of Havana spend considerable amounts of time outside, on the streets of the city. Pertierra (2008) observes that in Cuba, "men are seen as belonging to 'the street', and the street is where

they are most likely to spend their leisure hours (of which they have substantially more than most women)" (746). Part of the reason is obviously cultural and geographic, while another part of the reason is due to the severe housing shortage that continues to plague the city, in addition to the high levels of underemployment that hamper the economy (Hamberg 1990, Scarpaci et al. 2002).

Public space is permeated with power relations with some individuals or groups being either accepted, tolerated, policed, or excluded. In essence individuals or groups are 'in-place' or 'out-of-place' to varying degrees in public space (Cresswell 2004). This is also the case along Calle G, although it is described as a space open to all, the discourse of the youth interviewed for this project tells a different story. There is a tremendous amount of overlap among the different youth subcultures that occupy this space, yet this space also reveals a certain degree of self-segregation among the varying groups. Certain sections of Calle G are deemed to be for one particular group, while others are seen as mixed.   However, it is important to note that all of these territorialities are often flexible and overlap.

Another troubling aspect related to this issue of self-segregation is the issue of racism and the racialized and class-based undertones evident in the discourse of many of the youth interviewed for this project. While Chapter 6 will present more detailed data on this issue, it is important to note that the ways these youth described the other youth subcultures often demonstrated perceptions of stratification among the varying groups. This was particularly the case in the discourse on the *repas*, the mostly marginalized Afro-Cuban youth subculture that is characterized by their affinity for reggaeton[7] music.

---

[7] Reggaeton is a blend of reggae with Latin music and Latin hip-hop.

The ways youth from other subgroups described this group is often derogatory, saying that the *repas* are ill-mannered, poor, vulgar, and violent. Over the past fifteen years, issues of race and racism have grown considerably, "there is a danger that the racial, regional, and class inequalities which were considerably weakened by the Cuban Revolution are now being reinforced by the vicissitudes of the Special Period" (Safa 2007: 222). Although the 1959 Revolution was successful in improving the lives of black Cubans, racist attitudes and prejudices latently remained in Cuba. De la Fuente (2008) observes that following the crisis of the 1990s, "despite significant gains in education and employment, many blacks continued to live in the poorest urban neighborhoods and remained dangerously close to poverty and to a past of deprivations that refused to simply disappear" (713). As will be explored further in Chapters 4 and 6, what the economic crisis of the 1990s did was to make racism and racial inequality once again more visible (Espina and Rodríguez 2006).

Looking to research on youth and public space in socialist and post-socialist countries can potentially provide a comparative framework for understanding contemporary youth in Havana. Thomas (2001) argues in relation to urban space in Hanoi, Vietnam since the economic liberalizations of *doi moi*[8] policy, the city has not only been reconfigured architectonically in line with the dictates of neoliberal capitalism, but the use of open public urban space has also changed. Part of the transformations in the uses of public space in Vietnam is connected to issues of consumption. However, in the context of socialist nations, consumption has always played a significant role in people's lives in even during the Socialist period (Crowley 2000). Material incentives,

---

[8] *Doi moi* is the Vietnamese word for innovation. It usually refers to the economic reforms and liberalizations that took place in Vietnam beginning in 1986.

such as cars, housing, and domestic goods unavailable in state stores, were distributed to privileged and elite party members. During the socialist period in Eastern Europe, as pointed out by Verdery (2000), consumption was not only connected to issues of self-identification and differentiations, but was also seen as a form of resistance to the dominant ideology. She goes on to say, "the arousal and frustration of consumer desire and East Europeans' consequent resistance to their regimes led them to build their social identities specifically *through consuming*. Acquiring consumer goods and objects conferred an identity that set one off from socialism. To acquire objects became a way of constituting selfhood against the regime you despised" (26). Willis (1990) also writes of consumption in such a way by saying that, "consumption is itself a kind of self-creation- of identities, of space, of cultural forms- with its own kinds of cultural empowerment" (82). The socio-economic restructuring in Cuba that followed the collapse of the USSR is creating new identities among the Cuban youth that are increasingly tied to consumption and material culture. These new identities, much like Ball et al. (2000) argue, are a form of 'reflexive individualism'.

Conspicuous consumption in Cuba prior to the economic restructuring of the 1990s was limited because even for Cubans who had disposable capital, there were few durable and non-durable luxury goods available to purchase and the few goods available in the markets were extremely over priced (Lutjens 1996). For the most part, prior to the crisis, there was a measure of equality across society and the few who had privileges were unlikely to publicly express privilege ostentatiously. According to interview data from several respondents who grew up prior to the crisis and restructuring of the 1990s, life *before* the crisis was seen as more socially and economically equitable.   As one

respondent says, "..the 80s had an ease about it, in some ways we were all equal.."
(Yorell, age 37, 3/02/08). The current generation of Cuban youth, De la Fuente (2008)
says, are "unlike their elders, who were protagonists and first-hand witness of the
profound social transformations that Cuban society experienced during the 1960s and
1970s, these youth grew up in a relatively egalitarian society, only to see the equality
erode in front of their own eyes" (699). However, as will be developed more fully in
Chapter 4, the social and economic transformations of the 1990s led to a rapid evolution
of consumption patterns throughout all of Cuban society along with the simultaneous
growth of socio-economic inequality. Another factor connected to the rising levels of
inequality is the dual economy that emerged during the mid-nineties.

Since a dual economy was put into place back in the early 1990s and the
government legalized the use of the US dollar[9] while continuing to pay the vast majority
of the labor force in local de-valued pesos, there developed an uneven landscape of
consumption. This was accomplished by creating more mechanisms to absorb hard
currency, through 'dollar-stores[10]', hotels, restaurants, and a whole array of other service
oriented operations. Whereas, prior to 1993 when the dollar was legalized, one national
currency enabled any Cuban to access the same establishment or services as everyone
else. However, with the introduction of the dual currency system and the development of

---

[9] The period of *dollarization*, when the US dollar became legal tender in Cuba was from 1993 until 2004
when it was replaced by a Cuban convertible peso (CUC). However, although the US dollar is no longer
legal, the effect of this original policy created a dual economy where the majority of state workers receive
their salaries in local pesos which have much less value than the CUC.

[10] Dollar stores, or dollar reclamation stores as they are called, were originally intended to provide goods
unavailable to the general population to foreigners living in Cuba, primarily diplomatic staff and personnel.
Although these stores offered a wide selection of goods and food they were off limits to the average Cuban.
However when the US dollar was legalized in 1993, these stores, which charged in US dollars, became
open to the public. They are a way for the government to absorb hard currency floating in the economy as
well as they provide a means for Cubans to supplement ration books.

a dual economy, differential citizenship has emerged based upon what type of currency

one has. As Whitfield (2008) says,

> "the dollar's superiority over the Cuban peso set a pattern for social inequalities that
> the revolutionary project had sought to eliminate. Salaries continued to be paid in
> pesos while material goods were sold in dollars, so that labor hierarchies were distorted
> and service work that could earn dollars (waiting tables, guiding tours, driving taxis,
> prostitution) was valued over specialist professions" (5).

This is symbolic of the new economic landscape in Havana. A Cuban who has hard

currency is therefore able to go anywhere and do anything if they have the correct

currency, in addition to providing higher levels of material consumption, it also provides

a higher social status. In Cuba today, as will be explained in more detail in Chapter 4, the

emergence of a dual economy and currency system is having a deep impact on Cuban

society. The majority of the Cuban labor force still works for the state and this

population gets paid only in local peso, which are not sufficient for an individual to

survive. Connected to the impact of the dual economy and dual currency system,

Pertierra (2008) says, "the reduced dependence upon state salaries and workplace benefits

has been a major- if not *the* major- transformation of domestic economies in Cuba since

the decline of Soviet socialism" (762). Therefore, everyone is looking for formal and

informal ways to make hard currency, and it is often in public space that this occurs.

This discussion of informality will be visited again farther below.

1.4 Youth Cultures

The identities of young Cubans are indisputably impacted by the increasing flow

of information, material objects, and ideas that bear the mimetic imprint of North

American and European society. As Massey (1998) points out, youth cultures are often

the entry point for external cultural influences, not just in North America and Europe, but

also throughout the world. In the process of acknowledging the agency of these youth, this project seeks to show that youth are not only social actors negotiating a period of constant socio-economic change; but also that they are simultaneously adapting, appropriating, and co-opting these global flows of information, culture, and technology. As Willis (1990) says, "young people are all the time expressing or attempting to express something about their actual or potential *cultural significance*. This is the realm of living common culture" (1). This can be seen in the ways the youth are dressing and displaying their identities, for each of the various subcultures studied in this project has a distinct 'style' to it, based upon fashion, music, and spatiality. Hebdige (1979) argues that style, in and of itself, communicates symbolically and in a substantive way and therefore it is the ideal means for youth subcultures to display and articulate their resistance to the cultural hegemony of the times.

This process is occurring through the everyday practices and the everyday life of habaneros, citizens of Havana, as they negotiate the combined impact of political, economic, and social restructuring in addition to the everyday penetration of capitalist market forces and cultural globalization. The youth who fill Calle G every weekend display this cultural globalization with their fake designer clothes from China that bear the names Dolce & Gabbano or Diesel, their cell phones, their digital cameras, and their t-shirts that bear the names of top music groups and bands from the US and Europe. The youth of Calle G are representative of the reach of globalization in Cuba since it is through these material artifacts of globalization that these youth are forming their identities. As Willis (1990) says, "clothes, style and fashion have long been recognized as key elements in young people's expression, exploration and making of their own

individual and collective identities. They remain amongst the most visible forms of symbolic cultural creativity and informal artistry in people's lives in our common culture" (85).

It is clear that a large portion of these material artifacts, these gadgets and clothing, come from family living abroad, predominantly from Cubans in south Florida. While both the Cuban government and the international community make serious efforts to keep track of the remittances that enter the country, there is little information on the value of the material gifts (e.g. consumer electronics, clothing, house hold items, music etc.) that enter the country with each visit of a relative, friend, or lover (Eckstein 2003, 2008; Mesa-Lago 2002; Monreal 1999). Now it is possible to see countless number of youth plying the streets of Havana with headphones on and MP3 player in hand, much as can be seen in cities throughout the world today. The prevalence of these electronic gadgets is so extensive that in 2006, the Cuban National Assembly put forward a motion to ban headphones because they were seen as 'anti-revolutionary' and were therefore acts of anti-social behavior (Nevaer 2008). However, another issue behind this attempt to ban headphones is that they are demonstrative of the growing socio-economic inequality in Cuba. This is a visual display of the divide between those who have family abroad and those who don't, between those who have parents who work in the new economic industries (tourism, mixed-enterprises, self-employed etc.) and those whose parents don't. With the gifts that are repeatedly brought over and the money being sent from Cubans living abroad, the quality of life for those who receive remittances is markedly better than those who do not receive any remittances. The distribution of such gifts and items across the population is not known; however, if it follows the trends associated

with dollar remittances then these gifts overwhelmingly flow to the white population of the country due to the fact that the majority of the people who emigrated from Cuba since 1959 are white (De la Fuente 2001).

Popular culture, in the form of music, literature, fashion, and art, is one of the few mediums that Cubans are able to express their discontent with the current political and economic circumstances that are shaping their lives. Since the 1990s a number of scholars have demonstrated this by examining Cuban cultural production in the post-Soviet era (Fernandes 2003a, 2006; Hernandez-Reguant 2002a, 2003; Power 1999; Quiroga 2005; Wunderlich 2005). As Hernández-Reguant (2002a) says, "this emphasis on culture as the locus of national identity marked an appreciable change from the early days of the revolution, when the victorious Cuban government put forth a nationalist ideology based on allegiance to the revolutionary project. Then, national sentiments capitalized on the construction of the future- now it capitalized on the experience of the past.." (107). She goes on to say that the political and economic restructuring that followed the crisis of the 1990s strategically shifted the national discourse from ideology towards culture as the premise for community and nation. This dissertation demonstrates that youth are not only social actors engaged in negotiating socio-economic transformation, but are also transforming and appropriating these global flows of information, culture, and technology. While several of the youth interviewed for this project articulated an anti-capitalist, anti-materialist posture towards the cultural forms entering Cuba, they simultaneously embraced mimetic forms of Western culture in the form of fashion and music in particular.

One of the other important aspects of youth identity formation in contemporary Cuba is music. While arguably music has always been a powerful force in the composition of youth identities in Cuba, globalization and the increasing flow of new forms of music are creating entirely new youth subcultures. This is a process that is occurring across the globe and Cuba is no exception. "Popular music is a tremendously important site of common culture, for individual and collective symbolic work and creativity. The message of all youth research in the last thirty yeas has been that popular music is young people's central cultural interest" (Willis 1990: 59).

Music is also at times the medium through which the local government attempts to co-opt the gathering of youth at Calle G. Periodically, *La Asociación Hermano Saiz,*[11] the cultural arm of the *Unión de Jóvenes Communistas,* the Union of Communist Youth (UJC), hosts free concerts and shows music videos on giant screens set up at the intersection of Calle 23 and Calle G. These rock concerts and videos are part of an effort by the state and local authorities to reach the youth congregating at this space every weekend. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 6, the increasing number of young people repeatedly going to Calle G has caused the government to respond by trying to appropriate the gathering, not by putting an end to it, but by trying to become an integral part of it. One of the youth interviewed for this project described this type of state intervention at Calle G as an 'official counterbalance'. She went on to say, "In some ways the state is saying, 'You are not counting on me that I am the State, I am the Almighty, therefore that cannot happen here in that way. Here, even for partying in such a way you have to count on me!'" (Yanisbel, age 23, 02/03/08). Therefore by the state

---

[11] The state run youth cultural institution

setting up these music concerts on Calle G, it can be interpreted as an effort by the state to co-opt this youth space, to bring it back into the fold of the state and the revolution. What is also an interesting aspect of these concerts and events is that they often play rock'n'roll or heavy metal music, which is ironic if one considers that in the 1960s, 1970s, and into the 1980s, rock music was often seen as anti-social and therefore anti-revolutionary, it was seen as a symbol of the capitalist US. In the past, informal public gatherings have typically been suppressed by various state mechanisms, the police, rapid action brigades, undercover security, Committee for the Defense of the Revolution[12] (CDRs) etc. Now, the fact that the government is allowing these youth to gather in such large numbers is informative of the status of many of the youth who congregate along Calle G, it is important to note that many of these youth are the children of functionaries, the children of communist party members, bureaucrats, and managers of Cuba's new mixed-enterprises.

Prior to the crisis and restructuring of the 1990s, Cuban youth lived in a world where social mobility and material wellbeing were the rewards for those who followed the appropriate educational, political, and occupational trajectories (Bobes 2000). In other words, these youth grew up in a society where bettering oneself and working to achieve the goals of the revolution would lead to happiness. However, for this current generation coming of age in Cuba, they encountered a vastly different scenario and a whole new array of obstacles.

---

[12] As mentioned in Chapter 4, the CDRs were originally set-up as militias during the early 1960s, at the height of the crisis between the US and Cuba. Since that period, their function has shifted to mobilizing their respective neighborhood, and providing assistance to the elderly and needy in their neighborhood, as well as continued monitoring of their neighborhood and its residents.

1.5 The End of an Era

On February 19, 2008, Fidel Castro withdrew his potential nomination for the

Municipal Elections in Cuba, thereby removing any possibility for him to run in the

elections for the National Assembly- the only route to maintain his presidency. With

words written for the Communist daily newspaper *Granma*, Fidel stated: "I will not

aspire to or accept –I repeat not aspire to or accept—the positions of president of the

Council of State and Commander-in-chief," (Granma 02/19/08). And with that a

symbolic moment in the history of modern Cuba passed. At the age of 81, and after 49

years in power, Fidel moved to the back of the political stage, though while still holding

on to the true reigns of power. This was more of a symbolic gesture than one of true

change, since, as First Secretary of the Communist Party, Fidel is still the head of state

according to the 1992 Constitution[13], which clearly states that the Communist Party is the

supreme power in Cuba. Fidel ended this notable article by saying, "This is not my

farewell to you. My only wish is to fight as a soldier in the battle of ideas ... It will be just

another weapon you can count on. Perhaps my voice will be heard". In some places there

was a noticeable increase in state security forces patrolling the city, but for the most part

it was a sad city on that day. Most of the Cubans whom I spoke with about this historic

moment were well aware that it did not signal any real change, yet virtually all expressed

a genuine sadness as well as pessimism. It was not that Raúl Castro was elected

president that was greeted with dismay by many Cubans, particularly younger Cubans, it

---

[13] In the 1992 Constitution, Article 5 states: "The Communist Party of Cuba, a follower of Martí's ideas
and of Marxism-Leninism, and the organized vanguard of the Cuban nation, is the highest leading force of
society and of the state, which organizes and guides the common effort toward the goals of the construction
of socialism and the progress toward a communist society.."
http://www.cubapolidata.com/gpc/gpc_constitution_1992.html

was the fact that the individuals he appointed with him[14]; with the exception of Carlos Lage, were all seen as part of the old guard revolutionaries- men who had fought with the Castro brothers during the 1950s. This was an indication that very little would change after Fidel stepped down, and it was interpreted by many youth as the old regime barring the advance of newer generations into the seats of power.

One indication of the ways young Cubans are thinking about the current political and economic situation in their country can be seen in the comments made by university students earlier this year. On January 19, 2008 computer-science student Eliécer Ávila Cicilia[15] publicly questioned Ricardo Alarcon, the president of the National Assembly, about many issues that young Cubans were preoccupied with. In this rare town-hall meeting, Eliécer asked, "it seems to us a revolution cannot advance without a plan. I'm sure one exists, we just want to know what it is." The student went on to say, "why can't the people of Cuba, workers and their families travel to certain parts of the world? Why are we charged at the market in a currency worth 25 times that in which we are paid? Why can't Cubans go freely to resorts in their own country? And what are the reasons for the restrictions on the internet, why for example were the sites Yahoo and Google

---

[14] The individuals appointed by Raúl Castro are: Jose Ramon Machado Ventura, age 77, First Vice President of Council of State and Council of Ministers who is reputed to be a hard line communist ideologue and old guard revolutionary: General Julio Casas Regueiro, age 72, Defense Minister and also Vice-President of the Cuban Council of State. The other Vice-Presidents of the Cuban Council of State are: Juan Almeida Bosque, age 81, third ranking member of Cuban Council of State, he was one of the members of M-26-7 who attacked the Moncada Barracks with Fidel and Raul; Esteban Lazo Hernández, age 64; Abelardo Colomé Ibarra, age 69; Esteban Lazo Hernández, age 64; Carlos Lage Dávila, age 57. It was Carlos Lage whom many thought would potentially replace Fidel Castro as President, if the regime were looking to bring in the younger generation. See: 'Castro steps down as Cuban leader', *BBC* (Feb. 18. 2008).

[15] To see a video clip of the meeting: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgj3gPbLE4g&feature=related, or http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/americas/02/07/cuba.videos/#cnnSTCVideo

suddenly restricted?" He also asked why does it take a Cuban worker two or three days

to earn enough money to buy a toothbrush.

Since his entering the office of the president in February 24, 2008, Raúl has made

some minor reforms and changes[16]. To increase food production he allowed Cuban

farmers and cooperatives to lease land from the state and provided them with credits

through which to purchase equipment and supplies. In March 2008, Cubans were granted

the right to stay in tourist hotels and rent cars, something that was banned since the early

1990s, though they must now pay the same rates as foreigners. Also in the same month,

Cubans were allowed to legally purchase such electronic equipment as DVD players,

computers, and mobile phones in state stores. Salary caps were removed to provide

better incentives for efficiency and productivity, and pensions were marginally raised.

Additionally, to reduce the stress of the transportation crisis, the government opened to

the door to allowing more private taxis. With the average state salary remaining about

$17 or $18 USD per month, many of these reforms were superficial and out of reach for

the vast majority of Cubans whose purchasing power is limited. One respondent who I

have maintained contact with since conducting fieldwork emailed me after these reforms

were made and wrote that even those Cubans who somehow have saved enough money to

go and buy a DVD player or a computer were weary of doing so because they feared that

when they went to purchase the item the state would turn around and ask them where

they acquired the money to these items. One time when I was interviewing a foreign

---

[16] See Arreola, Gerardo. (2008). "Fin a 'prohibiciones absurdas' en Cuba" *La Jornada* (April 1, 2008): http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2008/04/01/index.php?section=mundo&article=044n1mun, or Frank, Marc. (2008). Cubans line up for their first cellular phone lines, *Reuters*, (April 14, 208): http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSN1435806920080414 (accessed on August 28, 2008), and Lacey, Marc. (2008). Cuba to Grant Private Farmers Access to Land. *New York Times*, (July 19, 2008).

journalist who has lived in Cuba for close to twenty years, I was asking him about social control in Cuba. He laughed and said, yes there are police and security agents all about the country, but the most effective form of social control in Cuba today is the fact that *everyone* is doing something illegal to survive or make some money and therefore no-one 'rocks the boat' for fear of getting caught renting a room without a license or for reselling supplies stolen from work etc.

1.6 Structure and Layout

In order to address the number of issues mentioned above, and to understand the significance of the youth appropriating Calle G, it is first necessary to provide the historical, spatial, social, and economic contexts as well as the theory on which this work is based. In Chapter 2 I presents the main theories and ideas that frame this dissertation. It provides an overview of, and engages with, the main paradigms and literatures on public space. This chapter reviews the appropriate literature on public space by starting with theories on the social production of space before moving on to examining the role of public space in democracy and eventually concluding by reviewing some of the literatures that lament the end of public life and the 'death of public space'. Some of the key themes that will be highlighted include issues of 'inclusion', 'exclusion', and 'rights to the city'. By following the emergence of these literatures, I will be able to then situate public space in Havana within the framework of Latin American cities and socialist and post-socialist cities. This chapter will close situating youth in public space. Chapter 3 will provide a brief review of the history of Havana from the colonial period up until 1990. The purpose of this chapter is to examine some of the prevailing characteristics

and historical trends and events that shaped this city, in other words, it will present the contingent historical specificities of the city. Havana is a polycentric city, and this characteristic is important for understanding the current development strategies the government is following. Understanding the historical context of the urbanization of the city will provide a richer insight into the significance of the youth appropriating Calle G. Additionally, this chapter seeks to demonstrate the connection between the spatial growth of the city and the growth of a plantation economy, thereby linking sugar and colonialism inextricably to modern Havana. This chapter also briefly reviews the history of the Cuban Republic (1902-1959) and how this period produced the recognizable city of today. Understanding the historical and spatial characteristics of the city is important for being able to discern the current re-emergence of historic trends, such as the racialization of space, the growth of the service economy through tourism, and the re-signification of the city itself. This chapter is chronological and leaves off when the Soviet Union collapses and the Special Period begins.

Chapter 4 picks up temporally where the previous chapter left off, at approximately 1990-1991. This chapter will resume examining the development of the city while also reviewing the social and economic changes that make the backdrop for the youth of the nation. This chapter presents the reforms and restructuring that occurred during the 1990s as well the consequences and impacts of these policies. Additionally this chapter examines some of the strategies local residents employed to mitigate the severity of the crisis, particularly in the form of informal strategies and economies. This chapter provides the background necessary for understanding Cuban youth and their experiences of the restructuring and transformations of the past fifteen years. In Chapter

5 there is a brief overview of the role of Cuban youth in the revolutionary struggles prior to 1959 in Havana. The reason for recounting this history and the role of youth in the political transformations of the nation is because this is the history every Cuban student learns in school. This is the historical backdrop that has produced the current generation of youth. This chapter also reviews the mechanisms the post-1959 government implemented in order to incorporate the youth into the revolution. This chapter looks at such issues as education, delinquency, and youth expectations. This chapter also draws from recent Cuban research on the impact of the 1990s on this current generation of youth. Youth have historically played an important role in social change, and therefore, understanding this history provides insight into potential futures of the youth. It also raises some important questions concerning the youth of today.

Chapter 6 presents the data and data analysis. This chapter relies on the discourse of the interviewees to tell the story of youth and public space in Havana. This chapter is broken down into subheadings, or themes, that emerged from the interview data. This chapter returns to, and engages further, a number of issues that were only briefly mentioned in this introduction. And the final chapter of this dissertation will review the findings of this project as well as discuss the future of this research and its contributions to the field.

1.7 Conclusion

Youth cultures are often the entry point for external cultural influences and ideas in society. When considering the growing presence of globalization in Havana, it is important to keep in mind that these youth are consumers of global forces, symbols, and

cultures while simultaneously being the producers of a distinctly Cuban culture and identity. In the process new meanings are given to the objects that circulate and the spatial practices and patterns performed by the youth. In relation to the youth appropriating foreign cultural references, Massey (1998) argues that youth cultures today are spatially open as youth from all parts of the globe are utilizing, appropriating, and claiming aspects of an international cultural reference system, thereby creating hybrid cultures. On the other hand, Chatterton and Hollands (2002) argue that by focusing too much on the 'hybridity' of youth culture there is a potential to disregard the importance of locality.

Youth culture itself is the product of lived social and spatial practices, it is something that must exist in material spaces and places in order for it to have meaning. Calle G is a space where identities and cultures are formed and reformed through repeated performance. This is an unending process where subjective identity and material urban space, as McCann (1999) says, exit in a mutually constitutive relationship. The spatial practices on an individual and collective level have transformed a mundane public space into a spectacular space where the youth are repeatedly carving out a space of their own. There are two additional factors, beside the central location, of Calle G that are worth pointing out. As will be further developed in Chapter 6, Calle G is not located directly within any of the major tourist zones of the city, therefore there is less urgency to regulate or bring to an end the youth occupation of this space since it does not disturb the tourist trade, this is an anti-tourist space. The other locational factor of importance is that the intersection of Calle 23 and Calle G is only a few blocks away from the symbolic and

physical heart of all governmental power on the island, the *Plaza de la Revolución*.[17] The proximity of Calle G to the seats of power indicates that the government, on all levels, is well aware of the nocturnal gatherings of youth there. Because of their location and visibility within the urban landscape, the youth of Calle G are highly revealing of the changes underway in Cuba, namely of the growing socio-economic inequality among the population. As will be further demonstrated in Chapter 6, the growth of the number of young people repeatedly going to Calle G has caused the government to respond by trying to appropriate the gathering of the youth there. This can be interpreted as an effort by the state to co-opt this regular confluence of youth, in other words, it is the state trying to appropriate the momentum that is causing these youth to come together there. Additionally, as mentioned above, the fact that the youth association tries to co-opt these gathering by staging rock concerts along Calle G is ironic if one considers that in the 1960s and 1970s rock music was seen as anti-revolutionary and representative of the reach of capitalism on the island. While in the past the government did make efforts to control the reach of globalized culture (e.g. through arresting youth who listened to the music of the Beatles or the Rolling Stones, as will be discussed in Chapter 6), today, instead of trying prevent the consumption of these cultural flows, the government is trying to encourage Cuban cultural production as a means of capital generation.

The economic crisis of the 1990s and the subsequent political and economic restructuring that followed created a 'culture of informality'. By 'culture of informality' I mean that as the state was unable to fully meet the material and ideological needs of its citizens, it had to relax its regulation and expectations of the citizenry. And in response

---

[17] *Plaza de la Revolución* is the location of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of the Armed Forces, the Ministry of Communication, the Ministry of Finance.

to the state rolling back, individuals began operating outside of the traditional structures

of the formal economic system. In this sense, the state's inability to completely satisfy

the needs of the population forced it to turn its head on the burgeoning informal networks

and activities that emerged during the 1990s. During the past fifteen years, there

emerged a tendency that when the economy improved the central government would try

to restrict and regain control over the numerous informal mechanisms that operated

throughout Cuban society, and when the economy did poorly, there would be a

subsequent relaxation of control. It is similar to what one of the participants for this

study said in relation to this growing informality, "it was kind of an agreement, basically

the government said- I can't give you what you need to cover your basic needs so the

only thing I can do is allow you to do what ever you want to do, and it is up to you"

(Omar, age 52, 02/18/08). He even goes so far as to say that there is a danger in this

process, because once people realize that they are own their own and that the state no

longer cares for them, that it can become something political.

Connected to the inability of the state to provide for all of the material and

ideological needs of its citizen is the fact that entire population, particularly the youth,

increasingly became disaffected by the constant revolutionary rhetoric and unfulfilled

promises of a future that never arrives. Seventy-two percent of the 11.2 million Cubans

who live on the island were born after the 1959 revolution (ONE 2007). Therefore, the

vast majority of people in Cuba do not know first hand the conditions and circumstances

that led to the revolutionary struggle. The vast majority of living Cubans only know the

revolutionary struggle as history and not as experience. Without having experienced this,

much of the rhetoric of the revolution lacks substance when the state is no longer able to

adequately provide for its citizens. The current generation of youth in Cuba is a product

of the revolution. And ironically, it is exactly this triumph of the revolution that is one of

the factors for the current disillusionment of many Cuban youth. The expectations and

aspirations that the state and society instilled in them suddenly were not being fulfilled

any longer. The complex outcomes of the social and economic restructuring that

followed the collapse of the Soviet Union dramatically altered actually exiting conditions

on the ground. According to Pertierra (2008), "in the post-Soviet years the Cuban state

has had a reduced capacity to directly influence citizens' activities, and many of the

resulting social changes have actually involved the resurgence of pre-existing economic

and cultural practices that had declined or disappeared during the decades of Soviet

influence" (765).

The moral and ideological fiber that had supported and legitimated the revolution

for so many years was bankrupt. With the loss of support from the Eastern Bloc

countries, the Cuban government was required to dramatically change course, as can be

seen in the rapid growth in the tourism industry, the search for foreign investment, the

downsizing of the sugar industry, the legalization of self-employment, the welcoming of

remittances, and a number of other policies and reforms that essentially began the painful

process of reintegration into the global market. As will be elaborated on more fully in

Chapter 4, the multiple reforms and restructurings are having a number of consequences

socially, economically, and politically on the population and particularly among the

youth. While one of the triumphs of the revolution was education, the number of

professionals that were being produced was unnecessary for the new economy that was

developing. Tourism does not need many professionals to operate smoothly, it needs

mostly service workers. While the government is attempting to retrain its labor force, the youth who have recently graduated from university, or thinking about going to university are confronted by the reality that, from a material and financial perspective, they would be better off learning how to mix cocktails than they would learning engineering or architecture. Additionally, those youth with university degrees are also confronted by a shrinking job market. Intergenerational conflict emerges as older Cubans do not move aside for the younger generations, which is a problem when considering that the economy has still not surpassed the levels it had attained back in 1989. One of the results of this simple fact is that racial socio-economic based inequality is worsening, and this is apparent along Calle G. In regards to youth, this is becoming a larger issue as identity and status are increasingly linked more and more to material goods. A Cuban who has hard currency is therefore able to go anywhere and do anything if they have the money, in addition to providing higher levels of material consumption, it also provides a higher social status. One of the ways that youth in Cuba are differentiating themselves is through appropriating aspects of the international cultural reference system, through music, fashion, and material objects like cell phones, digital audio players, and digital cameras. With tourism at the core of Cuba's new economy there are constant flows of foreigners coming and going through the streets of Havana, and with them there are the impacts of the demonstration effect, as Cubans who see and interact with, tourists their same age who have the income to travel and visit the island. These youth are thus forced to create meaningful identities for themselves in the wake of tremendous uncertainty and instability.

As a result of the implicit agreement mentioned above, between the state and its citizens, the youth of today in Cuba have a generational consciousness that does not look toward the state or the revolution for developing their own identity. The youth of today are being raised amidst numerous contradictions. In one sense they have benefited from the revolution through their high levels of education and raised expectations and aspirations; yet they are confronted by a starkly different reality, the gap between theory and praxis. This current generation of youth in Cuba is increasingly apathetic about the revolutionary struggle, they must come of age in an environment where the rhetoric and ideology of the revolution seem like empty words and unfulfilled promises. Therefore it is understandable why Cuban youth are increasingly directing their gaze outside of Cuba to find meaningful sources of identity. This notion of informality is supported by the work of Grødeland (2008) who examines it in the context of Eastern Europe. While Grødeland (2008) is discussing the informal economy and social support networks in post-Soviet Eastern Europe her description of juridical control and the growth of informality are apt for Cuba as well. She says,

> "as laws were frequently idealistic- and consequently also often unrealistic- and plans (carrying the status of laws) were often too taut to be implemented, informality became a useful tool to circumvent the former and secure fulfillment of the latter. It was also used by the general public as a strategy for coping with everyday life: having a contact in the right place gave access to consumer goods that were in short supply and otherwise impossible to obtain" (229).

It is through informal networks and the informal economy that many Cubans survive and try to lead fulfilling lives. Therefore, this project is also looking at how young Cubans are making meaning for themselves under conditions that they have little control over. However, these global forces and flows that are directly impacting the lives of young people are also causing a re-sedimentation of racialized identities in Cuba.

The spatial practices of these youth in public space are directly and indirectly challenging and testing the boundaries of authority, a process that is reworking and reshaping the relationship between the state and youth. I found that the relationship and interactions between the Cuban state (at a variety of scales) and youth are complex, and the rhetoric and discourse of the state is often contradictory to the actually existing realities of socio-economic restructuring on the ground. Therefore, there is a growing divergence between the official state commitment to the revolution and the hopes and aspirations of young people. Youth are creating their own social space outside of the sphere of state regulation and influence, and this venue provides Cuban youth with a space to explore and create their own identities in relation to local as well as transnational cultural flows.

For young people, the nighttime in the city opens up the streets and public spaces from the control and regulation of the adults, providing opportunities for young people to congregate and socialize together in autonomous spaces outside of the sphere of adult control (Hebdige 1988; Ruddick 1996a; Massey 1998; Skelton 2000). And through these spatial practices, these youth are temporarily fixing the spatial meanings of Calle G, they are re-inscribing their own discourse into the space of the city.

Chapter 2

Public Space

2.0 - Introduction

Public space is a fundamental part of urban life in all societies. It is where the social and cultural life of the city is maintained and reproduced, a process that repeats itself daily as individuals encounter and engage one another as well as the state in public. This notion of public space, from an inherently Western perspective, dates back to the *agora* in Greek cities. Wycherly says that the *agora* "..was in fact no mere public place, but the central zone of the city- its living heart…It was the constant resort of all citizens, and it did not spring to life on occasions but was the daily scene of social life, business and politics" (cited in Morris 1994: 41). The *agora*, an idealized conception of public space, presents public space as the 'stage' of citizenship. This process of linking public space with participatory democracy stems from these early days of Greek urban planning and the Greek *polis*. However, it is important to remember as La Gory and Pipkin (1981) poignantly state, "..only the citizen- the individual with legal rights and responsibilities to the polis- could participate in the political system. The citizens, in turn, represented only a fraction of the urban population."(56). Therefore, even within this classical urban space of participatory democracy, issues of *inclusion* and *exclusion* were apparent, for the slaves who constructed, maintained, and reproduced these Greek cities clearly did not

have the same 'rights to the city' as the small number of 'citizens' who are now idealized as the progenitor of our modern democratic states.

However, there are clear threads that link the early *agora* with modern urban public space, for then, as now, public space in the city is vital for the social reproduction of the city and for the maintenance of a vibrant and diverse *public*. Additionally, just as the slaves who built the *agora* had a different set of 'rights to the city' than did the citizens of the polis, so to, do individuals in modern cities have differing sets of rights to the city and its public spaces. These 'rights to the city' are directly connected to issues of *inclusion* and *exclusion*, which are themes that will be reoccurring throughout this chapter. There are a number of scholars who draw attention to individuals and groups that are repeatedly being *excluded* from urban public spaces, such as young people and children (Philo 1992; Ruddick 1998, 2003; Sibley 1995;Valentine 1997, 2004), skateboarders (Nolan 2003), homeless people (Cresswell 2001; England 2008; Mitchell 2003), homosexuals (Bell and Valentine 1995), ethnic groups (Watt and Stenson 1998), and countless others who are seen as undesirable inhabitants of modern urban space. These issues of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' and 'rights to the city' are themes that repeatedly appear throughout much of the literature on urban public space and will therefore be examined in more detail below. This chapter will review pertinent literatures that analyze topics ranging from the social production of urban space to literatures that lament the end of public life and the 'death of public space'. This backdrop will allow me to situate how public space is thought of in Latin American cities and in socialist cities. A final goal of chapter is to review the literature on youth and public space.

Before beginning this review of the relevant literature it is necessary to define

public space. Public space is that which all citizens are granted a right to, although this

right is never fixed or absolute. Therefore, on its most basic level, 'public space' for my

purpose herein should be considered as a space that addresses a collectivity, a space that

is open and accessible, a space not only were people observe certain norms of behavior

but also share collective experiences and memories. Since much of this research is based

upon analyzing spatial practices and social relations in public space, it is fitting to begin

with Henri Lefebvre's theory of the social production of space.

2.1 The social production of urban space

French Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991), transformed notions of

social space by arguing that social space is socially produced- space is not neutral, it is

not the mere backdrop of history: 'space is permeated with social relations; it is not only

supported by social relations but it is also producing and produced by social relations"

(1991: 286).

Building upon these insights, many geographers and social theorists have

examined the process of producing meaning in space and the production of space

(Castells 1983; de Certeau 1984; Gottdiener 1994; Harvey 1985; Mitchell 1996; Soja

1989; Watson and Gibson 1995; Zukin 1991). These contributions have connected

political economy and social and economic relations with the production of urban space

and the urban landscape in a variety of ways. One of Lefebvre's contributions to the

study of urban life and cities is his theory on the production of space, which strives to

demystify the social life of the city by understanding space itself, and the processes that

produce it. Lefebvre emphasis on socially produced space focuses on the materiality of

the social, economic, cultural, and political factors that go into creating social space.

Lefebvre argues that the abstraction of space under capitalism causes exchange value to

supplant the use value of urban space. This process of abstraction both homogenizes and

simultaneously fragments space. According to Lefebvre, every society and every mode

of production produces its own distinct type of space, and therefore, an underlying

question in this research is how are the current transformations in modes of production in

Cuba simultaneously transforming the production of space in the city?

Lefebvre brings a dialectical approach to the study of modern capitalist cities,

further advancing Hegel's conceptions of dialectics by introducing a triadic approach in

understanding urban space in the form of *conceived–lived- perceived*.

> "It is reasonable to assume that spatial practice, representations of space and
> representational spaces contribute in different ways to the production of space according
> to the society or mode of production in question, according to the historical period.
> Relations between the three moments of the perceived, the conceived, and the lived are
> never either simple or stable, nor are they 'positive' in the sense in which this term might
> be opposed to 'negative', to the indecipherable, the unsaid, the prohibited, or the
> unconscious." (Lefebvre 1991: 46).

The first aspect of Lefebvre's triadic conception of space is *conceived* space, or in spatial

terms- *representations of space*. This refers to the space of scientists, urban planners,

architects and engineers, and to the actual practices of the material production of the city.

Lefebvre says that this is the system of verbal signs. This is the space produced by the

state, the 'dominant space', created, manipulated, and ordered by the state to control,

code, and carve up urban space in the name of capital accumulation through maintaining

the supremacy of exchange value over use value. The second part of the triad is the *lived*

space or, again in spatial terms- *representational space*. This refers to social space, and

the symbolic meanings inscribed and embedded in the urban landscape. This is the

'*lived'* space of inhabitants and users, 'the clandestine or underground side of social life'

where artists and philosophers challenge 'dominant space' through appropriation and

imagination (Lefebvre 1996: 38-40). This is the space where individuals understand and

interact with the city through non-verbal symbols, images, and signs. It is in

'representational spaces' where "people not only live their space through its associated

images and symbols, they actively construct its meaning through cognitive and

hermeneutical processes" (Lefebvre 1991: 39). And finally there is *perceived* space, or in

spatial terms- *spatial practice*. This refers to the spatial patterns of the everyday, *lo*

cotidiano, the practices of use by the people who inhabit and traverse these urban spaces.

These spaces "structure everyday reality and broader social and urban reality" (Merrifield

2000: 175). Spatial practice is how inhabitants move through and use the city. Lefebvre

argues that the interconnected and interrelated processes of this triadic dialectical

relationship are both consciously and unconsciously carried out again and again in the

city.

> "What is spatial practice under neo-capitalism? It embodies a close association, within
> perceived space, between daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes and
> networks which links up the places set aside for work, 'private life' and leisure). This
> association is a paradoxical one, because it includes the most extreme separation between
> the places it links together. The specific spatial competence and performance of every
> society member can only be evaluated empirically" (Lefebvre 1991: 38).

In other words, each of the three turns of this dialectical process are often mutable and

overlapping and depend on the instance of a given time and context. Through analyzing

representational space, Lefebvre is attempting capture the dreamscape, as Benjamin

(1999) says, the city of memory that is omitted from the urban spaces of the planners and

the state, yet which is essential to the processes of spatial production.

Lefebvre was not the only scholar interested in examining the significance of the everyday, the meaning of *lo cotidiano* in relation to modern forms of capitalism. The geographer Edward Soja (2000) is another theorist engaged with issues of spatiality and the production of space:

> While it may be easy to grasp the idea that everything spatial is simultaneously, even problematically, social, it is much more difficult to comprehend the reverse relation, that what is described as social is always at the same time intrinsically spatial. This inherent contingent and completely constituted spatiality of social life (and of history) must be persistently and explicitly stressed, lest it be forgotten or submerges"(15-16).

Building on Lefebvre's triadic conception of space, Soja (1989) also maintains that socially constructed space is shaped by social, historic, and spatial elements and relations. Therefore, actions of individuals do not merely 'take place' in space, they are informed by space and help give meaning to, and shape, space. Therefore, Soja's dialectical materialism is simultaneously historical and spatial. The work of de Certeau (1984) helps inform, and in some instances, expand the foundations laid out by Lefebvre's theory. For de Certeau (1984), *place* is in essence, the embodiment of hegemonic strategies of power that aim to order and control movement and social behavior in the city. In other words, it is *place* that is planned and built to structure individuals and social relations in line with the dominant, hegemonic, interests. From the perspective of Lefebvre's theory, this refers to the 'abstract space' of urban planners and developers, dominant space. However, and of particular interest for this project, de Certeau (1984) goes on to demonstrate that although *power* structures and orders place, the actual users and inhabitants creatively construct their own spaces through the practices of living in place, what de Certeau (1984) refers to as *practiced place*.

"Space is practiced place" says de Certeau, "the street defined by urban planning is the place which becomes transformed into space by the people who use it" (1984: 117). It is through the everyday spatial practices and tactical appropriations, according to de Certeau (1984), through which citizens resist the formal, and hegemonic, strategies of institutionalized power. By focusing on '*spatial practice'*, de Certeau (1984) also contends that it enables us to examine ways in which hegemonic power imposes an ordered structure on place, thereby defining the identity of place and instilling appropriate norms of behavior for such spaces.

According to de Certeau (1984), ordinary people in their everyday life activities appropriate and use urban space in ways that challenge the abstract urban spaces constituted by capital and the state. The work of de Certeau focuses on the 'spatial practices' of citizens, in the ways people re-appropriate space from the state and hegemonic power through the tactics of walking, narrating, and remembering the spaces of their city, which is a project intimately tied to the politics of representation. In this sense, following de Certeau (1984), we can think of place as fixed and stable, while space shifting, fluid, and open, the point at which mobile elements and subject intersect (Massey 2005). Therefore, cities are spaces that are not only concretely produced in a temporal sense, but are also spaces that are collectively imagined, constructed, and sold (Gregory 1994; Lefevbre 1991; Silva 2003). Our interactions with the built environment influence our perceptions of it and our perceptions influence our interactions with it (Gregory 1994). As Goheen (1998) says, "Citizens create meaningful public space by expressing their attitudes, asserting their claims and using it for their own purposes. It thereby becomes a meaningful public resource."(279). And it is Harvey (1978) who

states that all spatial forms and the symbolism and aesthetics embedded within them, therefore, all urban landscapes, are the products of socio-political and economic forces.

Lefebvre's 'spatial practice' can be seen in much the same way as put forth by de Certeau, through investigating the ways in which citizens contest the meanings and representations put forth by the state and capital. Through using these concepts together as mutually exclusive, they provide an avenue to "analyze space as an activity and to ask questions about the dialectical relations in terms of which space is formulated and functions" (Ligget and Perry 1995: 246). It is important to also note that these spaces overlap and intersect repeatedly, and part of this analysis will be focusing particularly on these points of intersection because these are often points of tension and thus, spaces of contradiction.

2.2 Public Space and Democracy

In Western society, notions of public space are often inseparable from ideas concerning democracy, linking public space as the space of citizenship- the public stage were citizens perform and act upon their rights as citizens- the public sphere (Fraser 1999; Habermas 1989). For many scholars, there is an intrinsic political dimension to public space, thereby linking it with the *public sphere*, *public life*, and the *public realm* (Mitchell 1995, 1996; Staeheli and Mitchell 2004). Low and Smith (2006) argue that a thorough understanding of public space is necessary to engage and try and understand the public sphere. Don Mitchell (1995) says: "It is in the material realm of public space that other voices 'may arise and contest issues of citizenship and democracy' (117). Therefore, public space is, as Sennett (1977) described, an ideal democratic urban space.

For Arendt (1973), the public realm promotes a sense of social identity and community while also helping to establish a sense of what it means to be a citizen in addition to creating a diverse collectivity. Ardent (1973) argues that public space is a fundamental component of democracy because it allows individuals to engage in discussion and to interact, and even merely be present, with one another- thereby sharing recognition of their citizenship and their humanness.

> "Only the existence of a public realm and the world's subsequent transformation into a community of things which gathers men together and relates them to each other depends primarily on permanence. If the world is to contain a public space, it cannot be erected for one generation and planned for the living only; it must transcend the life-span of mortal men. Without this transcendence into a potential earthly immortality, no politics, strictly speaking, no common world and no public realm is possible…." (Arendt 1973: 55).

According to Arendt these simple acts of appearance, discussion, and recognition of one another in a public and open space are essential to political action and identity. In essence, Arendt's public realm fosters citizenship and social identity through elements of commonality and togetherness. And of crucial importance, this public realm is open and accessible to all and represents a collectivity. Therefore, from this perspective, public space is necessary to the maintenance of democracy and the nurturing of diversity within the city. Similar to Arendt's theory, Kunstler (1996) states it more succinctly by saying, "civic life is what goes on in the public realm", meaning that the public spaces of the city are where civic life and the public realm take place (38). And it is precisely because of this important function that Kunstler (1996) advocates that something must be done to stop the erosion of the quality of these spaces by capitalist development. As Lofland and Lofland (1998) say, it is only in urban spaces "..legally public or otherwise- where strangers and/or categorically known others have the relational edge does the public realm exist." (51).

In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989), Jurgen Habermas contends that historically the bourgeois public sphere operated as a realm that mediated between the private interests of individuals and the public power of the state. The public sphere, he argues provided a space where individuals could engage in free and open debate (through free speech, a free press, and the freedom to assemble) in the process of ensuring the accountability of the state (Ibid.). Conceptually, Habermas' public sphere referred to seventeenth and eighteenth century western European bourgeoisie that comprised non-governmental, non-economic, 'voluntary associations' that made up what could be called- civil society. Fraser (1992) disagrees with Habermas's concept of the public sphere by arguing that it is too restricted and narrow since, historically, the public sphere he refers to was very exclusionary- essentially it was only open and accessible to individuals of the right gender, class, and race. Although Habermas' public sphere is to a certain extent aspatial, many theorists argue that public space serves as the material setting where the 'public' becomes manifest through actual interaction and engagement (Fraser 1990; Howell 1993; Mitchell 2003).

In a number of his works, Don Mitchell (1995, 1996, 2003) has argued that public space is inherently, by its very nature, politicized- meaning that urban space only becomes 'public' space through contestation and struggle. As Mitchell (2003) demonstrates with the example of People's Park in Berkeley, in order for a public space to be truly a functioning democratic space, it depends upon a group, or groups, *taking* that space and *making* it 'public' (35, italics in original). Carr et al. (1992) also maintain that it is in material public space where political struggles and democratic actions become visible. In other words, for a protest to be a 'public protest', it must take place in public,

and hence, this necessitates actually existing public space. Mitchell (2003) also argues

that this issue of 'visibility' is a crucial component for the successful functioning of an

open and free democracy.   As Low and Smith (2006) argue: "..political movements are

always about place and asserting the right, against the state, to mass in public space" (16).

However, although public space is the site for social interaction and the locus of

potentially transformative powers, Mitchell (2003) and Low (2000) have shown that all

social interactions in public space are limited by the politics of power.

Therefore, public space should be considered as space to which all citizens are

granted access, although this right is never fixed or absolute. On its most basic level,

'public space' for my purpose herein should be considered as a space that addresses a

collectivity, a space that is open and accessible, a space not only where people observe

certain norms of behavior (the implicit codes of behavior that enable strangers to interact

with one another in public- *civility* or *civitas* (Sennett 1977), but also share collective

experiences and memories. Being spaces of engagement and interaction, public space is

often seen as the arena for political expression, the potential zone of conflict and protest

(Carr et al. 1992; Mitchell 1995, 2003).

> "As cities have redeveloped, public space has become a key battleground- a battleground
> over the homeless and the poor and over the rights of developers, corporations, and those
> who seek to make over the city in an image attractive to tourists, middle- and upper-class
> residents, and suburbanites." (Mitchell and Staeheli 2006: 144)

The significance of these arguments can be seen by looking back to the protests in

Paris of 1968, events which led to Lefebvre's famous essay "The Right to the City"

(1996). Additionally, we can look to the events in Tiananmen Square in 1989, or the

protests in Seattle and Genoa in 1999 against the WTO, or the recent protests against the

Chinese government by Tibetan monks throughout Tibet and India in 2008. These are

merely a few of the better-known examples of people 'taking it to the street', but they demonstrate the importance of public space for the visible performance of the public sphere. In order for the public sphere to function, and arguably for democracy to exist, there is a very real need for material public space. Furthermore, the above mentioned demonstrations and protests can be seen as citizens struggling for their right to the city, a right that according to Harvey (2003a) should not just be "merely a right of access to what the property speculators and state planners define, but an active right to make the city different, to shape it more in accord with our heart's desire, and to re-make ourselves thereby in a different image.." (940).

2.3 The Death of Public Space

 With the continuing spread of neo-liberal forms of globalization and the deepening entrenchment of capitalism in Western and non-Western cities across the globe, there is a growing body of literature that is lamenting the loss of democratic public space coupled with the degradation of public life in the city (Davis 1990; Harvey 1989; Putnam 1996; Sennett 1977; Sorkin 1992; Zukin 1996). Part of these processes of globalization and neoliberalism that are readily apparent in cities and towns throughout both the Global North and the Global South is the ever-increasing privatization, commercialization, commodification, and homogenization of public space. These *narratives of loss* that focus on this increasing privatization and commercialization of public space throughout the world are heralded as the 'end of public life' (Sennett 1977) and the 'death of public space' (Davis 1990; Sorkin 1992).

This demise of public life in cities is argued to be the result of increasing domesticity and the privatization of formerly public aspects of urban life in late-capitalist societies (Drucker and Gumpert 1996; Putnam 1996; Sennett 1977; Sorkin 1992). However, some theorists argue that nostalgic notions of an idealized past are fallacious, and that an idealized past does not apply to modern time anymore (Brill 1989; Coontz 1992). Nonetheless, there is a large body of literature that maintains that public life is increasingly becoming privatized and inward focused (Boyer 1996; Lofland 1998; Low and Smith 2005), a phenomenon that has direct correlation to the transformation of social relations in public space.

In *The Fall of Public Man*, Sennett (1977) links the 'end of public culture' in Western societies to the socio-economic and political transformations brought about by capitalism. The result, he argues, is a dramatic decline of public life due to a loss of what Sennett terms, *civility*. (1977). *Civility*, refers the capacity of diverse peoples, meaning people of differing ages, genders, races, religions, and classes, to be able to live together and interact and socialize in the city without the constant control of the state. In essence, Sennett's notion of *civility* refers to an implicit code of behavior and conduct that enables diversity in the city to be a common good. Putnam (2000) also laments that the loss of meaningful social relations in public space is causing a significant decline in civic life and in community. This notion of the necessity of diversity and social mixing for the maintenance of public life in the city are exactly what scholars are lamenting when arguing that there is a 'Death of Public Space'. For almost two decades, scholars have been discussing the consequences of the increased commodification and

commercialization of public space throughout the West (Banerjee 2000; Davis 1990; McCann 1999; Sorkin 1992; Zukin 1995).

These scholars lament the disappearance of truly democratic public spaces in contemporary capitalist cities. One of the main issues of these debates is that previously public spaces are increasingly becoming private, therefore blurring the boundary between public/private, with the increasing prevalence of quasi-public spaces such as the quintessential shopping mall paradigm, the modern version of Walter Benajmin's (1999) Parisian Arcades, that now dot the urban landscape across the globe. In *City of Quartz*, Davis (1990) argues that public space, particularly the shopping mall, is being designed solely for consumption, and that part of this process is the control of peoples and spaces through design and surveillance. These pseudo-public spaces become defensible privatized spaces of exclusion. Davis says: "The 'public' spaces of the new megastructures and supermalls have supplanted traditional streets and disciplined their spontaneity. Inside malls, office centers, and cultural complexes, public activities are sorted into strictly functional compartments under the gaze of private police forces." (1992: 155). The other part of Davis's argument in regards to securitization and privatization is the increase in the industries that defend one's private space and private property, as seen in home security systems, gated communities, and car alarms.

In *Variations on a Theme Park*, Sorkin's (1992) compilation focuses on the ways in which the development of late-capitalism has produced the postmodern city, and, in essence, the ways in which exchange value is obliterating the use value of urban space. Thus, creating what Zukin (1991) terms, 'landscapes of consumption'. In Sorkin's (1992) book the reader moves through the commodified hyper-controlled landscapes of

artificiality from the South Street Seaport in New York City to the West Edmonton Mall

in Alberta, Canada and on to the Disneyscapes of Florida and California. In each of these

instances, we see technology and capital creating public spaces of 'securitization and

privatization'.

> "Public space design reproduces the conditions within which processes such as
> gentrification can occur, because it is often in the quality of the design of public space
> that people, such as investors, attribute the ability to generate profit, and can therefore
> justify clearing out people who do not share in that vision" (Van Deusen 2002: 150).

In the context of public space in North America much of the literature focuses

primarily on the interactions between the state, whether in the form of federal, city, or

local government, and private interests, usually in the form of property developers,

investment firms or other forms of private capital (Harvey 1989; Zukin 1996). How the

relationship between *public* and *private* is shaped in a given society at a given time

produces different forms of public space as well as transforms the social relations of its

citizens. As Banerjee (2001) argues, the privatization of public spaces devalues the

social function of public space for the citizens of the city. Additionally, the privatization

of public space increasingly blurs the boundary between the *public* and *private* space, an

issue that will be further explored in the following section.

2.4 The Public/Private Dichotomy

Part of the transformation of public space over time is a concomitant

transformation of conceptual meanings of what the *public* and the *private* are. The *public*

and the *private* are two concepts that are defined in relation to one another, with one

being defined almost always in contrast to the other.

"These different public/private distinctions emerge, [ ] from different (often implicit or only partly conscious) theoretical languages or universes of discourse, each with its own complex historical cargo of assumptions and connotations…[which] reflect deeper differences in both theoretical and ideological commitments, in sociological assumptions, and/or in sociohistorical context…debates about how to cut up the social world between public and private are rarely innocent analytical exercises, since they often carry powerful normative implications – but quite disparate normative implications, depending on context and perspective" (Weintraub 1997: 3)

Weintaub (1993) says: "The discourse of public and private cover a variety of subjects that are analytically distinct and, at the same time, subtly –often confusingly- overlapping and intertwined..'(3). On its most basic level, the word *public* refers to that which is open and accessible to everyone and therefore addresses a collectivity, while on the other hand, the word *private* refers to that which is restricted to the use of particular persons or groups and subsequently addresses the individual (whether in the form of an individual person or group). The importance of understanding the relation of these two concepts in the context of public space in a given city is that they are directly linked to issues of *inclusion* and *exclusion*, in other words, who has, or conversely does not have, a right to the city. It is exactly this *public*/*private* dichotomy that Lefebvre (1991, 1996) tries to move beyond by replacing it with his triadic dialectical approach to spatial analysis and the production of space.

As mentioned previously, a truly democratic public space is open and accessible to everyone, and is therefore *public* and *inclusive*. While the contemporary quasi-public/private spaces of many North American and Western European cities lamented by scholars from the 'Death of Public Space' school are becoming more *exclusive* and *private* and thus limiting the presence of the 'other'.

The dichotomy between the *public* and the *private* is something that is directly connected to macro-scale social and economic changes that are transforming our world in

the name of globalization. Drummond (2000) argues that with the recent liberalization of the economy, there is an increasing shift from the public realm towards the private realm, something that this research argues is occurring in Cuba. These issues of *public/private* are important in relation to Havana because with the continuing erosion of the socialist egalitarian values of the Cuban Revolution, in combination with the increasing inability of the state to maintain the social safety net at the levels previously attained prior to the 90s, there is a subtle transition from public life towards private life.

2.5 Public Space and the Socialist State

In contrast to most cities throughout the West, and even in many non-Western cities, where the dictates of the market cause land values in the urban core to have a high exchange value; socialist cities, lacking the presence market forces, have different land value systems, and thus often different land use patterns. From a Marxist perspective, or Neo-Marxist according to Szelenyi (1996), the key determining contrast between socialist and capitalist urbanization is that differing modes of production produce different social and spatial structures in cities. Furthermore, it can be agreed that there are marked differences between the two forms of urbanization, primarily due to the fact that under socialism there was a virtual elimination of all forms of private land ownership in urban areas, and that the centralized state was solely responsible for planning, construction, financing, and ultimately distributing all urban land and housing (Szelenyi 1993; French and Hamilton 1979). However, I am in agreement with Lefebvre (1991), when he questions whether there actually exists any purely socialist space. Lefebvre (1991) says,

> " What of socialism – or, rather, what of what is today so confusedly referred to as socialism?.....To rephrase the question therefore: has state socialism produced a space of its own?...One cannot help but wonder, however, whether it is legitimate to speak of

60

socialism where no architectural innovation has occurred, where no specific space has been created; would it not be more appropriate in that case to speak of a failed transition?" (53-55).

In relation to urbanization processes in Eastern European cities, Szelenyi (1993) says "Urbanization in socialist Eastern Europe followed a different path from what one might anticipate if this region had followed a western trajectory of development after the Second World War" (41). Szelenyi (1996) argues that as a result of extensive industrialization during the socialist period, Eastern European countries experienced 'under-urbanization'. Another factor that is important to emphasize, when contrasting socialist and capitalist urbanization and the spaces that each produces, is that in a socialist city, all non-residential urban land is theoretically owned and controlled by the state, and therefore all urban space is 'public' by nature. Furthermore, as Forbes and Thrift (1987) correctly point out, socialist states and cities, particularly outside of the USSR and the Eastern Bloc countries are far from homogeneous. The given forms and varieties of socialism are dependent on the contingent historic and geographic contexts of a particular location.

It is often cited in the literature that public space in socialist cities was used to serve the purposes of the dominant power, namely the Communist Party (Crowley and Reid 2002; Engel 2007; Stanilov 2007). Thus public space in many socialist cities was planned and designed on a monumental scale, large open spaces in the urban core loaded with political iconography and symbols of the power of the state and the Party (Scarpaci 2000a). As Crowley and Reid (2002) say, "On these monumental sites, marches were arranged to animate the city and to embody the inexorable force of history. Perhaps these

great new public spaces might be understood as the most self-evidently ideological spaces where the collective identities of socialism were to be forged" (2).

These spaces were landscapes of power, used for performative state rituals aimed at legitimating the hegemony of the Party over history, by fostering a particular vision of the past and the present. As Duncan (1990) says, these types of landscapes function as "a vast repository out of which symbols of order and social relationships, i.e. ideology, can be fashioned" (17).

> "Central squares were planned with monumental proportions at a scale reflecting the superhuman power of government, rather than the daily needs of the residents. These spaces were frequently used as a grand stage for numerous political parades, festivals, and public celebrations showcasing the advantages of the socialist system. The control over the use of these spaces and the importance assigned to them was further demonstrated by the high level of their governance, which included not only their dutiful maintenance but also the strict control over access to those areas prohibited for certain unwanted groups including homeless, alcoholics, and drug addicts (not to mention political demonstrations)." (Engel 2007: 288-9)

Stanilov (2007) points out that the three main distinctions between public space in capitalist cities and in socialist cities are: the quantity, distribution, and function of public space. Of particular importance in Stanilov's distinctions is that the functionality of public space was different as well as the ways that public space was used outside of state functions. Even during the Soviet period there were changes in the function and use of public space. Castillo (1992) says, "these carnival-like festivities [of May Day, as observed under Lenin] were transformed under Stalin into formulaic demonstrations of military strength, social conformity, and devotion to the leader."(277). In most socialist cities, little informal commerce or private entrepreneurialism took place in the public spaces of the city, something which Stanilov (2007) says has changed dramatically during the post-Soviet period in Eastern European cities.

Even outside of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, public spaces are directly connected with political ideology and spectacles that legitimate the state. In the case of Beijing, Hung (2005) refers to Tiananmen Square as:

"…. as an architectonic embodiment of political ideology and as an architectural site activating political action and expression… Together with the architectural monuments in the Square, they have provided the basic standards and references for constructing a 'revolutionary history of the people's and defining the country's political geography and temporality" (9).

Hung (2005) goes on to say that to meet the needs of the 'fanatical agendas' of the state, public spaces were constructed throughout the country during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s for political mass mobilization campaigns (22). However, with the collapse of the Socialist Bloc in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, in addition to the economic liberalizations that have taken place in both Vietnam and China, the pressures of commercialization and privatization are changing the role of public space in these societies.

As Engel (2007) points out, the socio-economic and political changes following the collapse of the socialist system in Russia caused dramatic changes in the public realm, changes and tensions that are being played out in the public spaces of cities. She argues that the increasing privatization of public space, particularly through extraordinary upsurge in unregulated informal and entrepreneurial activities in public space, is creating a 'Wild West' mentality, therefore, changing the patterns of urban space consumption (Engel 2007: 293). While Scarpaci (2000a) says that, "the commodification of public spaces, long an affliction of the capitalist city, is visible in the cities of Poland, China, Vietnam, and Cuba...How nations as diverse as Poland, China, Vietnam, and Cuba contend with both commodification and new market forces is uneven, frequently messy, and they impede our ability to form broad generalizations" (661).

Stanilov (2007) also makes the same claim by saying: "The extent of the public realm in the post-socialist city has been further eroded by the proliferation of development patterns hat have curtailed public access to ever increasing portions of the urban fabric." (273). This is also the case in other socialist cities, where in the case of Ho Chi Minh, Thomas (2001) says that the economic changes brought about by *doi moi*[18] has transformed the ways public space is used and appropriated by the public. Drummond (2000) says that, while the Vietnamese state still orders and theoretically controls the public spaces of its cities, increasingly citizens are appropriating and utilizing public spaces for their own ends, in both leisure activities and commerce. Also in the case of Vietnam, Nguyen (2005) contends that economic liberalization and the increasing pressure of market oriented societal transformations are altering citizen/state relations, particularly among the youth of Hanoi, who are becoming more focused on issues of everyday life and consumption than on the Party ideology of collectivism. However, as Smith (2007) says, "in practice, the postsocialist experience has been messier and more complex than this simple transmission belt of global neoliberalism framework suggests, in the same way that understandings of state socialism could never rely upon a simple model of the centrally planned system devoid of its complex and contested practices" (Smith 2007: 205). These are exactly some of the issues, though on different scales and to different degrees, which are impacting public space in Havana.

---

[18] *Doi moi*, means 'renovation' in Vietnamese, it refers to the economic reforms initiated in Vietnam in 1986, these reforms centered around the liberalization of the economy and developing market mechanisms. Some of the main reforms were the decentralization of state management, refocusing economic development towards external markets, agricultural reforms, and an increasing reliance on private sector initiatives to foster economic growth. See, Murray (1997), *Vietnam: Dawn of a New Market*, New York: St. Martin's Press.

2.6 Pubic Space in Latin America, the plaza and beyond

The history of public space in Latin America is one of both tragic volatility and inspiring vibrancy. Public space in Latin America cities has served two opposing roles, one of being the space for legitimating and reproducing totalitarian regimes, as described above in socialist cities, while the other is as a space for the production, maintenance, and contestation of democracy.

In Latin America, the most emblematic form of public space is the *plaza*, which Low (2000) calls a microcosmic public space that represents a quintessential part of the Latin American city. The *plaza*, which for centuries was the locus of colonial power and authority, was also the space where citizens communicate publicly with the state, whether it be in contestation or in approval of the various regimes and administrations. Low (2000) goes on to say:

> "Plazas are spatial representations of Latin American society and social hierarchy. Citizens battle over these representations because they are so critical to the definition and survival of civil society. Plazas are also centers of cultural expression and artistic display reflected in their changing designs and furnishings. And finally, plazas are settings for everyday urban life where daily interactions, economic exchanges, and informal conversations occur, creating a socially meaningful place in the center of the city" (33-34).

However, although the *plaza* is seen as *the* quintessential form of Spanish colonial architecture and urban planning, it must be remembered that central open urban spaces pre-date the arrival of Columbus and the Spanish in the Americas. As Herzog (1992) says: "the first great plazas of the Americas, vast public spaces surrounded by temples or towering stone pyramids, were consistent features in pre-Hispanic indigenous settlements, especially those crafted by the Olmec, Toltec, Mayan and Aztec cultures"

(54). Therefore we can see the deep cultural and historical roots of public space in Latin American urban culture.

In *Plazas and Barrios* (2005) Scarpaci examines how central historic districts throughout Latin America are now being restructured and remade in line with the dictates of globalizing heritage tourism, demonstrating how commercial (and even state, in the case of Cuba) interests are commodifying the urban landscape of these colonial cores to generate capital. He contends that these processes of historic preservation and heritage tourism can, at times, lead to the displacement of locals by gentrification and can lead to the homogenization of the landscape as a result of globalization (Ibid.). Much like Scarpaci (2005), Herzog (2006) also writes of the historic and cultural importance of the historic urban core Latin American cities. In his book *Return to the Center*, Herzog (2006) argues that there needs to be a literal and metaphoric 'return' to the historic centers of cities. His argument can be seen as a response to the global homogenization and commodification of public spaces that Davis (1990) and Sorkin (1992) lament. The increasing pressure of globalization is changing the traditional dynamics of public space in Mexico today as privatization and commercialization of public spaces is driving people indoors. As Herzog (2006) says, "the traditional plaza was the outdoor living room of the town, a place of discourse, serendipity, and free access to all. The shopping plazas are privately owned, rigidly controlled, and frequently indoor spaces" (190).

While in Low's (2000) work *On the Plaza*, she examines the historical context and the socio-economic transformations of patterns of use and users in plazas in San Jose, Costa Rica, linking the meanings of 'plaza life' with issues concerning the social production of urban space. In this book, Low, focused on the spatial practices and

66

symbolic meanings of groups and individuals engaged struggles to control, claim, and define the urban space of the plaza. Low argues that the aesthetical design and the socio-political characteristics of the *plaza* are always being reworked and transformed as a result of larger-scale social and political forces. Yet, the use, design, and meanings of this space are continuously being challenged and contested.

As a result of this cultural way of thinking about urban life, throughout Latin America there has developed, what I call, a collective consciousness of the political potential inherent in the occupation of urban public spaces. As Rosenthal (2000) states:

> "The history of the city in twentieth-century Latin America can be seen as a long contest over the exercise of urban public space. While the nature of this space is often less physical than it is social and situational, the struggle between different elements of the city to manipulate its politics and control its daily life has often been violent, leaving deep imprints in the collective memories of places as culturally and physically diverse as Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Havana, Bogotá, and Rio de Janeiro" (Rosenthal 2000: 33)

Avritzer (2002) argues that there are three new traditions emerging throughout Latin America in regards to public space, "a tradition of occupation of the public sphere to voice political demands; a tradition of collective mobilization around pluralistic demands and plural identities; and a new tradition of formation of voluntary associations organizationally autonomous from the state" (78). One of the most famous and successful instances of the occupation of public space for democratic purposes was the peaceful demonstrations of the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* in Buenos Aires in the early 80s (Avritzer 2002). This notion of 'taking it to the street' is something still very present and active in Latin America as was evidenced in 2006 when the Grassroots Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO) took their protests to the street to voice disapproval of the government's actions (Cravey 2008), and as can be seen by indigenous groups, particularly in Bolivia and Peru, gaining access to citizenship by occupying public space

and making their claims public. As Herzog (1993) says, "Public space- plazas, parks and the street- remains embedded in the civic conscience of contemporary Mexico"(56). Another instance of the tremendous political importance of public space can be seen in the tactical strategies of Landless Worker's Movement (MST) (Wright and Wolford 2003). Also connected to citizens claiming urban public space is an interesting study done by Larson (2004), that demonstrates that since homosexuals in Havana have a limited number of spaces of their own, that they are forced to appropriate public spaces for their community, a process that makes these 'gay' public spaces a symbolic part of their community and identities.

Avritzer (2002) says that the process of liberalization of political spaces by authoritarian regimes in Latin American, in Brazil in the mid-1970s, in Argentina in the early 1980s, and in Mexico in the late 1980s, allowed for public space to take on new meanings (Ibid.). During this process of liberalization of political space, "the role of the public expression of political ideas was transformed, as was the meaning of a public and democratic identity…social movements and voluntary associations became the standard ways of organizing and occupying the public sphere"(Avritzer 2002: 81).

> "Social groups and *ad hoc* collectives have taken to the streets in response to the privatization of energy resources and primary sources of employment, the globalization of commerce and communication, the politics of austerity and inflation, the degradation of urban and regional infrastructure, unsatisfactory urban services and investment in education, and paucity of jobs. Identity politics- issues of legal status, gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity- are also increasingly played out in public space." **(**Irazábal 2008: 14).

Public spaces in Latin American cities are not only spaces of political protest and performative citizenship, they are also historically spaces of commerce and consumption (Jiménez 2007). In many cities throughout Latin America one of the big issues regarding contemporary public space is the struggle over *vendedores ambulantes* (street vendors)

and their rights to private economic production and employment in the public spaces of the city (Jones and Varley 1994; Roever 2006). With the increasing pressures from neoliberalism and the continued rural to urban migration throughout all of Latin America, issues concerning informal economic practices in urban public spaces are of growing importance. The tensions, and at times clashes, between street vendors and local governments has made the issue of the control and regulation of public space a major concern for urban governance and economic development throughout Latin America. Scarpaci (2005) argues that heritage tourism, as well as the forces of globalization, is transforming the central historic districts, the primary locations of the traditional plazas, across most of Latin America. He goes on to argue that the central historic districts are increasingly being given over to commodified commercial land-uses in settings of manufactured heritage which do little do sustain or generate community (Ibid.). In the case of Mexico City, in more recent times, Herzog (2006) argues that "The Mexican ruling party (PRI) and its leaders sought to construct a myth of collective memory, whereby the historic center is transformed into a sacred space and symbol of national identity...The plaza was transformed into a "museumized" space of national identity, used to reinforce the importance of the Mexican government and its political system" (Herzog 2006: 151-152).

In Cuba, one recent manifestation people 'taking it to the street' is the case of *las Damas de Blanco* (Women in White) which was formed in 2003 in response to the jailing of several Cuban dissidents accused by the government of receiving money from the US government. The women in this group protest these actions by attending Catholic mass every Sunday wearing all white and then quietly march through the streets. García

(2008) argues that the actions of these women represent a real and symbolic form of resistance to the ruling regime in Cuba. In 2005 these women were awarded the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Though for their peaceful protest against the Cuban government.

2.7 Youth and Public Space

"*What kind of youth and childhood* we imagine for ourselves and our communities intersects in fundamental ways with *what kind of future globalizations* we will tolerate or create, the social spaces and infrastructures we develop, who is included or excluded- and how." (Ruddick 2003: 357).

As the above sections of this chapter have revealed, public space is a crucial component for the social reproduction of urban and civic life. However, a number of scholars argue that it is of particular importance also for young people since it is in public space where young people develop their own identities and produce their own culture (Ruddick 1998, Sibley 1995; Skelton and Valentine 1998; Valentine 1996, 2004). The previous sections reviewed the literature on different arguments concerning the significance of urban public space in addition to reviewing *how* public space is thought of and defined. Furthermore, public space was situated within different cultural and historic contexts that are relevant for this project, namely that of a socialist Latin American city.

Youth in public space is an issue that is continuing to gain attention throughout the social sciences, and it is particularly important when considering the following two factors. Firstly, the world is witnessing a continuing escalation of rates of urbanization worldwide, within the Global North, but especially throughout the Global South. Directly connected with these high rates of urbanization in the Global South is the fact that these burgeoning urban populations are disproportionately made up of young people.

Consequently, with increasing levels of urbanization, issues regarding urban public space are of tremendous importance. Additionally, with such large numbers of young people now living in cities, the tensions regarding the spaces they inhabit, the urban spaces they socialize and grow-up in are going to be of increasing concern for urban planners, geographers, and sociologists. The second consideration is that many of these young urban individuals inevitably are the ones who will be the inheritors of our current social order. What young people 'do' in the city and its public space, i.e. their spatial practices, is of great importance, as Tranberg Hansen (2008) says, "these are among the activities that matter to tomorrow's leadership and which society at large and the development industry must come to grips with in order to reckon with the centrality of youth to urban social reproduction**"** (19). Therefore, as this project argues, gaining insight into the meanings and practices of youth in the urban public spaces of the world, particularly outside of the context of North American and Western European cities, can lead to a greater understandings of the potential futures of our global urban society. What follows will review some of the key debates regarding young people and public space, it will examine the evolution of this field of study, and will establish part of the foundation for this research project.

To begin with, how youth and young people are, and have been, perceived and thought of by society is something that varies dramatically over time and space (Aitken 2001; Jones and Wallace 1992; Massey 1998; Ruddick 2003; Valentine 1996). Notions of 'youth' are not fixed and static, but are very fluid and are prone to change according to the fluctuations of macro-scale processes such as the spread of neoliberal forms of globalization. As Valentine (1996a) says, "during the last three centuries children in the

UK (and to a certain extent in North America and parts of Europe) have been constructed

both as the bearers of original sin- 'devils'- and as innocent and pure- 'angels'" (581).

What Valentine (1996a) is referring to is the fact that since the Industrial Revolution,

what it means to be a young person has shifted dramatically. In essence this shift refers

to the fact that at times youth are seen as a threat, something that needs to be regulated

and controlled, while at other times, youth are seen as vulnerable and helpless and in

need of protection.

> "The restructuring of youth and childhood figured centrally in strategies for social
> reproduction in the transition from rural and industrial economies from the mid-1800s to
> the beginning of the last century, culminating in the emergence of a form of childhood
> and adolescence that became the idealized norm. The last century saw a radical
> restructuring of norms and forms of youth and childhood as a legitimating impulse for the
> labour force exigencies of industrial capitalism" (Ruddick 2003: 356)

It has particularly been young people from working class backgrounds, who have been

seen by society as dangerous, immoral, and undisciplined (Frye & Bannister 1998; Lucas

1998; Valentine 1996, 2004; Watt and Stenson 1998). As Valentine (1996a) explains,

young people have been seen as either 'vulnerable' or 'dangerous' in public space,

depending on the given context. Since the 1980s we have witnessed a new shift in the

perception of youth, predominantly in the West, from being seen as 'dangerous' or as

'youth in trouble' to being seen as 'vulnerable' and in 'danger', this concern for the

safety of youth is more focused on middle-class youth than on lower-class young people

(Ruddick 2003; Valentine 1996; Wulff 1995). Ruddick (2003) points out that,

marginalized youth from lower income families do not have the same access to urban

space as do youth from the middle class, an issue that can be interpreted as differing

rights to the city and its public spaces. This 'fear of youth' in public still remains, though

in a highly racialized and class based manner (Frye and Bannister 1998; Lucas 1998).

Another factor regarding defining youth categories that changes over time and space is determining the limits of the category of youth, which is usually based upon aged-based criteria. As Tranberg Hansen (2008) says, "Definitions of youth are contextual and they shift. Regardless of whether our concern is with young people in the West or in a developing country, definitions of youth in terms of biological age are shaped by the cultural politics of their time and place, and by who defines them" (7). Therefore, how a 'youth' or an 'adult' is defined and perceived according to temporal, spatial, and cultural factors.

These issues concerning what are the demarcations for 'youth' are also problematic in Cuba, as Fernández (1993) argues. However, utilizing rigid age-based definitions of youth can be problematic because it can be limiting and mutable depending on the historic, cultural, and socio-economic context of a given group. Although 'youth' have been a topic of study in the modern Western academy for over two hundred years (Aries 1962; Hall 1904; Mead 1955; Erikson 1968), it has only been within the past few decades that scholars have recognized the agency and power of young people. In the case of examining the role of young people in public space and, vice versa, the role of public space in the lives of youth, one salient venue of research is The Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham. The works of Stuart Hall and Dick Hebdidge utilized a Marxist perspective in their work, and from this perspective they examined the subjectivities and agency of youth, particularly marginalized youth. The work of Hall and Jefferson (1976), and subsequently Hebdidge (1979), studied the emergence of youth subcultures in post-war England, focusing on how the identity formation of many youth groups (such as the *teds*, *mods*, *skinheads*, and *rastas*) could be

seen as forms of resistance to the hegemonic culture and ideology of the period. In

Hebdidge's (1979) book, *Subculture, The Meaning of Style*, he links the identity

formation of these youth subcultures to their consumption patterns, particularly fashion,

and to their performance and rituals in public spaces. In other words, these marginalized

youth subcultures formed their identities, in response to being culturally and

economically alienated, through such practices as wearing certain type of clothing,

listening to certain types of music, and by performing these identities in public. This

process and these spatial practices were seen as being political, not only as a symbolic

form of resistance, but also as a more substantive and political form of resistance to the

state and to hegemonic culture and ideology.

Although Hall and Jefferson's (1976) book, a compilation of essays on

marginalized youth subcultures, is still widely acclaimed and remains one of the most

prominent books from the CCCS (Wulff 1995); when it was first published, its reception

was far from glowing. In a review essay by Schwartz (1978) in *The American Journal of

Sociology,* Hall and Jefferson's book was described as,

"a provocative and frustrating amalgam of moral, sociological analysis, and abstruse
theorizing about working class youth in England. Stylistically, the book is odd indeed. A
ponderous and, at times, obscure Marxist vocabulary is combined with offhand references to the
argot of the underlife of British pop culture" (789).

Much of this work examines 'youth problems' and 'troubled youth' of predominantly

white working-class young people where these subcultures emerged out of a sense of

alienation, a loss of community and a sense political and economic disenfranchisement

during the post-war years. However, there was also a lot of criticism of the work of the

CCCS. Dunn (1986) argues that the work of CCCS scholars tended towards an overly

determined politicization of culture (as cited by Wulff 1995: 4). Additionally, McRobbie

74

(1980) argued that Hebdidge's work was overly masculinist and failed to take into account gender or the family.

The work of the Birmingham School further opened up the door for scholars to examine the subjectivities and agency of young people by highlighting the importance of the spatial and consumption practices of youth. The reason it is necessary to highlight the works of the CCCS is because, in many ways, this can be seen as the beginning of viewing youth and youth cultures as being transgressive to hegemonic culture and ideology, and that these trangressions are actualized in public space. Following from these earlier traditions, a number of scholars have shown that the spatial practices of young people in urban public spaces can be seen as creating alternative geographies that oppose the meanings imposed from above (Matthew 1995; Ruddick 1998; Valentine 1996, 2004; Skelton and Valentine 1998).

According to much of the literature, one of the big issues facing young people is how they negotiate the limitations, regulations, expectations imposed upon them by 'adult' society in public space, and how they creatively transgress these boundaries and restrictions in processes directly connected to identity formation (Massey 1998; Ruddick 1996, 1998; Skelton and Valentine 1998; Valentine 1996, 1998, 2004). As Valentine et al. (1998) say, for many young people, public space is one of the few spaces of autonomy that they are able to create. It is in public space that young people carve out a space of individuality and independence while simultaneously creating social relations outside of the sphere of control of family, school, and society (Skelton and Valentine 1998; Valentine 2004). Valentine (2004) goes on to say, "hanging around on street corners, in parks, underage drinking, petty vandalism and larking about and other forms of non-

adherence to order on the street become (deliberately and unconsciously) a form of resistance to adult power" (85).

Part of young people's performance and formation of identity in public space is in contestation of the meanings from above of these public spaces. The spatial practices of youth are often 'transgressive', 'contesting', and 'resistive' to authority, and thus to hegemonic conceptions. Young people are constantly redefining and reworking the meanings of public space through their tactical appropriations of these spaces (Harrison and Morgan 2005). Yet, as young people 'play out identity struggles' in public space as Valentine (2004) says, they also engage in processes of territorialization by including some and excluding others (85). However, as Valentine (1996) says, young people are often seen as a 'polluting presence on the street' that needs to be regulated and controlled" (214).

The growth of commercialized and privatized public spaces such as malls is creating highly controlled environments for consumption where the fear of unruly youth is reduced and eliminated (Smith 1992; Frye and Bannister 1998). As Oldenburg (1989) argues, these malls become a 'basic training in consumerism and the passive acceptance of highly controlled environment" (283). As Massey (1998) says, "the control of spatiality is part of the process of defining the social category of 'youth' itself."(127). It is not merely that young people are increasingly struggling to form their identities within consumption landscapes (Zukin 1991), it is also that they being acculturated to a controlled environment of surveillance and social control.

There is a growing body of literature that is focusing on young people in urban public spaces outside of the West (Nguyen 2005; Pilkington 1994; Tienda & Wilson

2002; Tranberg Hansen 2008; Valentin 2008). For although Massey (1998) argues that all youth cultures are 'spatially open' and develop hybrid cultures and identities as a result of globalization, the temporal, spatial, and cultural factors that determine context are often vastly different between Toronto, Mexico City, Lagos, and even Havana. Although a young person in a city in the Global South may be adopting and appropriating cultural references from the Global North, the expectations and aspirations of youth outside of the West are constrained by different factors than a young person, say in suburban England. Tranberg Hansen (2008) says, it is particularly in non-Western cities where youth have such a high degree of visibility since they are politically and economically disenfranchised, and therefore public space is *the* only space they can carve out. As Nguyen (2005) points out in relation to urban youth in Vietnam, they are constantly testing and redrawing the boundaries imposed by the state, processes of negotiation and compromise between the state and the individual aspirations and desires of the youth. Valentin (2008) argues that young people in Hanoi are producing localized understandings of the complex socio-economic transformations that *doi moi* has ushered in.

According to Valentin (2008), the growing market economy in Vietnam, and the subsequent privatization and commercialization of urban public space is dramatically altering the spatial practices and consumption patterns of urban youth in the city. Whereas in the context of a unified Germany, Smith (2008) points out that in former East German cities, youth are appropriating public spaces for purposes that challenge the dominant ideology. She goes on to say, "many young people actively or passively resisted the ideology and actions of the state by creating other geographies which

77

challenged and subverted state intentions at a series of scales from the body to the home, the club, the street, the church and other niches created in the margins of the official geographies of the GDR" (Ibid.: 296). A reoccurring theme in the literature on youth in socialist and post-socialist cities is the importance of the role of consumption in identity formation and in resistance to the state and to the transformations of their social and economic lives (Drummond 2000; Pilkington 1994; Thomas 2002; Valentin 2008; Verdery 1996).

> "For marginalized working class youth, 'leisure' is shaped by a lack of money, a strong sense of neighborhood boundaries, and the stigma attached to geographical and class location….Being able to marshal resources leads to very different social experiences and opportunities in the world of leisure, as well as in other spheres of activity. For middle-class youth, the transformed night-time economies of late capitalism present myriad leisure choices." (White and Wyn 2004: 16-18).

White and Wyn's statement captures the experiences of working class youth in Western capitalist cities, however, they could as easily refer to the experiences of lower class youth in Havana, as will be demonstrated in the following chapters. Youth cultures worldwide have a high degree of 'spatial openness', meaning that even the poorest urban youth in the remotest parts of the Global South tap into the flow of the 'global reference system' (Massey 1998: 122). What this means is that youth cultures, in particular, are inherently hybrid- as young people create their identities in their own ways, often through consumption practices. Massey (1998) says, they import, adapt, and adopt transnational cultural forms for their own purposes. This is key in understanding the spatial practices and consumption patterns of youth in the public spaces of Havana, because as demonstrated in the literature cited above, not only is public space one of the few spaces of independence and individuality for young people, it is also the spaces whereby youth perform their identities through spatial practices and consumption patterns, and therefore,

following Massey (1998), it is in these public spaces where we can witness the negotiation between the *local* and the *global*- a product of relations, networks, and interconnections. Young people need to be seen as active social actors in the city, individuals who create and perform their identities while negotiating and appropriating the urban environment and public spaces they inhabit.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented a wide range of literatures on public space ranging from literature on the social production of space to literature on public space and democracy, all the way through to work that explored public space under the politico-economic contexts of Latin America and socialist and post-socialist cities. Examining public space and youth in Havana requires drawing from this diverse body of literature because Havana is a post-colonial socialist Latin American city in a country that is undergoing significant social and economic change. It is important to keep this context in mind, and to understand the complexity that it brings. This will be developed further, however, first it is necessary to present a brief history of the city and the processes and factors that have impacted its urban trajectory.

Chapter 3

The Urbanization of Havana

> "And thus the city is an *oeuvre*, closer to a work of art than to a simple material product. If there is production of the city, and social relations in the city, it is a production and reproduction of human beings by human beings, rather than a production of objects. The city has a history, it is the work of a history, that is, of clearly defined people and groups who accomplish this *oeuvre*, in historical conditions" (Lefebvre 1996: 101).

3.0 Introduction

The city of Havana is, as Lefebvre says above, an *oeuvre*, a city that is both real and imagined, a city that is a product of history as well as a producer of history. This chapter will briefly traverse this history, stopping at crucial moments in the city's history for closer examination, in order to provide the context for this dissertation. Harvey (1985) says, urban landscapes, and all spatial forms and the symbolism and aesthetics embedded within them, are the products of socio-political and economic forces, and therefore examining the historical conditions that produced Havana will aid in understanding the present transformations that are reshaping the city.

Afro-Cuban scholar and essayist, Fernando Ortiz often used the term *ajiaco*, literally meaning a meat and vegetable stem, to refer to Cuban culture, and Cuban identity. What he meant was that 'Cuban' culture and identity were the result of centuries of mixing of Spanish, African, and Chinese cultures and beliefs.

In essence, to try and understand what it means to be Cuban or to understand 'Cubanness'

(*lo cubano, cubanidad, cubanía[19]*), one needs to begin by understanding how the unique

blending of these cultures over time has produced something that is specific to Cuba- *lo*

cubano. This process occurs in much in the same way that the various ingredients of a

stew slowly cook in an *ajiaco*, producing a rich amalgam of flavors. This concept is

useful for understanding the evolution and development of the city as well, for modern

Havana is also the result of centuries of mixing and blending of influences from Europe,

North America, and Latin America, as well as the Soviet Union. The built environment

and the socio-spatial organization of the city are the legacy of this mixing through

processes of adoption, adaptation and appropriation. Fortunately, this historical mixing,

embedded in the urban topography, is still present throughout the city due to the fact that

the city of Havana grew and developed not through processes of 'creative destruction[20]'

but through processes of spreading out- first south, southwest, east, and then west in

successive waves intricately connected to the global economy. As a result of this

important factor, one can traverse the city and see a wide range of architectural styles[21]

However, first and foremost it is crucial to note that, Havana and its distinct urban form,

is a product of colonialism and a sugar based plantation economy.

---

[19] To read more about Cuban identity see Kapcia (2000); Pérez (1999); Ortiz (1978).

[20] 'Creative destruction' is a term used by Schumpeter to describe capitalist processes of innovation and transformation whereby new innovations (technologies, ideas etc.) devastate older companies in the process of introducing innovation. This process also occurs in cities, as speculative capital destroys existing buildings and urban zones in order to try and create profit anew. In the case of Havana, this process did not occur much because instead of destroying and rebuilding the dense urban core of the city, speculative capital merely moved and spread to open areas surrounding the city.

[21] These styles range from pre-Baroque, Baroque, neo-Gothic, Neoclassical, eclecticism, Art Nouveau, Art Deco, neocolonial, modern monumental, all the way to brutalism, and even post-modernism.

3.1 Colonial Havana

San Cristóbal de la Habana was founded in 1519 and remained little more than a village until the 1560s when Spain attempted to consolidate its empire by creating a large fortification system at key points throughout the Caribbean (Veracruz, Caratgena, San Juan, and Havana) creating a *Mare Clausa* (closed sea) and by establishing *La Flota*, a fleet system that would consolidate shipping through armed convoys. Havana needed to be defended not because of its economic value, but because its geographic and strategic role, possessing a deep sheltered harbor strategically positioned on the Florida Straights, made it the key to the new world. Thus, during the 1560s, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés arrived in Havana on a mission to protect, defend, and consolidate the power of the Spanish crown by surveying the area and beginning the process of fortifying and militarizing the city and the region as a whole (de Leuchsenring 1963). However, the most important contribution Menéndez de Avilés made for Cuba and the entire Caribbean was his recommendation to the Spanish Crown for the creation of *La Flota*. The fleet system defined the demography, the trade, and the economies for everything in Cuba and the Caribbean and in this process it definitively fixed the patterns of political authority, settlement, and economic activity for the entire region (Pérez 1995). It was also with the fleet system that Havana rose to a position of great importance, for it became the nexus of Spanish power.

The system of *La Flota* and the fact that Havana served primarily as an entrepôt caused the city's population to remain very transient, its population ebbed and flowed according to the schedule of the semi-annual gathering of the fleet. Thus the growth of the city during the first two centuries was very slow. The built environment of colonial

Havana was highly militarized as elaborate fortification systems (*La Fuerza* 1577; *Tres Reyes del Morro* 1610; *San Salvador de la Punta* 1600) were built and defensive walls encircled the city. In 1592, Havana was finally recognized as a city by King Felipe II of Spain and in honor of this recognition and of its important role in the Spanish empire, it was given the title "The Key to the New World and the Rampart of the West Indies". It was European military engineering that shaped the urban fabric of the city, and it was colonialism that profoundly marked the city. The fortifications and the walls surrounding the city (which were built between 1674 and 1797) demarcated the historic urban layout of the city (Venegas 1990).

The walled area, the *intramuros*, which is today known as *Habana Vieja* (Old Havana) covers an area of only 4.5 square kilometers (Diaz-Briquets 1994). Beginning in 1863, the defensive walls the lined the original colonial core of the city were torn down since they were no longer needed for defense and they inhibited the city's growth. The early fortifying and walling of the city has had lasting impacts on the development and psychology of the city, everything was located either within the walls, *intramuros,* or outside the walls, *extramuros* (Venegas 1990). García (2006) argues that these notions of inclusivity and exclusivity are embedded in the urban topography of Havana and that although the walls were torn down long ago, a metaphoric wall still encircles the old colonial core to this day. What she means by this is that although the walls no longer exist, the popular perceptions that characterized the different neighborhoods and their inhabitants as either 'inside' or 'outside' the walled area still exist.

It was also during this early colonial period that Havana began developing one of the defining characteristics of its urban form– that of polycentricity. As Segre (2008)

points out, the social functions of colonial Havana were divided among various public spaces that essentially became designated for particular functions. For instance, *Plaza Catedral* was predominantly for religious functions, *Plaza de Armas* was for military and civic functions, while *Plaza Vieja* and *Plaza de San Francisco* were for commercial use.

> "The town's enlargement determined, from its earliest period, the social structure of the main public spaces. Military, administrative, religious and commercial functions were obviously located within the city walls, which determined the relationship among the most important activities. The early determination of the position of the different squares and other open spaces, the first directing of urban expansion and the class hierarchy, were interesting and valid attempts to plan the development of the settlements from the very beginning" (Nuñez Fernández and García Pleyán 2000: 3)

This separation of functional areas in the city is something that continued throughout the history of Havana, with each successive wave of development and urbanization the 'center', or more appropriately, 'centers', of power have tended to move westward with the city's expansion (Coyula and Hamberg 2003; Scarpaci et al. 2002). (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Map of Havana from around 1898

As the Cuban economy shifted from a military colonial economy to one based mainly on sugar production in the late 18th century, the confines of the walls hampered the economic development of the city and less than one hundred years after they were completed they began to be torn down to meet the needs of a rapidly increasing population and the demands of modern urban planning (Venegas 1990). Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, the city of Havana expanded in starts and fits as the wealth from sugar and tobacco production ebbed and flowed according to their global market prices and external factors (Scarpaci et al. 2002).

Havana became a 'modern' metropolis during the period that Captain-General Miguel Tacón (1833-1838) was in office, a period that coincided with an increasing presence of Spanish colonial power on the island as the independence wars on the mainland forced Spanish troops and Royalists to relocate to Cuba (García 2006; Pérez 1995; Scarpaci et al. 2002). Thus, Cuba was more Europeanized than other former Spanish colonies due to this prolongation of the colonial period and the emigration of Spaniards from throughout the Americas. Another factor related to the growth of Havana, in terms of its population and of its wealth and power, was that following the Haitian Revolution in 1804, steady streams of migrants entered Cuba and helped develop the sugar industry across the island (Pérez 1995; Thomas 1998). Prior to the Haitian Revolution, Cuba had a marginal sugar industry that could not compete with the efficiency and production levels in St. Dominque, subsequently called Haiti. However, with the loss of St. Dominque and the void left in the global market for tropical goods (such as sugar, coffee, and tobacco), Cuban producers rapidly seized the opportunity to

fill this void. However, the importance of former Haitian colonists and French sugar planters in providing capital, technology, and knowledge cannot be underestimated.

According to Pérez (1995), Cuba's share of the world market for sugar rose from 15.8 percent in 1839 to 29.7 percent in 1868 (77). However, although technology was an important factor in this growth, the main explanation for this dramatic increase was based on the massive importation of slave labor. Between 1763 and 1862 the number of slaves imported from Africa to Cuba was approximately 750,000 (Ibid. 85). How this directly impacted the development of Havana was that the tremendous amounts of wealth generated from sugar production were then used for land speculation and property development in Havana. Therefore, there is a clear connection between this growth of the sugar industry and the attempts made by governor Tacón to beautify and modernize the city. In essence, it was this wealth that became a, if not *the,* defining factor in the creation of the city that can be seen today.

Tacón's controversial plans for the modernization and expansion of the city earned him the reputation of being the 'Haussman' of the Caribbean (Scarpaci et al. 2002; Segre 2002, 2008).   During his brief period in power, Tacón helped shift the center of the city from the colonial core to directly west of the walled area by developing new urban spaces such as the tree lined promenade of the Prado, Central Park, and by extending the portico lined boulevards, *calzadas*, to the southwest and to the west. Lejeune (1996) says that Tacón's administration, "..marked the birth of modern city planning in Havana" (157). These modernization efforts by Tacón transformed the areas outside the defensive walls, the *extramuros*, into desirable areas for the privileged

86

classes. By the middle of the nineteenth century Havana extended west to Calle

Belascoaín (Victoira 2007), the central part of Centro Habana.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the colonial center was being dramatically

transformed as the wealthy creole aristocracy began moving outside of the walls,

intramuros, while lower classes filled the inner city, moving into the former regal

mansions of the upper classes that were transformed into the tenements that remain to this

day, the *cuartería, solares,* and *ciudadelas*[22] *(*Gelabert-Navia 1996; Rutheiser 2000).

Following the Cuban Wars for Independence (1868-1878, 1879-1880, 1895-1898) these

tenements absorbed much of the rural-urban and foreign, primarily Spanish, migration

that swelled the ranks of the working classes. Even after the Peninsular elites and the

creole aristocracy[23] moved residences out of the colonial core to the suburbs, Old Havana

remained a center of trade and banking, while rural Cuban and landless Spanish born

immigrants occupied tenements converted from elite mansions. This flight of the

wealthy from the crowded and dangerous colonial core and its environs parallels a similar

exodus of the wealthy from the urban cores of North American cities in favor of the

sanitary, spacious, and safely removed suburbs that the railroads allowed access to.

With the removal of the defensive walls beginning in 1863, the area of the

extramuros to the west of Habana Vieja, in what is now called Centro Habana, became

the location for many tobacco factories, theaters, and hotels, as well as middle and upper

class housing. The Prado, the promenade boulevard, redeveloped under the Tacón

---

[22] All of these terms refer to different types of tenement housing *cuartería* refers to a dilapidated rooming house, a *solar*, refers to a tenement house with about twenty to thirty rooms*,* while a *ciudadela* is a tenement house composed of one or two stories of rooms alongside an interior courtyard with more than one hundred rooms (Coyula and Hamberg 2003; Scarpaci et al. 2002).

[23] *Penunsulares* refers to elites born in Spain, while *criollo* (creole) refers to the planter class born in Cuba-the landed aristocracy and the *petite bourgeoisie*. See Pérez 1995; Staten 2003; Thomas 1998.

administration, became an important and privileged space for the elite class, the Spaniards and creole aristocracy, that moved out of the cramped colonial core to palatial residences that lined both sides of the street (Nuñez Fernández and García Pleyán 2000; Scarpaci et al. 2002). On the other hand, as mentioned previously, the colonial core and the areas to its south, as well as to the east, filled in with lower classes and the landless. Oliveras and Núñez (2001) state, "The habitat territorial distribution in Havana was very linked to the conflicts and aspirations of social sectors. The northwest will forever belong to the privileged and luckiest while the south to the poorest, the gap between them greater than ever" (2). This land speculation and development was only made possible from the profits generated from sugar and tobacco production, profits that were created first from the blood of slave labor, and then on a smaller scale, from a cheap imported Chinese labor force.

During this period *repartos*, suburban subdivisions, began springing up west and south west of the city, in *Cerro* and *Vedado* to name a few, that were connected with rampant real estate speculation and an increased spatial segregation by the Creole aristocracy (Martín and Rodríguez 1998). Even prior to this period though, the lower class inhabitants of the city resided south of the colonial core in areas such as *Atarés*, *La Guinera* and *Reglas*, a characteristic that remains to this day (Coyula and Hamberg 2003). Modern urban planning principles were used for the first time in the development of Vedado, not only using a grid-iron layout of streets, but also angling the grid to maximize the flow of air from the ocean (Juan de las Cuevas 2001; Scarpaci et al. 2002). The whole subdivision of 156 hectares was divided into 105 quadrants, each measuring 100 meters by 100 meters (Victoria 2007). As Segre (2002) points out, the planning of

Vedado was greatly influenced by Cerdá's[24] plans for the expansion (*Ensanche*[25]) of

Barcelona, marked by the utilization ample amounts of open space in the layout of the

reparto. Vedado was originally one of two large farms that lay directly west along the

coast from Central Havana. The two estates *El Carmelo* and *El Vedado*, owned by

Domingo Trigo, Juan Espino, Don Francisco (Conde de Pozos Dulces), and Doña

Dolores y Doña Ana were sold and divied up to make this neighborhood (Juan de las

Cuevas Toraya 2001; Scarpaci et al. 2002; Segre 2002). Scarpaci et al. (2002) say that

although this newly laid out neighborhood appeared very stylish and elite, it was in fact

from the very beginning a socially and economically mixed neighborhood. However, this

clearly was the new location for the creole bourgeoise.

Additionally, the *reparto* of Vedado required larger lot sizes for stand alone

houses that were to be set back from the street while streets were required to be 25 meters

wide with additional space provided for trees to line and shade the streets and sidewalks

(Victoria 2007). Prior to this, in Habana Vieja and Centro Habana, as well as in Cerro,

the majority of housing had shared party walls[26] (Coyula and Hamberg 2003). This

distinct difference in urban planning can be seen as one walks west from Centro Habana

to Vedado, as one leaves Centro Habana the space separating housing gradually

progresses from party walls to small gaps and alleyways eventually to distinct gardens

and yards. Although Vedado was subdivided and planned during the 1860s and 1870s it

---

[24] Ildefons Cerdà was the engineer responsible for devising the plans for the modern expansion of
Barcelona in the 1860s. His plans focused on sanitation and the creation of integrated urban space that
incorporated green spaces with high flow traffic arteries. See Soria y Puig (1999), *Cerdá: the Five Bases of
the General Theory of Urbanization*. Madrid: Electa

[25] The *Ensanche* was part of Cerdà's plans to expand Barcelona into the outlying areas.

[26] 'Party walls' refers to when two buildings are side-by-side and share the same wall.

was not until after the Independence wars and during the early years of the Republic that it started becoming built up with extravagant mansions, because by 1894, only 35% of the lots in the nearly 400 blocks were built upon (Martín and Rodríguez 1998: 18).

On February 15, 1898, the US battleship Maine blew up mysteriously and sank in the Havana harbor, thus providing the impetus for the United States to enter the 'Cuban Wars for Independence' and transform them into the 'Spanish-American War'. This "splendid little war", as President McKinley would later say, led to the American Occupation of Cuba. Cuba was, and still is, the southern frontier of the United States, and it played a great strategic and economic role for the US, particularly if one considers the dominant position of US corporations in the sugar production industry. However, it must also be pointed out that by the time US forces landed in Cuba, US capital had already been flooding the island, purchasing land and businesses decimated from nearly three decades of warfare. As Pérez (1995) says that by the time of the US Occupation, "an estimated 60 percent of *all* rural property in Cuba was owned by individuals and corporations from the United States, with another 15 percent controlled by resident Spaniards" (197 italics added).

The US occupation of Cuba (1898-1902) was a critical turning point for the urban development of Havana, it set in place the patterns for the Americanization of Havana. During the military occupation, modern urban planning and infrastructural development, which included street paving, modern sewer systems, improved water supply, electrical lighting, telephone and gas lines and streetcar service were introduced to the city. As García (2006) clearly states: "The North American administration in post-colonial Cuba invented a new discourse and a new rhetoric to lobby for the modernization of Havana

that was seemingly divorced from any association with the colonial past"(35). US capital and ideas transformed the course of urbanization in Havana, and would set the course for the largest expansion of the city's history. It is important to iterate that by the turn of the twentieth century, the growth of the Cuban economy and the physical expansion of Havana were dominated by foreign interests.

3.2 The Republican Era (1902-1958)

After the Cuban Wars for Independence, the core of the original conflict between Cuba and Spain, the dependent nature of colonial relations, continued. However, it continued under the guise of the Republic and the subsequent neo-colonial relationship established by the United States (Le Riverend 1992; Scarpaci et al. 2002). At the time of the signing of the Treaty of Paris[27] in 1899, Cuba was of great strategic and economic importance, and the acquisition of the island helped to usher in the dawn of the "American Century" (Harvey 2003). Scarpaci (2002) says:

> "Independence from Spain in 1898 merely transferred economic power from Madrid to Washington D.C., or more precisely, to New York's Wall Street. While it would be far too simplistic to claim that Havana until 1958 reflected more of a neocolonial status than a republican era of full sovereignty, it was inextricably tied to US markets, investments, and segments of organized crime" (164).

Scarpaci (2002) makes an important point by saying that merely describing Cuba as a neo-colonial state for the first half of the twentieth century is overly simplistic. However, the fact remains that the Cuban Wars for Independence economically devastated the nation and into this economic power vacuum stepped US capital. With the country in ruins and with no collateral to put forward, US carpet baggers descended on Cuba buying

---

[27] The treaty that ceded control of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines from Spain to the United States.

up Cuban tobacco farms, sugar plantations, mines, railroads, and public utilities (Pérez 1995, 1999). Arguably as a result of the overwhelming presence of US capital in almost every sector of the economy, the US government would not leave Cuba independent. However, during the first two decades of the twentieth century, Spanish elites still maintained tremendous power in certain sectors of the economy, business and small scale manufacturing, and it was not until the economic crisis of the 1920s that the hegemony of US capital became complete (Scarpaci et al. 2002).

> "American investments in Cuba increased 536 percent between 1913 and 1928. In 1913 the American stake was estimated at $220,000,0000, which was 17.7 percent of all American investments in Latin America. By 1929 this had grown to an estimated $1,525,900,000 or 27.31 percent of the total Latin American investment. American-owned sugar mills produced approximately 15 percent of the Cuban crop in 1906 and 48.4 percent in 1920. By 1928 various estimates placed American control of the sugar crop between 70 and 75 percent" (Smith 1960: 29).

The dramatic growth of Havana after the Cuban Wars for Independence, in both population and size, is a telling indicator of the rate of urbanization during the first half of the twentieth century. As a result of the wars for independence, the actual population of Cuba dropped by 3.6 percent between 1887 and 1899, however, this drop in population was more than made up by the wave of predominantly Spanish migration at the beginning of the twentieth century (Acosta and Hardoy 1973). According to Le Riverend (1992), the population of the city at the time of the US occupation was approximately 242,055, yet by 1919 it had almost doubled to 432,353 inhabitants and then doubled again with a population of about one million by 1953 (213). Of the 660,958 immigrants who arrived in Cuba between 1902 and 1919, 68 percent were from Europe (mostly Spain), and 31.5 percent were from the Americas (mostly from the US and Haiti) (Acosta and Hardoy 1973: 3). The physical expansion of the city is just as remarkable, with Havana in 1871

occupying only 4 square kilometers, yet by 1919 it had grown to 95 square kilometers

and within only 5 years it grew to 116 square kilometers and then to 200 square

kilometers by 1953 (Ibid.). Another important phenomenon, a result of the increasing

concentration of sugar production in the hands of foreign companies, was that it caused a

dramatic increase in flows of migratory rural labor to the cities, particularly during the

"dead time" (*tiempo muetro*, the time when the sugar cane fields lay fallow) (Acosta and

Hardoy 1973: 2).

      During the US occupation (1898-1902), extensive public works campaigns were

put into place that focused on sanitation and hygiene, (See Figure 2) and involved

everything from actually cleaning and disinfecting the city to paving the streets and

clearing the drainage lines, all of which combined to create new forms of urbanization

that were conducted under the "rhetoric of modernization and sanitation" (García 2006;

Martín and Rodríguez 1998).
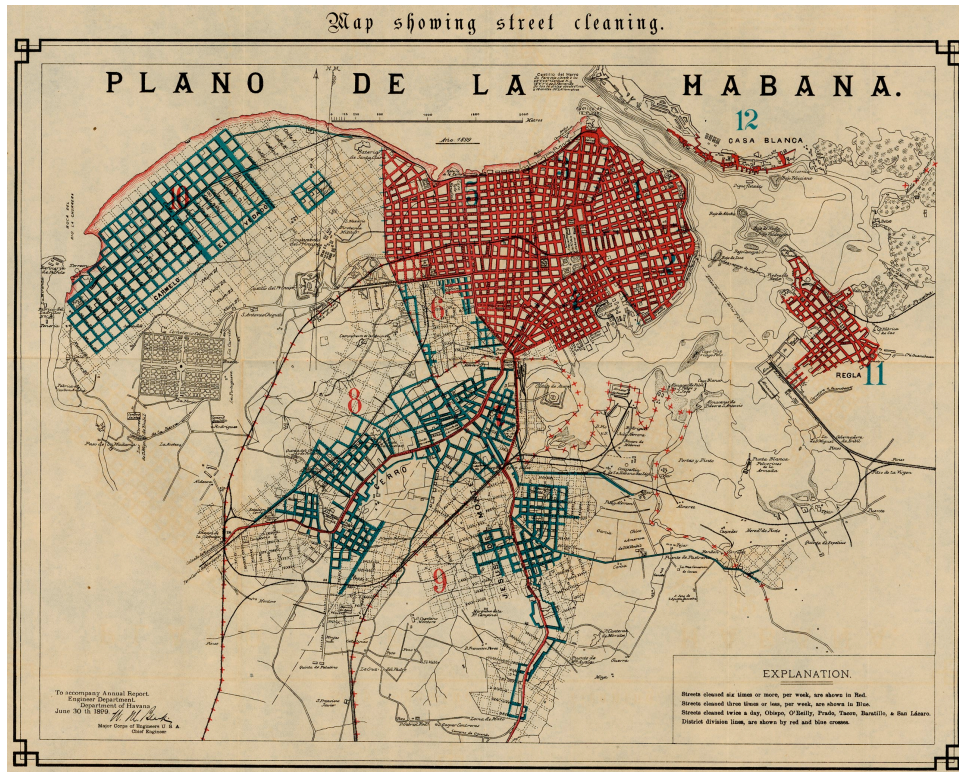
Figure 2, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers street-cleaning map circa 1899.

In addition to sanitation and hygiene, there was also extensive road construction, public works, and the construction schools, hospitals, and even hotels (Lejeune 1996). It was also the during the US occupation that the US Army Corp of Engineers constructed the Malecón, now often tooted as the 'city's living room', the seaside boulevard/promenade that runs along the coastline of the Florida Straights, implementing a plan devised in 1874 by Cuban engineer Francisco de Albear (1816-1887) (Lejeune 1996; Pérez 1999; Scarpaci et al. 2002; Segre 2002). According to Lejeune (1996) the construction of this boulevard met the US administration's sanitation objectives, while it also created a major artery for traffic flows (173).

As mentioned earlier, the scale of US capital investments in the Cuban economy, as well as the imperial desires of the United States at this time period, created a situation where the US government would not allow for Cuban independence until they could

assure some means of control over Cuba. This goal was made real by the US forcing the

Cubans to add the infamous Platt Amendment into the constitution they were drafting for

the Republic. Essentially the Platt Amendment stated that the Republic of Cuba could

not enter into any treaties with foreign powers without the approval of the United States,

Cuba could not contract any foreign debt, all acts and laws enacted during the US

occupation were valid and irrevocable, Cuba was required to cede the Guantanamo naval

base to the United States, and finally the United States had the right to intervene in Cuban

affairs in the defense of 'Cuban liberty' (Pérez 1995; Thomas 1998).

On May 20, 1902, Cuba celebrated its independence with the establishment of the

Republic and the ending of the US occupation; however, the constitution put into effect

with the founding of the Republic was a far cry from what was fought for during three

decades of bloody war. Essentially, the Platt Amendment made a mockery of Cuban

independence (Pérez 1995).   With US corporations owning most of the means of

production, government office and the burgeoning civil services became the primary

means of employment for many Cubans. As Kapcia (2000) says, "..after 1902, it became

clear that wealth came from access to office, and that, as the economic structure excluded

many Cubans, security came through political activity, administrative patronage and

corruption, especially as electoral fraud was widespread" (68).

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, money was poured into the

infrastructure of Havana, first by the US administration and later by the Cuban

government, in an attempt to modernize and beautify the city. It must be recalled that

due to the constant conflict that marked the second half of the nineteenth century in Cuba,

there had been little, if any, improvements made to the infrastructure of the city since the

time of Tacón (1834-38). Schwartz (1997) argues that this modernization and beautification of the city were part of the attempt to create the image of a healthy and modern city for the growing tourist trade.

As mentioned previously, the manner in which the city of Havana developed, through processes of spreading out instead of through processes of 'creative destruction', caused the lower and working classes to be somewhat invisible in the urban fabric, not only in the colonial core, but also in the more wealthy neighborhoods of the city, like Vedado (Coyula and Hamberg 2003; Scarpaci et al. 2002). Following a model comparable to that in the US, urban development in Havana was driven almost entirely by land speculation and profit motives.

During the Republican Era, private capital from North America was an integral part of the increasing suburbanization to the west and south of the city. With the improvements made to infrastructure and the expansion of road networks throughout the city, along with the growth of suburban garden neighborhoods, the automobile came onto the scene and made a lasting impact on the urban fabric. As Segre (2008) says, "the automobile was another essential element in the transformation of the traditional character of Havana which previously had been defined by its compact structure" (207). The expansion of infrastructure, particularly roads servicing the western reaches of the city, enabled the continued development of suburban subdivisions, with such upper class neighborhoods as Mirimar, Country Club, Víbora, and Lawton. However, a number of scholars argue that one of the foremost groups to impact and the shape and development of Havana was the 'omnipresent' middle class (Coyula 1996; Coyula and Hamberg 2003; Venegas 1996; Scarpaci et al. 2002; Segre 2002).

During, and after, World War I, the European beet sugar industry all but collapsed, thereby hurtling the Cuban sugar industry into a period of unprecedented wealth that became known as *Danza de los Millones*, Dance of the Millions (1916-1920). During these sugar boom years, also known as *la vaca gorda* (the fat cow), residential and commercial construction and public works projects proceeded at a dizzying pace. The impact of this tremendous flow of capital changed forever the face of this Caribbean city, as evidenced by the expansive residential construction in Vedado, Mirimar, and Country Club. Many of these new subdivisions were modeled after the Garden City movement of Sir Ebinezer Howard in the United Kingdom and Frederick Law Olmstead in the United States, with ample green spaces provided in their layout (Scarpaci et al. 2002; Segre 2002).

Additionally, the population of Havana sky-rocketed during this period to well over 500,000, and the rate of growth did not abate until after the impact of the Great Depression (Martín and Rodríguez 1998). Under President Machado, and his secretary of public works, Carlos Miguel de Cespedes, they created what Lejeune (1996) calls "an ambitious Keynesian public works program to modernize the country" (164). Machado and Cespedes made plans for the modernization and beautification of Havana, much like the efforts put forth almost a century before by Tacón. Machado had a Master Plan drawn up by the French landscape architect Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier in 1925 (Colantonio and Potter 2006; Scarpaci et al. 2002; Lejeune 1996). Part of Forestier's master plan was the creation of green spaces that would be connected throughout the city. Unfortunately many of his ideas never materialized, this was mainly due to internal political turmoil and weakening economic conditions. It was also during this period that

there was a rapid growth in the number of class based recreational facilities being built throughout the city, such as the Havana Biltmore Yacht and Country Club, and La Playa (Gelabert-Navia 1996).

Another Master Plan was created in 1956 by a team from Harvard headed by José Luis Sert, in which a combination of Haussmanian rationality and Modernist aesthetics were employed for the benefit of North American style capitalist investment. Fortunately this Master Plan was never able to be full realized due to the revolution of 1959, for part of Sert's plan would have created a man-made island that would house hotels and a casino directly off the coast of Central Havana. Sert's plan also included a Le Corbusier style modernist high-rise mixed use corridor that would run straight through the heart of Old Havana (Bastlund 1967). (See Figure 3). The urban fabric of the city would have been drastically altered by real estate speculation, resembling many coastal cities world wide that are marked by high-rise condominiums that line the coasts.

> "Cuba in the 1950s remains difficult to comprehend in light of its many opposing representations and realities. Socially, the country was divided into a surprisingly large group of affluent urban professionals on the one hand and a mass of rural farmers and urban immigrants struggling to make ends meet one another. It boasted one of the highest levels of per capita income in Latin America, yet the concentration of economic development in Havana as well as problems with discrimination deprived many of education, social services, and adequate employment. Politically the nation was in chaos, lorded over by dishonest presidents and military men" (Moore 2006: 51)

Cuba during this period became the tourist playground for the US, as Schwartz (1997) says, "lush tropical foliage, climate, and location were fortunate accidents of nature, but human inventiveness, imagination, and perseverance turned Havana into a naughty Paris of the Western Hemisphere and a luxurious Riviera of the Americas for tourists" (15).
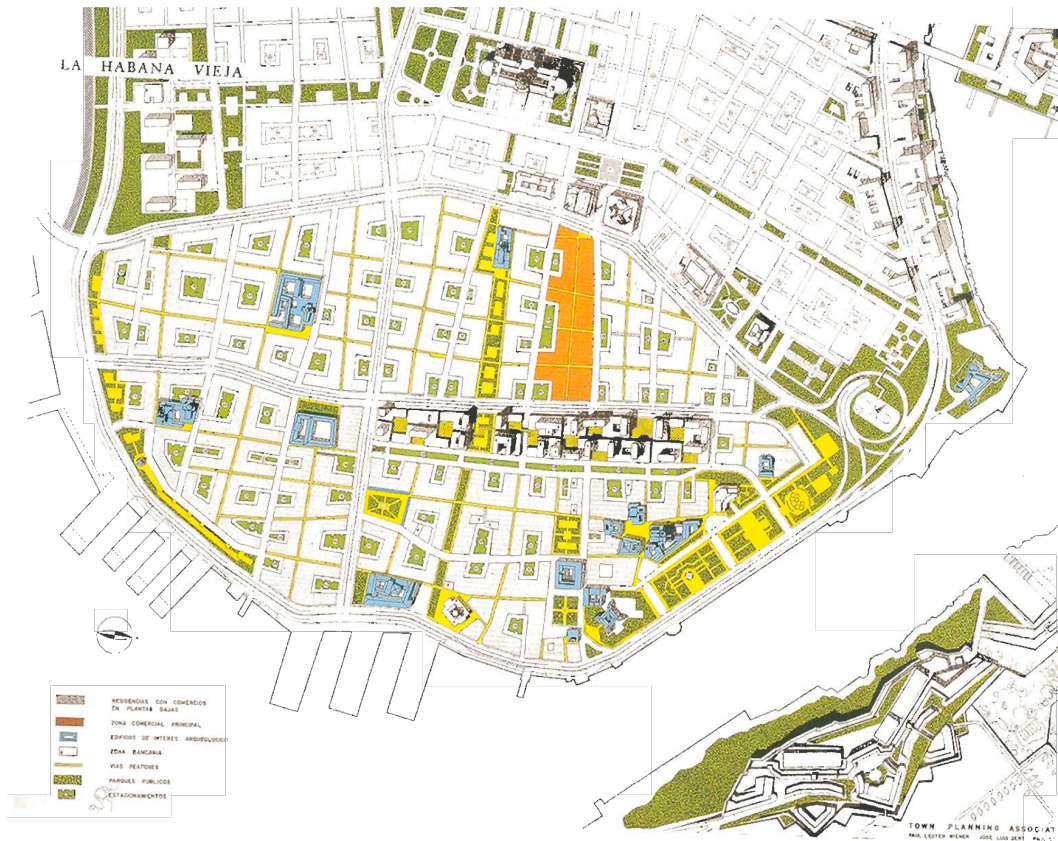
Figure 3, Sert's Master Plan for Havana 1959.   **Bastund ©**

Schwartz (1997) examines the relationship between the United States and Cuba during this period, focusing on the aspects of the perceived pleasure and paradise of tourism in Cuba for North American citizens who embraced the exotic sexualized images of the island. As a result of the increasing importance of tourism during the first half of the twentieth century, hotels were constructed throughout the city of Havana to meet the growing demands of the tourist trade. Pérez (1999) says, "no where did North American demands reconfigure Cuban life as dramatically as through tourism. Although travel to Cuba had its antecedents in the nineteenth century, not until the 1910s did the opportunity to develop a mass tourist market present itself" (166). Between the 1930s and 1950s, Havana became internationally known as a tourist destination, tropical images of

mulattas, casinos, beaches, and rum circulated the globe, selling this exotic destination to the newly emerging international tourist market. With the growing tourist market in Cuba, and the succession of corrupt Cuban officials, tourism in Havana became entangled with organized crime from the United States, with mobsters like Meyer Lansky and Lucky Luciano owning hotels and casinos throughout the city (Schwartz 1997; Scarpaci et al. 2002). In Guillermo Cabrera Infante's (1990) classic novel, *Tres Tristes Tigres*, he writes about pre-revolutionary Havana, poignantly presenting an exotic tourist paradise set within with the sordid social, cultural, and political context of a divided nation.

Machover (1995) says, Cuba was "an island open to all of the influences of the world, Cuba, and all of its capital was a crossroad of influences, an astonishing mix of skin colors, of nationalities and of mother tongues, and of cultural origins" (18). The pervasiveness of the presence of US culture and influence on the island had a tremendous impact on Cuban identity, as Pérez (1999) says, "increasingly, Cubans came to measure themselves by northern standards and evaluate their achievements and aspirations based on imported models. The Cuban mediation on modernity was formulated largely in a narrative of self-representation vis-a-vis the North as frame of reference and source of validation" (351). The backlash against the overwhelming US cultural, economic, and political influence was a crucial component for the success of the revolutionary struggle throughout the 1950s that eventually culminated in the triumph of 1959.

Throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, the pervasive influence of foreign interests in Cuba caused a transformation in the spatial and economic structure of the island. Following the principles of the capitalist organization of production, the spatial structure of the economy was focused on the efficient production of export

commodities, particularly sugar and tobacco. The spatial outcome of this structure was:

a.) large scale consolidation of agricultural lands by foreign companies (US firms owned

between 70 and 75 percent of Cuban sugar production by 1928); b.) urban agglomeration

concentrated in a few key cities, predominately Havana; c.) a transportation network that

focused mainly on connecting the sugar *centrales* (large-scale sugar mills) to the port

facilities and urban areas for export. As Zanetti and García (1998) make clear, the

transportation networks in Cuba prior to the revolution were created not to meet the needs

of the domestic market and population, but were solely aimed at connecting the producers

in the interior with foreign markets. Sugar was *the* determining factor in the construction

of Cuba's railway system (Ibid.).

3.3 Socialist Havana (1959-1990)

In 1959, the revolutionary government inherited a typical Third World capital

city, one that housed a disproportionate share the nation's population, approximately one

fifth, and one where the majority of industry and urban agglomeration were concentrated

(Acosta and Hardoy 1973; Hamberg 1990). One of the primary goals following the

revolution was to establish a developmental policy that would promote spatial and

economic equality across the island, particularly eradicating the rural-urban dichotomy

that had long plagued Cuba.   Traditionally, Havana was the key to an export economy

based on monoculture production, for centuries all the wealth produced in the interior

flowed into and through Havana. As Susman (1987) says, "from the earliest days of their

struggle, the Cuban revolutionaries saw the exploitive role of urban-based elites in

perpetuating inequality as antagonistic to its goals" (253).

"The concentration in the cities of wealth created in the countryside has been a historical constant in the development of Cuban society. For the most part such wealth was channeled into Havana, creating disequilibria that, since 1959, have constituted one of the principal concerns of a country pursuing its own integral development. To bring the economy into regional balance, therefore, priority was given to elevating the rural standard of living" (Acosta and Hardoy 1973: 10).

Therefore, one of the basic tenets of development during the early years of the revolution was, a 'maximum of ruralism and a minimum of urbanism' (Eckstein 1977, 1994; Slater 1982). Scarpaci (2002) says, these policies were "derived from the belief that social justice demanded that Havana's opulent lifestyles be curtailed" (181).

"The pre-1959 spatial division of labour and power reflected patterns of exploitation and accompanying attitudes of domination, further separating people in towns from those in the countryside. Hence, so much of Cuban development may be interpreted in the context of efforts to integrate towns and country, economically, politically and at different geographic scales- local, provincial, and national" (Susman 1987: 254).

Throughout the 50s, virtually all investment in Cuba was concentrated within Havana. As Fidel has said, Havana was an overdeveloped city in an underdeveloped nation. Six percent of the urban population lived in shantytowns that dotted the periphery as well the interstices of many central areas of the city (Coyula and Hamberg 2003; Hamberg 1990). Prior to the revolution of 1959, 97 percent of all rural housing in Cuba consisted of thatched roofed huts known as *bohíos*, with less than 10 percent of all rural housing having access to electricity (Hamberg 1990; Segre 1990: 4). The revolutionary government inherited what Susman (1987) refers to as a "spatially distorted landscape" (256). Prior to the revolution, nearly three-quarters of all Havana residents were actually renters (Hamberg 1990; Scarpaci et al. 2002). However, partially due to such high ratio of tenants versus homeowners, there were very advanced protections and rent control measures that date from the 1930s.

Urbanization under socialism developed a particular ecological form (Crolwey 2002; Scarpaci 2000a). With the state providing housing and urban real estate markets and speculation eliminated, the urban fabric of the city is much different than in a capitalist city (Kovacs 1999; Wiessner 1999). Experts differ considerably on the nature of urbanization in the state socialist system. Some define socialist urbanization as distinctly different from capitalist urbanization (Szelényi 1983), while others argue that they in fact have the same spatial structure, yet with significant regional differences (Enyedi 1992; Scarpaci, 2000a; Timár 2003). Enyedi (1998) goes on to say that due to the general laws governing the spatial development of urbanization after the industrial revolution, the spatial form of cities under socialism and capitalism are much the same. However, centrally-planned urban development was often combined with ideological aims in the attempt to create an ideal urban form in an egalitarian fashion (Szelenyi 1996). "Building socialism involved changing people's minds and view of history, not just the material conditions of their lives, and new public monuments were expected to play a major educational role in this respect" (Crowley 2002: 65). Thus, the manipulation of space can be seen as socializing process aimed at creating a new consciousness and new forms of social relations, in addition to legitimizing the revolution.

Within the first few months of 1959, the new government reduced rents by about fifty percent for all tenants, put a halt on evictions, and freed up vacant urban land for home construction (Acosta and Hardoy 1973; Hamberg 1990). These measures were made to reduce the rampant land speculation and eradicate profit making on urban lands that had marked the city for the first half of the century. Following these initial steps, in

103

October 1960, the regime passed the Urban Reform Law, which made more than half of urban tenants into homeowners. Tenants who did not receive ownership rights, particularly those living in inner city tenements (the *cuarterías*, *casa de vecindad, ciudadelas, and solares*) were given long term rent-free leases (Hamberg 1990). The revolution saw housing as a basic right of all citizens (Hamberg 1990; Coyula and Hamberg 2003). Additionally, the law stipulated that any individual or family could only own one house of residence and an additional vacation home. This law also did away with private renting and subletting. Properties exceeding this limit would be purchased by the state. The majority of all former owners of rental properties, with the exception of the 'slum-lords' who owned the inner city tenements, were compensated for their appropriated properties and were often entitled to lifetime pensions from the government. Additionally, this urban reform policy encouraged self-building by freeing up vacant plots, *Ley sobre los solares yermos,* throughout urban areas (Nuñez Fernández and García Pleyán 2000).

To overcome the spatial and economic uneven development between the city and countryside that was characteristic of many Latin America countries, the Cuban government implemented numerous programs (Acosta and Hardoy 1973; Hamberg 1990; Scarpaci 2002; Susman 1987). Three measures, among others, taken by the government to increase spatial and economic equality across the island were the First Law of Agrarian Reform of May 1959, the Second Law of Agrarian Reform of October 1963, and the Urban Reform Law of October 1960.

> "Because the plan involved both the 'urbanization of the countryside" and the "ruralization of the city," it may have helped break down rural-urban social barriers. The urban populace became "ruralized" through its participation in agricultural activities while the rural populace became more "urban" as social services, electricity, modern housing, and technology became available to them." (Eckstein 1981: 127).

By focusing on rural over urban development, the government was attempting to improve spatial and economic equality between the cities and the countryside by improving living standards in rural areas and by deconcentrating urban areas, thereby reducing the urban primacy of Havana. Acosta and Hardoy (1973) argue that the Urban Reform Law impacted Cuban society more than almost any of the other revolutionary policies enacted during the early years of the revolution. The revolutionary administration did not begin nationalizing North American properties until 1960, and according to Acosta and Hardoy (1973) it was not until the Second Law of Agrarian Reform in 1963 that the administration began to dramatically transform the rural social class system. As Scarpaci et al. (2002) say, during the initial years of the revolution, the housing policy of the government was aimed at eradicating shantytowns, constructing new large scale apartment blocs, and to create new materials and ways of constructing housing within the context of the US embargo (201).

The new policies created by the revolutionary regime were also transforming the spatial structure of the nation by urbanizing rural areas through developing new small and mid-sized, primarily agricultural, towns that would enable the concentration of rural labor and thereby improve the linkage of these previous dispersed populations within an urban network that provided adequate housing, jobs, and health, education, and entertainment services. As mentioned above, the transportation networks in Cuba prior to the revolution were predominately constructed to service the agricultural, sugar and tobacco industries, and the mineral extractive industries. Previously there was little interconnectivity between small towns and villages not directly connected to these

industries and the larger cities such as Havana (Zanetti and García 1998). With these sweeping laws, the government transferred the means of production from private hands to the state, thereby attempting to complete the transform of the social class system, and rework the spatial and economic structure of the economy.

Following the 1959 revolution, many of the upper class and middle class neighborhoods, particularly in the western suburbs, were, to use Eckstein's (1981) words, "de-bourgeoisified". This was a result of many of middle and upper class Cubans fleeing the island in the initial years after the revolution. It is understandable that the middle and upper classes represented the bulk of the migrants when considering the necessary capital it would require to quickly move an entire family. This is important to clarify, for it was not necessarily *only* the middle and upper classes that wanted to flee revolutionary Cuba, it was that these socio-economic groups had the cash available to do so. The vast majority of these Cubans fled to Southern Florida where there was an already established community of Cubans. The result of this dramatic mass exodus of the middle and upper class, mostly from Havana, was that many homes, apartments, and mansions were left empty in Vedado, Mirimar, Lawton, Country Club. As Eckstein (1994) points out, most of those who emigrated from Cuba following the revolution were from Havana, and therefore this mass migration impacted the capital city more than anywhere else on the island. The government quickly converted many of these former homes of the elites into boarding houses for students from the countryside, clinics, schools and other cultural institutions. Although there was a severe housing shortage at the outset of the revolution, these abandoned homes were not re-distributed to the overcrowded inhabitants of the inner-city tenements. Instead, these neighborhoods were classified as off-limits, or a

"frozen zone" (*zona congelada*). From the start, these posh neighborhoods were intended to be used by foreign embassies, government officials, schools, and local clinics (Rutheiser 2000; Scarpaci et al. 2002).

In the climate of socialist ideology, urbanization in Cuba became more focused on social problems, such as the large-scale construction of housing, schools, hospitals, and factories across the island. However, the state did initially attempt to address the urban housing shortage in Havana by building large-scale socialist-style housing projects in East Havana on the other side of the bay (Scarpaci et al. 2002). Two of the biggest housing projects completed by the revolutionary government were in El Cotorro and in Alamar, an area originally designated during the Batista years to be another upper class suburb of modern luxury mansions (Eckstein 2003; Scarpaci et al. 2002). The large scale housing project in Alamar followed many of the principles of Soviet housing, however, it failed in providing adequate infrastructure, services, and public spaces with the result that often today it is considered like living in 'Siberia' due to its desolation and distance from the city (Oliveras and Núñez 2001: 13).

By the time of the 1984 Housing Law, more than half of the 2.5 million households on the island were owner occupied, with another one-fifth living in government owned housing, particularly the urban tenements and in modern prefabricated soviet style apartment blocs, where tenants paid no more than 10 percent of their monthly income (Hamberg 1990: 50). Housing shortages have plagued the revolutionary administration throughout its fifty-year history (Coyula and Hamberg 2003; Hamberg 1986; Eckstein 1994). Although Cuba was partially successful in creating some degree of spatial equality in urban planning, the occurrences of uneven urban

development in post-socialist Eastern Europe provides a troubling picture of how a competitive economic market can impact urbanization in post-socialist countries (Hamberg 1990; Kovacs 1999; Sailer-Fliege 1999).

3.4 Conclusion

It is ironic to note that the anti-urban bias of the revolutionary regime is now being seen as a benefit. Although Havana has been neglected for over four decades, the lack of destruction of the urban fabric has left the vast majority of the city untouched. Coyula et al. (1996) argue that it is in large part due to the anti-urban bias of the revolution and the 'benign neglect' of Havana that much of the urban heritage of the city remains today, though often in a state of disrepair. Now, due to the economic crisis of the 1990s, the government is having to reformulate its policy in regards to urban development, and the policy of rehabilitating its tourist sectors is creating a tapestry of uneven development. And although the government was successful in reducing the levels of inequality between the city and the countryside, the urban primacy of Havana remained. Yes, Havana grew at a much slower rate than it had prior to the revolution, but the government was not able to reduce the importance of Havana and the crucial role it played within the nation. Havana was, and still is, the political and cultural heart of the nation, it still maintains a large industrial and manufacturing sector, it is still disproportionately larger than any other city, and it still continues to grew from rural-urban migration. With the crisis of the 1990s, as will be seen in more detail in the following chapter, the restructuring of the economy is once again focused on the capital city, for Havana has always been, and will remain Cuba's gateway to the world.

It is virtually impossible to sum up nearly five hundred years of history in one chapter, yet this chapter attempted to provide some context for better understanding the city today. Havana is the legacy of a colonial system, its entire purpose, for the most part, was being an entrepôt for empire. After the high point of the Spanish colonial enterprise, its role shifted to a plantation economy where the sugar profits were funneled through Havana thereby providing the necessary capital for the expansion and modernization of the city, as was the case under the Governor-General Tacón. After several decades of bitter fighting between the loyalist forces of the Crown and the local elites, not to mention the landless peasants who made up the ranks of the Independence Army, Cuba was freed of its colonial title only to be engulfed into a new emerging empire- the United States.

From a geographic perspective (i.e site and situation) the close relationship between the US and Cuba seems obvious, yet this period of neo-colonialism had a dramatic impact on Cuba, arguably just as important as Spain did during the earlier colonial period. The combination of US capital, Cuban elites, and the growing global demand for sugar all combined to create the modern urban landscape of Havana. This chapter provided parts of this history in order to aid in the understanding of how the city of Havana has historically evolved. It tried to make clear the importance of the roles of sugar and slavery in its evolution. This information is relevant for this dissertation because it helps to establish the significance of the study site, *Calle G*, and of re-establishing the importance of the city in regards to its national history. Havana has always been the outward looking face of the island. During the Spanish colonial period this was the location where empire and wealth were consolidated before being shipped to

the metropole. Also, it was the main point of embarkation and debarkation; the place where goods, people, information, and technology came and went. Even though the revolutionary government made several efforts to reduce the importance of the capital city in the national urban network, Havana is now increasingly assuming the role of a quintessential primate city. Therefore, understanding what is occurring there is increasingly important for understanding what is, or what will be, occurring throughout the entire nation. The following chapter will resume where this chapter left off, around 1990 and the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Chapter 4

Contextualizing Havana, The Special Period and Beyond

> "If the city is a material reflection of the dynamics established by social life, in the dialectic of the private and public initiatives, Havana today reflects the existing tensions of a political system that boldly struggles for its survival in a hostile and aggressive world." (Segre 2008: 217-18).

4.0 Introduction- The Calm Before the Storm

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the dissolution the Eastern Bloc between 1989 and 1991 sent tremendous shock waves throughout the world, which some thought, as Oppenheimer (1992) said, would to lead to 'Castro's final hour'. As Hobsbawm (1994) commented, 1991 and the collapse of the Soviet Union, marked the end of the twentieth century as we knew it. Although this event is often seen as *the* watershed moment for contemporary Cuba, it would be overly simplistic to think this is/was the sole impetus for the changes that have transformed Cuba and the city of Havana. However, for many young Cubans, the economic crisis of the 1990s, is often how they frame their lives- as life either *before* or *after* the economic meltdown and subsequent restructuring. It is clear that the loss of trade and subsidies from this Cold War era relationship dramatically sped up processes of change, particularly in the form of decentralization and economic reintegration into the global market.

The historical context of Cuba for more than one hundred and fifty years has been one of constant flux. If one looks back to the history of 'modern' Cuba, since the time of the wars for independence, one sees a nation and a people repeatedly struggling for

stability, a disjointed process of working and reworking political and economic strategies

to achieve this. From the turn of the century up to this very day, various Cuban

administrations, including the Castro administration, have altered, adapted, and modified

political and economic policies and ideologies to meet the changing circumstances of

Cuba's place within the global economy. As Cuban intellectual Rafael Hernández (2003)

poignantly says,

> "..since the 19th century Cuba has rarely gone through three decades without a crisis of
> economic, political, and social change. These periodic crises have been characterized by
> strong ideas about renewal, progress, development, social justice, national vindication,
> and independence." (19).

The point of discussing this history of fluctuation is to argue that Cuba since the 1990s is

merely another, though the most recent, manifestation of an adaptive country and

government. The fact that a small island nation, with a centuries old history of various

forms of dependency, has been able to maintain an anti-capitalist position directly on the

doorstep of the largest and most vociferous of capitalist nations in the modern era, is

nothing short of amazing. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc

countries was economically cataclysmic for Cuba, as will be demonstrated below,

however it represents one of many factors that have influenced the evolution of

contemporary Cuba. This chapter examines the factors that led to the numerous

processes of socio-economic restructuring of the past two decades, as well as to discuss

the impacts and outcomes of several of these political and economic strategies and how

they have impacted the city of Havana. Defining exactly what the Cuban economy is

today is a difficult task, for clearly it is no longer a 'pure' socialist centralized state, if

such a thing as a 'pure' socialist economy every truly existed, and certainly the Cuban

economy can not be described as an emerging capitalist economy. Saying whether Cuba

is adhering to a form of hybrid socialism, entrepreneurial socialism, market socialism, socialist capitalism, or even authoritarian capitalism is beyond the scope of this project, and does not necessarily inform this study. Yet it is important to keep this issue of economic models in mind as this chapter progresses because many of the economic strategies the current Cuban regime is employing are varied indeed.

The previous chapter left off reviewing the history of the urbanization of Havana up until the 1990s, here it will resume examining the development of the city while also reviewing the social and economic changes that make the backdrop for the youth of the nation. It begins by reviewing the events that preceded and followed the disintegration of the Soviet Bloc. From there, this chapter examines the reforms and restructuring that were initiated in Cuba during the 90s, followed by an evaluation of the impact of these reforms and strategies.

4.1 The Sovietization of Cuba

In February 1960, Khrushchev sent his vice-premier, Anastas Mikoyan to Cuba to enquire about the leanings of the new revolutionary regime on the island. Following this trip, and in light of the US embargo, the Soviet Union began buying Cuban sugar. In April 1961 two crucial events occurred, first, the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, and second, Fidel declared himself a Marxist-Leninist, and thus Cuba, essentially became a client state of the Soviet Union[28]. After the catastrophic and erratic political and economic policies of the 60s, and the unsuccessful drive for the ten million ton *zafra* (sugar harvest)

---

[28] To learn more of Cuban-Soviet relations see Faber, Samuel (2006). *Origins of the Cuban Revolution Reconsidered;* also, Lechuga, Carlos. (1995). *In the Eye of the Storm: Castro, Khrushchev, Kennedy and the Missile Crisis.*

113

in 1970, Cuba had to 'retreat to socialism', as Eckstein (1994) says, and thus to the Soviet Union (47). This period was marked by the "Institutionalization' or 'Sovietization' of the Cuban economy and political structure, essentially Cuba adopted many of the mechanisms and structures in place in the USSR. In 1972, Cuba becomes a member of the COMECON, also referred to as the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), the economic organization of communist states. This relationship not only provided national defense against further incursions by the US, it also provided markets and subsidized trade and unlimited access to cheap oil. This is a crucial point, because prior to the US embargo, the US was Cuba's main trading partner and Cuba's source for almost every conceivable commodity and manufactured good. Although the average annual growth in Cuba between 1972 and 1985 was an estimated 6 percent annually, there were significant signs of economic stagnation similar to what was experienced throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union during this period (Brundenius 2002: 366). According to Ritter (2004), between 1980 and 1987, the subsidies given by the Soviet Union and the CMEA represented somewhere between 23 and 36 percent of Cuba's national income (4).

4.2 The Rectification of Errors and Negative Tendencies

As Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union embarked on processes of political and economic liberalization, the Cuban government began a process of reform that became known as the 'rectification of errors and negative tendencies' (*proceso de rectification de errors y de tendencies negativas*), aimed primarily at decentralizing political decision making. However, these reforms were not meant to follow the political and economic

liberalizations occurring throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (Domenech 1996). During the period of 'Institutionalization," or 'Sovietization', the centralized command economy inadvertently created a privileged class of bureaucrats, who Fidel argued were enriching themselves at the cost of the revolution. Fidel (1986) justified the rectification of errors by saying: "Again, there are some of our company directors who have become businessmen who are doing nicely for themselves, like good capitalists." (as quoted in García Luis 2004: 244). And with that, the planning boards of the command economy were taken apart and moral incentives and voluntary labor were emphasized by the state.

A main aspect of the 'rectification of errors' was aimed at moral reform and reducing the amount of corruption within the system, particularly individuals stealing from the state for self-gain, therefore, as Eckstein (1994) says, this period of reform was "really a political, ideological and moral affirmation of continuing the real socialist project" (92). The 'real socialist project' in this case meant that Cuba would not follow the political and economic liberalizations that were sweeping through the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. However, during 1988 and 1989, the country responsible for Cuba's economic and political well-being, as well as its security, began to internally dissolve-leaving Cuba once again abandoned by history.

4.3 The Collapse of the Soviet Union

Although Cuba was already instituting economic reforms prior to the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, it was largely unprepared for the crippling economic crisis of the early 1990s. After over thirty years of continued economic growth in Cuba, Cuba's GDP

began contracting in 1990. By 1994, the gross national product of Cuba fell by

approximately half of what it was during the 1980s, and the deficit was around thirty to

thirty-five percent of the entire country's gross national product (Brundenius 2002; Mesa-

Lago 1998). Food imports dropped by over 40 percent and several analysts have said that

Cuba's economic output by 1994 decreased by somewhere between 35 and 70 percent

(Mesa-Lago 1994; Pastor and Zimbalist 1995). By 1994, inflation had jumped to 26

percent in comparison to 0.5 percent in 1989 (Mesa-Lago 2007: 196).   And by 1993,

sugar production, which had previously been the backbone of the Cuban economy,

decreased by over one third of the output of the previous year (Domínguez 1998).

Cuba's period of internationalism, as seen in Angola and Nicaragua, also quickly came to

an end. By 2001, the Cuban armed forces numbered only 46,000 troops, representing

only 28.5 percent of troop levels in 1985 (Domínguez 2007: 59).

Moreover, the ending of the favorable economic relations with the Soviet Union

and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) in 1989 represented the end of

economic aid totaling an estimated six billion US dollars annually. Prior to this crisis

period, 84 percent of Cuba's trade was with the CMEA (Brundenius 2002; Mesa-Lago

1998). Mesa-Lago (1993) contends that between 1960 and 1990, the Soviet Union and

the CMEA provided over sixty-five billion US dollars in aid to Cuba, in the form of

grants and non-repayable price subsidies. Of this trade, the CMEA provided Cuba with

about 90 percent of the country's petroleum needs, through the exchange and sale of oil

for sugar. The Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc countries bought Cuban sugar and

other goods at well above global market prices while selling oil and other essential

commodities to Cuba for far less than standard market prices. This cooperation shielded

116

Cuba from the oil shocks of the 70s that had such devastating effects on most nations throughout the region. In addition, Cuba was allowed to sell the excess imported Soviet oil on the open market, thus enabling Cuba to earn extra hard currency. This source of foreign capital, as well as financial aid and export earnings all but dried up after 1991. By 1994, trade between Cuba and CMEA nations dropped by 89 percent (Leogrande and Thomas 2002: 342). The loss of this trade resulted in annual shortfalls of anywhere from three to four billion dollars (Ibid.).

The massive reduction of imports, especially of petroleum, caused an oil shortage precipitating an energy crisis, a food crisis, a water shortage, and an extreme reduction in public transportation; all of which increased worker dislocation and underutilization. One of the government's responses to this unemployment, as Pérez-López (1995) points out, was to simply relocate workers to other state agencies, thereby dramatically increasing the levels of underemployment through the inadequate and inefficient use of labor.

The loss of subsidized trade also meant that spare parts for aging Soviet equipment and machinery were difficult if not impossible to acquire, thereby causing industry and manufacturing to come to a standstill. As previously mentioned, prior to 1960-61, virtually *all* inputs for industry, manufacturing, and items for social reproduction originated in the US. Therefore, with the embargo in place, everything had to eventually be replaced with products from the Socialist Bloc since parts for all pre-revolution goods and equipment was impossible to obtain. Essentially this process of an almost total economic disengagement occurred again in the early 1990s.

Public transportation also came to a virtual halt across the island, and has yet to return to pre-crisis capacity. To compensate for the loss of public transportation, the government imported over one million infamous heavy metal Chinese bicycles known as *Pigeons*. In urban areas horse drawn carts and wagons replaced inoperative Eastern European buses. *Apagones* (rolling blackouts), darkened cities, towns, and settlements across the island, and plagued factories and workplaces. Austerity measures and increased rationing resulted in dramatic reductions in food availability that contributed to nutritional deficiencies leading to neurological diseases (Leogrande and Thomas 2002). As a result of nutritional deficiencies, in 1993, 40,000 Cubans lost their eyesight from an epidemic of optic neuritis (Eckstein 1997: 150). Food available through the state ration books, *libretas*, diminished dramatically as the state could not stock the *bodegas* (small grocery stores) where Cubans could normally obtain their monthly food rations.

Food consumption between 1990 and 1993 dropped by as much as 33 percent, and estimates are that the average Cubans lost approximately 20 pounds during this period (Hidalgo and Martinez 2000). Mesa-Largo (2007) claims that between 1990 and 2000, levels of undernourishment nationwide had gone from 5 percent to 13 percent. Shortages became such a problem that on August 5, 1994[29], Cuba experienced its first public uprising since the revolution, as Cubans rioted in Central Havana because of the lack of food (McFadyen 1995). The progression of the crisis forced many Cubans to

---

[29] A foreign journalist who I interviewed and was present during this riot said that in comparison to public demonstrations and riots in the United States during the civil rights era, this event was almost comical. He described it basically as a bunch of unhappy, hungry people in a marginalized neighborhood in Central Havana doing some looting and gathering in protest to their lack of food. On the balconies and in the windows of the buildings overlooking where this was taking place along the Malecón people were chanting 'down with the revolution', 'down with Fidel'. He said he could see high ranking security officials and military circling around in jeeps on side streets when just at the right moment, Fidel comes driving in on a jeep directly into the middle of the crowd to quell the situation. At which point the same people on the balconies above immediately unfurled Cuban flags and began cheering 'Viva Fidel!', 'Viva la revolución!', and just like that it was over.

witness the breakdown of the physical, economic, and social infrastructures of the country, causing the enervation of the people's revolutionary spirit (Espina Prieto and Moreno 1990; Garcia 1994; Simon 1995). The crisis indiscriminately effected all parts of the island, though high density marginalized urban populations were at a disadvantage in regards to food production, where as rural areas and peripheral areas were able to grow food crops for personal consumption and sale on the open market.

> "Urban life also suffered direct consequences. This was not only due to the insurmountable difficulties caused by the public transport crisis, the lack of electricity and the halt in construction, but also to the loss of social cohesion characteristic of the initial stage of the Revolution. The individual and persistent daily struggle for material survival weighed heavily on any identification with the unattainable social and political utopia." (Segre 2008: 216).

Another complication for Cuba was that as the crisis intensified, Cuba was unable to borrow money from any international financial institutions owing to the fact that in 1986 the Cuban government had authorized a moratorium on debt servicing and principal payments (Leogrande and Thomas 2002; Mesa-Lago 2000). Cuba's ratio of debt to exports was almost double that of other Latin American nations (Ritter 2004). Thus, a major element of the crisis was a lack of hard currency. Further external obstacles that Cuba faced during the crisis were the increasingly strained relations with the United States, a result of the tightening of the embargo, or "blockade' as it is referred to in Cuba, and sanctions against Cuba.

In 1992, the US Congress passed the Cuban Democracy Act (CDA) otherwise known as the Torricelli bill, which put further restrictions in the US embargo, thus eliminating approximately $768 million in annual trade, particularly of agriculture and medicine (Leogrande and Tomas 2002: 355). The situation for Cuba was further exacerbated with the passage of the controversial Helms-Burton Law in 1996, which was

seen as a response by the US government to the Cuban Air-force shooting down two

private US aircrafts[30] that were invading Cuban airspace and repeatedly dropping anti-

Castro leaflets across Havana. The Helm-Burton Law prohibited US companies

operating in third countries from trading with Cuba, arguably a form of extraterritoriality.

Additionally the law made millions of dollars of taxpayer money available to help

promote 'civil society' in Cuba, money that invariably went into the pockets of Cuban-

Americans connected to the 'embargo industry[31]' of southern Florida (Weinmann 2008).

Furthermore, this crisis created a phenomenon that can be interpreted as, what I

call, 'time-space expansion', the reverse of Harvey's (1990) argument of 'time-space

contraction', because mobility decreased dramatically, production slowed to a grinding

halt, and space, in its material sense, became a greater barrier to both the population and

the economy. Therefore, from this perspective, it becomes apparent that the crisis of the

1990s set in motion processes that were reworking the meaning of space and time for the

citizens of Havana. Additionally, it could be argued that this crisis altered temporal

understandings as a result of increased worker dislocation and underutilization and

decreased mobility. From the perspective of the state, physical distance also became a

major economic obstacle due to the US economic blockade. With the tightening

blockade and the loss of former trading partners, Cuba was forced to import products and

materials from increasingly distant points of origin, thereby dramatically increasing the

---

[30] The aircraft were from a Miami based anti-Castro organization called Brothers to the Rescue which aided in the search for Cubans *balseros* (Cuban migrants on makeshift rafts) in the waters separating Cuba and the US.

[31] Weinmann (2008) argues that since 1996, USAID has given more than $40 dollars in grants to Miami based that 'help to support transition in Cuba', this in combination with the $500 million that has been given to Radio Marti and TV Marti, media networks that beam US news and propaganda to Cuba, have created an industry that employees hundreds of people in Miami that depend on the maintenance of the embargo.

cost of importing goods. As a result of the economic crisis, rural-urban migration, particularly to Havana, increased so dramatically that in 1997 the government was forced to implement a law regulating and limiting migration to the city (Coyula and Hamberg 2003). De La Fuente (1998) says that the people of the predominantly black eastern provinces of Cuba, *Oriente*, were declaring racism and mistreatment as they were repeatedly driven away from Havana in the government's attempt to mitigate the rural-urban flow of people.

Additionally, the impact of the economic crisis of the early 1990s led to the eventual downsizing, *redimensionamiento*, and restructuring, of the sugar industry. In 1989, sugar generated more than three-quarters of Cuba's foreign exchange earnings (Pollitt 2004: 71). According to Peters (2003), between 1989 and 2002, sugar production on the island dropped by 56 percent, and its global rank as a sugar cane producer went from number three to number ten (2). Between 1998 and 2002, 110 sugar mills were closed down and over 1,378,00 hectares of sugar cane fields were taken off-line and converted for food crop production by state farms and cooperatives (Ibid.: 4). The closing of nearly 70 sugar mills in 2002 displaced nearly 100,000 laborers (Mesa-Lago 2007: 195). Although sugar is still produced in Cuba, the government has focused its energies on what it thinks are more economically viable and sustainable endeavors, such as tourism, mining, biotechnologies, and more recently petroleum.

After decades of focusing the majority of the nation's developmental energy on achieving spatial and economic equality between the city and the countryside, now these rural towns and settlements are bearing the brunt of this economic restructuring and the virtual collapse or the sugar industry. Although rural areas were able to increase food

production and were therefore able to earn hard currency by selling excess produce in the

farmers market, there were little other means of lucrative employment, i.e. tourism jobs.

The government has encouraged the re-skilling of many of these displaced workers by

sending them back to school, however employment opportunities in these former mill

towns are scarce and will likely lead to increased levels of rural-urban migration again,

invariably to Havana (Peters 2003). In Cuba, the rates of rural-urban migration continue

to exceed the rates of urban job creation, thereby exceeding the absorption potential of

industry, social services, housing, and basic infrastructure.

The consequence of the collapse of the sugar industry can not be understated,

because it must be remembered that the entire history of Cuba, as discussed in the

previous chapter, is intimately and inextricably tied to the rise and fall of sugar, and it

would be impossible to understand modern Cuba without taking into account the tragic

legacy left by that sweet commodity. As Thomas (1998) says,

> "All commitments made in Cuba, no matter how well the risk seemed to be spread,
> were in fact commitments which depended upon the fate of sugar in the
> international markets. When sugar prices were good, no other enterprise in Cuba
> was so rewarding. When they were bad, most other activities suffered at the same
> time" (1152).

This virtual collapse, and subsequent restructuring, of the sugar industry represented the

beginning of a period of rapid deindustrialization in response to these new and traumatic

global conditions.

4.4 The Special Period in a Time of Peace

The combination of the above mentioned factors set in motion the transformation

and restructuring of the Cuban economy and society. It is clear under these

circumstances that the Cuban government urgently needed to speed up the reforms that

began in 1986 and find alternatives markets as well as mechanisms for generating hard

currency. The economic reforms the Cuban government set in motion during the 1990s

had far-reaching effects on the entire economy. The measures that helped restructure the

economy were specifically put into place at the Fourth Congress of the Cuban

Communist Party in October 1991 (Mesa-Lago 1998; 2002). The government declared a

'*período especial en tiempo de paz*' (special period in a time of peace), a euphemistic title

for a period for such instability and uncertainty. The Special Period now provides the

backdrop to current generations growing up in Cuba, it not only marks a period of

dramatic social and economic restructuring, but it also marks a dramatic shift in the

national discourse.

The principal reforms introduced during this period, primarily between 1993-

1996, were management reforms (domestic and external), the legalization of US dollar

holdings (dollarization), the legalization and licensing of some forms of self-employment,

reintroduction of agricultural and artisan markets, the break-up of large state farms into

cooperatives, the introduction of taxes, self-financing for governmental agencies, the

promotion of foreign investment and joint ventures, and the dramatic expansion of the

tourism industry. According to the Cuban government, these measures were successful at

stopping the contraction of the economy. By 1995 GDP grew by 2.5 percent and then

again in 1996 by 7.8 percent (Pérez-López 1997: 4).

The reorganization of management structures in the central government initiated

the introduction of self-financing for state agencies and the creation of autonomous

corporations, and entrepreneurial institutions- including ones run by the armed forces,

e.g. Gaviota[32]. These new institutions and actors are all part of a state-led liberalization of parts of the economy in an effort to sustain the socialist project. In her recent work, Hernandez-Reguant (2002) showed how the restructuring of the Cuban economy in the 1990s created new social and economic relations as transnational stakeholders and elite cultural producers and intermediaries have emerged in a number of industries operating joint ventures, particularly in the culture industries.

Many state enterprises became mixed enterprises, *empresas mixtas*, or *Sociedades Anónimas* (SAs)- the equivalent of corporations. In an attempt to increase efficiency throughout the economy, these state agencies became self-supporting business corporations that were supposed to be self-reliant and self-financed. If needed, these corporations could borrow money from the state, with delinquency of payment causing foreclosure (Mesa-Lago 2000). This notion of self-financing meant that government agencies are paying taxes for the first time since the beginning of the revolution. Furthermore, the wages of state workers are being tied to the profitability of their agency or institution based on the firm's performance. These organizations control their own finances, are allowed to import supplies, keep foreign exchange earnings, and establish joint ventures (Mesa-Lago 2000). These new institutional actors and corporations are altering social and economic relations among Cubans, as well as changing the nature of the relationship between the state and society.

---

[32] One of the main agencies dealing with tourism and foreign direct investment is the Gaviota (meaning seagull) Tourism Group, created within the Department of Economic Affairs and controlled by the Ministry of Armed Forces (MINFAR), and ultimately operated by the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolcionarias* (FAR). Gaviota, and its various subsidiaries, are the most important and profitable of the military's economic enterprises. In 1996 Gaviota generated $525 million dollars, or the equivalent of a fifth of Cuba's total foreign exchange earnings Mora (1999). This self-sufficiency was crucial during the economic crisis of the past decade, since it provided a means to counteract the hardships of the crisis.

The Cuban government began earnestly trying to attract foreign investment and joint ventures, *empresas mixtas*, during the Special Period. The importance of foreign investment is evident by the priority given to investors through: exemption on profit taxes; increased shares in ownership[33]; allowing the hiring of foreign managers and executives; repatriation of profits and salaries of foreigners; allowing the dismissal of Cuban workers; investment protection; fiscal incentives; and a ban on strikes by Cubans (Mesa-Lago 1998; Pérez-Villanueva 1998). These preferential policies are formulated and planning controls are streamlined to satisfy the demand of external investors. In this sense, the inward investments represent the influence of globalization in which the fate of Cubans on the island is closely related to changes of scale beyond the territorial bounds of their local government (Amin and Thrift 1997; Smith 2001).

Another aspect of adjusting the Cuban economy to incorporate foreign investment was that as Hernández (2003) says, it "..has opened the legal possibility of redefining the nature of property, including its private use in the case of 'nonfundamental means of production', and of modifying the irreversible character of the socialist sector, as well as recognizing the form of property represented by foreign investment" (21). This is a crucial component of understanding the reworking of meanings of space within the city of Havana, because with the introduction of foreign investors and transnational stakeholders, the Cuban government has had to reconfigure notions of property value in order for them to reintegrate the nation into global capitalist markets, and part of this process is redefining the nature of public/private space. After almost forty years of trying to eliminate notions of private property within the national discourse, re-introducing,

---

[33] Prior to this point, no foreign firm could have more than a 50 percent ownership of companies in Cuba.

even if only in a partial way, the legal concept of the private ownership of the means of production is surely to have some significant consequences for the city and its citizens.

Foreign firms who hire Cuban labor must contract through one of two main Cuban labor organizations *Cubalse* and *Corporación CIMEX*. After contracting for Cuban labor, the foreign firm pays these state agencies in hard currency at standardized international rates. This arrangement applies not only to the tourism industry, but to virtually every sector of the economy in which foreign investment is present, from press photographers to miners and oil platform workers. The state then pays the Cuban worker in local, non-hard currency *pesos*, the differences of this dual currency system will be elaborated on more below. Most of the time these firms pay their Cuban employees additional wages under the table in hard currency, or by providing baskets of goods and commodities that would typically be inaccessible with their peso salaries. In late 2007 the government began allowing foreign firms to pay their Cuban workers in hard currency, though this does not mean that all foreign firms are now paying their employees directly in hard currency. Arguably this step by the Cuban state is meant to increase tax revenues, because allowing Cuban employees to receive hard currency wages is an avenue for the state to increase tax revenue as well as to try and reduce economic inequality by using the money generated from this tax to fund social programs that would be helping those Cubans without access to hard currency.

To deal with the food crisis, in 1993 the government broke up large state farms into smaller cooperatives (*Unidades Básicas de Producción Cooperativa* –UBPCs), this measure was meant to increase the food crop production by introducing profit incentives to farmers (Mesa-Lago 2000). UBPCs must first meet state quotas which means a

portion of their production goes directly to the state, after which the remaining surplus

can be sold at farmers markets in urban areas, thereby generating profit which is divided

among the cooperative members. The other major change enacted during this period was

the re-legalization of farmers markets that operate more according to the capitalist

principals of supply and demand. Farmers markets, which had previously been legalized

for only a short period in the 80s, allowed farmers to earn hard currency by selling their

surplus production on the open market, a step aimed at increasing food accessibility as

well as increasing production efficiency.   The farmers markets were essential in helping

to alleviate the food crisis. Individual farmers, cooperatives, as well as military

production units and state firms were allowed to sell their excess production directly to

farmers markets, although the government retained control over products such as beef,

milk, and tobacco (Xianglin 2007). As Moreno (2004) says, although in some ways the

profit incentives for farmers are capitalist in nature, the farmers' markets are a tool that

promotes economic equality since they are means of enabling the rural areas to

economically compete with urban areas.

These measures was successful to a large degree, however, still to this day, Cuba

is required to import most of its food and agricultural products from abroad, and

ironically the US is the largest supplier of these commodities. In 2008, the Cuban

government, now under the command of Raúl Castro, began leasing agricultural land to

private individuals, cooperative farms, and other entities. However, even with the break-

up of large state farms, the state is still the largest holder of arable lands, nearly 70

percent of all arable land in Cuba is state land with 50 percent of that land remaining

fallow.

Pérez-López (1995) states that in 1989, the number of state employees in the labor force was about 3.9 million, which accounted for approximately 95 percent of the total labor force. However, since 1993 with the legalization of self-employment, combined with the growth of foreign investment and joint-ventures, there has been a dramatic increase in the percentage of non-state employed labor.

In 1993, the government legalized 117 types of self-employment occupations, primarily occupations such as: *paladares* (private restaurants), *casa particulars* (renting rooms in private residences to foreigners), small snack stands, artisans, private taxi drivers, and various forms of skilled services (plumbers, electricians etc.) (Alonso 1993; Peters 2006). However, professional tertiary and quaternary, primarily university trained, forms of labor could not become self-employed, *cuentapropria*. Through measures legalizing self-employment in the early 1990s, the government increased levels of the production of goods and services, and attempted to reduce levels of unemployment (Pérez-Villanueva and Omar 1998; Mesa-Lago 1998). The main objective behind legalizing self-employment was to stimulate the production of goods and services that the government was not able to provide (Ritter 1998). In addition to relieving some of the stress resulting from the high levels of unemployment and underemployment, self-employment also created tax revenue for the government and enabled many more Cubans to acquire hard currency (Smith 1999). However, Peters (1998) states that a serious issue regarding the self-employed is that many of the inputs for self-employed businesses actually come illegally from state supply chains by individuals who misappropriate state materials, supplies, and goods in order to earn hard currency. The largest percentage of

the self-employed work in the food services sector of the economy, with the preparation and sale of foods and snacks.

Some of the regulations governing self-employment require that, a.) state agencies may not purchase goods or services from the self-employed and may not supply any inputs to the self-employed, b.) all self-employed must pay income and operating taxes, c.) the sale of goods and services is determined by the seller, d.) and doctors, engineers, professors, and all professionals may not be self-employed. Originally, any university level graduate could not be self-employed because of the investment the state made in that person's education; however, in July 1995, the government allowed university graduates to be self-employed as long as it was not in the field in which they received their education or training. Therefore, it is illegal for a doctor to perform medical services on the side for money, but not illegal for a doctor to run a small restaurant.

The number of entrepreneurs in Cuba has fluctuated dramatically according to constantly changing rules and regulations that govern *cuentapropria*. According to Peters (2006), during the first year in 1993 there were between 10 and 15 thousand self-employed, this number peaked in 2006 with 209,606 (6). While Núñez Moreno (1997) says that by 1995 there were 208,346 individuals who were registered as self-employed (43). In 2004, the number of self-employed, according to government statistics, was 166,700 (ONE 2004). However, Domínguez (2008) argues that when dependents are taken into account that in actuality, more than 1.5 million Cubans derive their incomes from private market-related economic activities, and that these numbers represent a potentially powerful contingent in Cuban society and politics (66). Due to this fear of a growing middle-class and the potential political struggle that it could engender, Nuccio

(1999) argues that the government began trying to eliminate or reduce the number of self-employed through increased regulations, incomes taxes, and obstacles to obtaining licenses.

As Peters and Scarpaci (1998) describe, the income tax system is a progressive system based primarily upon the honesty of the taxpayer. To look at this measure from a broad perspective, it encourages individual initiative, as well as meeting the collective needs of the population and state. Hernandez-Reguant (2002) argues that the taxes being implemented are an acknowledgement by the state of the role of the market and of the increasing socio-economic inequality that parallels it. She goes on to say that, "…taxes did not remedy social differences, but they ended a view of society as a undifferentiated mass by introducing a contractual relationship between the individual citizen and the state according to both the market value of one's labor under capitalism and its moral value under socialism" (Ibid: 6). In January 2008, the government tried to initiate a 10 to 15 percent income tax on individuals who earn hard currency or CUCs through the foreign firms they work for. In many ways instituting this tax can be seen as the government acknowledging and accepting that there is growing economic inequality on the island.

However, another aspect of legalizing self-employment that is evident in Havana is how urban spaces are being appropriated for personal gain, not only are urban gardens, *huerto comunitario* (for personal consumption and to informally earn hard currency), flourishing in open spaces (in Old Havana these are primarily empty lots where buildings have collapsed) throughout the city but individuals are converting marginal spaces, spaces that blur possible distinctions between public and private, into entrepreneurial space (such as the ubiquitous snack stands or small scale services that are offered in

doorways or foyers throughout the city) (Companioni 2002; Premat 2004; Segre 2008).

In addition, with the growth of tourism, which will be described more fully below, it is

increasingly common to see Cubans legally and illegally using and appropriating public

spaces in tourist sections of the city to earn hard currency. One of the most obvious

examples of this are the *jineteros*[34], individuals whose primary means of income is

working the public spaces of the city selling goods, lodgings, cigars, and their bodies

(Reilly 2001). Their 'spatial practices' are emblematic to what Lefebvre (1998) refers to

as 'the clandestine or underground side of social life' (40). They represent just one

instance of the many ways that the public spaces of the city are appropriated in manners

that can be interpreted as contestations of the spatial order imposed by the state.

In 1993, the government legalized the possession and use of US dollars, usually

referred to as *dollarization*. *Dollarization* refers to the legalization of US dollar holdings

by Cuban citizens, and the legalization of the use of US dollars in state stores by

foreigners and Cubans. Although dollars are still widely used informally throughout

Cuba, in November 2004, the government ended *dollarization* and began a process of *de-*

dollarization whereby the US dollar was replaced by a convertible Cuban peso[35], or

CUC, that was artificially pegged against other currencies. It is legal to change dollars

and other currencies at the currency changers, CADECAS, that blight the urban

---

[34] *Jinetero* usually refers to male entrepreneurial street hustlers, though in some sections of the city they are engaged in prostitution particularly off *La Rampa* and in some sections of Old Havana. *Jinetera* refers to female prostitutes. Male prostitutes are usually referred to as *pingueros*. The literal translation of the term means 'jockey' in reference to the hustler or prostitute 'riding' the backs of the tourists.

[35] Although US dollars are no longer an officially recognized currency in Cuba, to ease confusion between local *pesos* (*pesos cubanos,* or, *moneda nacional*, MN) and CUCs, throughout the remainder of this dissertation, 'dollar' will continued to be used interchangeably with CUCs, as is often the case on the streets.

landscape of Havana and most other cities. However, to convert US dollars to CUCs,

higher taxes and fees are charged than are for other currencies. Taxes and fees to change

US dollars amount to 20 percent, versus only 10 percent for Euros, Canadian dollars, and

Mexican pesos. This is a maneuver by the state that can be interpreted as a means to tap

further into the flow of remittances entering the island, remittances that have typically be

in US dollars.

 Dollarization enabled Cubans to openly use dollars in the economy, thereby

increasing government revenue and decreasing the importance of the black market[36]. As

Eckstein (2008) says,

> "..from the government's and party's vantage point, the informal dollarization
> proved a double-edged sword. In the post-Soviet era all international transactions
> shifted to hard currency, but state activity alone generated an insufficient amount
> to cover needed and desired imports and foreign debt repayments and to finance
> income-generating investments" (179).

For many Cubans dollarization increased their access to certain goods previously only

available on the black market, because it allowed all Cubans to utilize the state run 'dollar

stores'. In response to the continuing growth of the black market even after the worst

part of the crisis, the government created, what Pérez-López (1995) calls, 'parallel

markets'. Essentially these are government stores and markets where Cubans can buy

consumer goods in dollars, goods such as Adidas sportswear, stereos, and imported

appliances that were previously not available to Cubans through any legal methods. By

creating these stores, the government is able to reduce the effectiveness of the black

market, in addition to devising a way for the state to secure a portion of the money

flowing through Cuba.

---

[36] In 1993 the black market exchange rate between local Cuban pesos and US dollars was 165 pesos for 1
dollar (ECLAC 1997:127).

Originally these stores were called *diplotiendas* because they were available only to the select few, typically diplomats and tourists who had US dollars to spend. Now the stores are often called *tiendas de recaudacion de divisa* (TRDs) (roughly translated- Hard Currency Recuperation Stores). These stores are now open to all who have the money to shop in them. They sell items of higher quality and items difficult, if not impossible, to obtain through the state rationing system. All goods in these stores, particularly imported goods, are dramatically marked up by the state, as much as 240 percent above cost (Eckstein 2008: 182).

A dual economy has emerged as a result. Labor sectors connected to the state, such as education, medicine, and manufacturing, are disadvantaged since their salaries remain entirely in local pesos, *moneda nacional* (Brundenius 2002). While labor sectors connected to tourism, private or cooperative farming, or to the emerging private sector, joint-venture firms, and state-run quasi-private corporations have access to earning all or portions of their salaries in convertible pesos CUCs. The current, 2009, exchange rate between the two currencies is 24 pesos equals 1 CUC.

Although it is argued that there are many problems resulting from dual currency systems, Kildegaard and Orro Fernández (1999) point out that it has been the Cuban government which has promoted and maintained the dual currency system. The result of a dual currency system is the creation of what has been called a parallel economy or a dual economy. One economy operates with the traditional peso currency and the other functions with dollars. The dual economy was seen as necessary, regardless of how well the two economies were connected, because the dollar economy was essential for bringing hard currency into Cuba. As mentioned earlier, it was Cuba's lack of hard

currency that was one of the leading factors of the economic crisis. Some scholars are of the opinion that it was the legalization of the dollar that was the most significant and successful reform of the Special Period- providing a basis for market transactions and increasing goods accessibility (Betancourt 1999; Macaulay 1994). However, Parker (1999) clearly criticizes dollarization, indicating that a previously classless populace has become an increasingly class divided society, where the prospects of any greater earnings are closely tied to a person's ability to acquire dollars.

In discussing the impact of the dollarization of the Cuban economy, Eckstein (2008) says, "state and societal interests in dollars from abroad partly coincided. Both wanted the hard currency for their own purposes. But both also wanted to maximize the dollars they accessed and the value of those dollars, and to minimize costs they incurred to access the money" (190). In addition, the only Cubans who typically have access to dollars are either those who receive remittances or those working in the tourist industry or in mixed-enterprises. McFadyen (1995) indicates that throughout the earlier part of the 1990s, around 85 percent of the population of Cuba did not have access to dollars. However, the number of dollar holders in Cuba has increased, for as of 1996 it was estimated that about 40 to 50 percent of the population began to have regular access to dollars (Wroe 1996), though this figure is also in debate. However, Bray and Woodford (2002) argue that there is a positive aspect to the dual economy and the dual currency system in that it has created employment for some while also providing funds for social services by the state absorbing hard currency in dollar stores where the prices on all items are dramatically marked-up. Therefore from this perspective, the state is attempting to redistribute wealth and maintain levels of equality.

Although *dollarization* has technically been reversed with the removal of the US

dollar as a legal currency of exchange in Cuba in 2004, its legacy persists in the form of a

dual economy- one in a convertible currency, CUC, and the other in a non-convertible

local peso.

Emigration has long been a pressure release value for the Castro government,

every time internal discontent and unrest reached a boiling point, the government would

allow people to leave the island. The first wave of migration out of Cuba took place

immediately following the triumph of the revolution and continued throughout the 1960s.

Eckstein (2004) states that the Cubans who emigrated to the US before 1980, which

represents half of the estimated one million Cuban-Americans in the US, have little in

common with those who emigrated after 1980. Those who emigrated to the US during

the first decade of the revolution were mostly from the middle and upper classes of

Cuban society. While those who emigrated following 1980 are from, what Eckstein

(2004) calls, the 'proletarianized cohort' (11). Eckstein and Barberia (2002) argue that

Cuban migration to the US is basically comprised of three successive waves of

immigrants, the first in the early years of the revolution, the second wave was the

Marielitos[37] (the Mariel Boatlift), and the third wave was the *Balseros*[38]. In response to

---

[37] On April 1, 1980, during a period of economic stagnation, a bus was driven through the fence of the Peruvian embassy in Havana. When the Peruvian government refused to return the defecting Cubans, Castro removed the Cuban security the guarded the embassy and within days about 10,000 Cubans flooded the Peruvian embassy compound. As tension escalated Castro announced that anyone who wanted to leave the country, could, and that he would open the port of Mariel to the west of Havana as the departure point. What followed became known as the Mariel boatlift, which would bring almost 125,000 Cubans refugees to the US.

[38] The *Balsero* crisis refers to the Cuban who fled Cuba during the height of the economic crisis of the 90s. Particularly during 1994, thousands of Cubans made extremely unsafe makeshift rafts, *balseros*, and appropriated small fishing vessels to make the hazardous journey across the Florida Straights. Between 1990 and 1994 during what became known as the *balseros* crisis, approximately 45,000 Cubans left the country (Barberia 2002). *Balsa* means raft.

the incident at the Peruvian Embassy and the subsequent Mariel Boatlift, on May Day

1980, Castro said,

> "We simply removed the guards from the embassy. And we knew what was going to
> happen. We knew what was going to happen because imperialism and its lackeys cannot
> encourage lumpens for such a long time by offering them the moon or however the
> saying goes, offering them everything, filling them with illusions, while on the other hand
> they close the door to these people and encourage them to enter [the embassy] illegally
> by force. They are encouraged to leave illegally. But they are not granted entry. We
> knew that when the guards were removed, and when the lumpens knew there were no
> guards, that the embassy would be filled with lumpens. And that is exactly what
> happened. It could be said that the lumpens did what was expected they would do."

Larrison (1999) also argues that there are significant socio-economic and ideological

differences between the varying waves of Cuban migrants, between the initial wave of

migrants, and the *Marielitos*, and *Balseros*. The people who left Cuba in 1980 were very

heterogeneous and "..included a spectrum of Cubans, ranging from intellectuals, artists,

and homosexuals, to long-time disaffected who for one reason or another previously had

been unable to leave, to criminals and mental patients the government loaded on to boats

picking islanders up" (Eckstein 2004: 13). During the *Balsero* Crisis, the number of

Cubans fleeing the island illegally by sea went dramatically up from 467 in 1990 to 3,656

in 1993 and peaked with 21,300 in August 1994 (Masud-Piloto 2004: 289). The total

number of *balseros* rescued by the US Coast Guard in 1994 was 37,139 people (Ibid:

293).

The reason for mentioning Cuban-US migration is because it is directly connected

to remittances, one of the primary hard currency generators in Cuba. As Barberia (2002)

states, during the 1990s the Cuban government actively sought remittances by changing

its policies to increase the flows of hard currency and to create mechanisms to channel it

into the official economy. Mesa-Lago (2007) says, "remittance are thus generating a

more regressive income distribution and providing disincentives to work in the state sector" (201). Cubans who fled Cuba following the revolution went from being called *gusanos*, literally worms, to becoming honored members of the 'Cuban community abroad'.

However, this flow of hard currency into the country is very unevenly spread. Inequality of income distribution is evidenced in remittance. Race is one of the major considerations relating to the impact of remittances on Cuba. De la Fuente (1998) argues that blacks are disadvantaged in regards to remittances since the majority of Cubans who emigrated, particularly during the early years of the revolution, were white and it is this group which is sending remittances back to Cuba. The result of the inequality in remittance distribution is that, as Rose Jiménez (2008) says, "for many Cubans without family abroad to send remittances, working with tourists is the only viable option for acquiring hard currency" (153).

Before 1959, Cuba was the leading tourist destination in the Caribbean. Hall, D.R. (1992) indicates that in 1957, 355,805 tourists visited the island, representing between 18 to 20 percent of the total Caribbean tourist trade. After 1959 however, tourism became analogous with all of the social woes of inequality and exploitation (prostitution, drugs, corruption, gambling, and organized crime etc.) which precipitated the revolution itself. This led to a virtual elimination of international tourism. One of the revolution's proudest claims once had been that it had eliminated prostitution, corruption, and many of the other social problems associated with the tourist trade, which had been so prevalent during the Batista years (Miller and Henthorne 1997). Essentially, as Espino (1994) explains, international tourism in Cuba was emblematic of the dependent nature of

137

the Cuban economy prior to the revolution, and of all of the derisive and exploitative characteristics of tourism (Hall 1992; Hinch 1990).

During the early 1960s the government promoted domestic tourism, giving citizens free access to tourism facilities, mostly nationalized pre-revolution facilities, as an incentive for productivity (Hinch 1990). International tourism to Cuba however was negligible until its gradual growth throughout the 1970s and 1980s, though even this tourism mostly consisted of tourists from the USSR and Eastern Bloc countries. In 1987, Cuba accounted for only 3 percent of the total tourist trade in the Caribbean, yet by 1997 Cuba represented 7 percent of the total Caribbean tourist trade which is a clear indication of tourism's growing importance to the Cuban economy (Godínez 1998).

International tourism, previously viewed as a legacy of the evils of capitalism, is now at the forefront of Cuban state policy. As Everlyeny Pérez (2003) says, "tourism is the branch of change that has caused the greatest impact on the evolution of the national economy in the last ten years" (88). Brundenius (2003) says that tourism is being used as a new development strategy in Cuba, that is being seen as the locomotive of economic growth and re-industrialization (265). By 1998, the total gross revenue for tourism in Cuba had reached $1.8 billion dollars, representing $4.9 million per day, which for the first time surpassed the earnings from sugar (the former principal foreign exchange generator) (Crespo 1998). Between 2000 and 2005, the tourism industry grew by approximately 20 percent per year (Rose Jiménez 2008: 146). The number of foreign visitors to Cuba has gone from 370,000 in 1990 to 1,774,000 foreign tourists in 2000 (Brundenius 2003: 266).

Tourism justifiably appeared to be the means of economic survival for Cuba, given the comparative natural advantage of the country, namely its beaches, climate, landscape, culture, and its built heritage (Espino 1994; Martin de Holan and Philips 1997). Due to its enormous capital generating power, tourism is being encouraged throughout both the developed and developing worlds as a means of economic growth and capitalist accumulation (Britton 1980; 1991; Hall T. 2000; Kearns and Philo 1993; Knox 1991). According to Mesa-Lago (2000b), between 1990 and 1998 income generated from the tourism industry in Cuba grew 450 percent from $403 million USD to over $1.816 billion USD (147). Tourism is now economically one of the main hard currency generating industries in Cuba, receiving the lion's share of foreign direct investment, infrastructural improvements, and government attention.

The largest problem facing the development of tourism in Cuba is the lack of capital necessary to improve the enormous infrastructural problems (deteriorating transportation networks, telecommunications, services, water supply, sewage etc.) (Simon 1995). Colantonio and Potter (2006) state that, due to the limited financial resources available during the early 1990s, the government had to focus its urban development projects in hard currency generating sectors of the economy- namely tourism. According to Coyula (2002), roughly 80 percent of all urban development in Havana over the past nearly 20 years is connected to the tourism industry. Through economic multiplier effects, some scholars argue that tourism has enabled many Cuban citizens to weather the economic crisis of the past decade (Avella 1996; Espino 1994; McFadyen 1995). However, according to Koont (2004), even with import substitution

strategies, Cuba, in 2001, was able to provide only 61 percent of the food inputs for the

tourism industry.

Thus, tourism is virtually *the* only impetus for any development projects in

Havana that have occurred since the crisis.

> "Tourism has been a powerful force in shaping Havana's urban development during the
> 1990s, contributing to the city's socio-economic and spatial polarization. Indeed, the
> Cuban capital is developing along its coastline according to urban growth patterns that
> resemble pre-revolutionary ones. This, in turn, is triggering the emergence of economic,
> social and environmental dualities in Havana.." (Colantonio and Potter 2006: 341).

Economic restructuring has caused the tourism industry (both its formal and informal

components) to become one of the most sought after sectors of employment for Cubans,

because it enables Cubans to gain access to dollars, and therefore to gain a higher

standard of living. Yet, their experiences with the tourist economy also represent a new

dynamic and contradiction in Cuba- capitalist style entrepreneurs within a socialist

system. Furthermore, tourism development became the main economic restructuring

strategy employed by the government (Leogrande 2002; Pérez-Villanueva and

Everlyeny-Pérez, 1998; Simon 1995). The majority of foreign investment and tourism

development are occurring in selective areas such as Havana and Varadero[39]. This

development strategy has only increased the core/periphery tension between Havana and

the interior of the island (De La Fuente 1998; Susman 1987). While the government has

addressed this question of the social divisions that accompany tourism as a 'necessary

evil' (Jatar-Hausmann 1999), the commodification of Cuban culture and identity that

---

[39] Varadero, Cuba's leading sun and sand tourist destination was originally developed in the 1880s by the
American millionaire Irene DuPont. She initially constructed an estate called Xanadu, which now serves as
a restaurant on a golf course owned by the Cuban government (Hall 1992; Hinch 1990).

coincides with tourism represents an area that may challenge the revolution's central objective of self-determination.

Travel and tourism have been transformed into experiences that are packaged and then bought and sold as commodities (Britton 1991; Cohen 1988; Copeland 1991; Hall 1994). MacCannell (1973) says that the commodification of culture possibly destroys the authenticity of local cultural products and of human relations, thereby making them meaningless for the indigenous community. Even sexual services, in the form prostitution and sex tourism, are another example of the commodification of tourism and potential harm to social relations (Cohen 1988).

Many scholars say that the largest downside of the development of the tourist industry in Cuba is that it has lead to the distressing re-emergence of prostitution on a large scale (Davidson 1996; Macaulay 1994; Smith and Padula 1996). Cabezas (2006) argues that with the increasing growth of the tourism industry Cuban labor is increasingly becoming eroticized as Cubans working in the tourism industry are commodified- their bodies, emotions, and sexuality. Furthermore, she argues that it is exactly the development of the tourism industry that is driving the growth of sex tourism in Cuba (Ibid.). Davidson (1996) explains that sex tourism in Cuba is generally by persons looking for the exotic 'other', tourists searching for that licentious black Caribbean male or female- thereby racializing prostitution and sex tourism in Cuba. However, as Colantonio and Potter (2006) say, although tourism in Havana is associated with 'negative social phenomena' such as prostitution (*jineteras/os*) and petty crime, it has also generated new employment opportunities for numbers of *habaneros*, and potentially helped civil society sectors to emerge.

"Produced with the help of Cuban intermediaries who positioned themselves as cultural guides and facilitators, they signaled an island that had become a product for capitalist consumption by means of culture, broadly defined. Culture itself was the element that allowed them to negotiate between the sense of national dignity sustained by the revolution and the needs of the market for all things Cuban" (Quiroga 2005: 103).

And finally, another aspect of the new tourist economy and how it is reordering spatial understanding is that tourism development is engendering spatial segregation as the average Cubans are excluded from many tourist spaces (hotels, resorts, beaches, etc.), and this represents an increasing level of social control over the spaces of the new economy. In March 2008, the government removed the restriction banning Cubans staying at hotels, however they must pay the same rates as foreigners. Therefore, although all Cubans now have legal right to enjoy these tourist facilities, all Cubans do not have equal access to forms of employment that enable them to earn the hard currency needed to take part in this tourist paradise.

4.5 The Impact of the Crisis

The worst days of the economic crisis, known as the 'Special Period', are over, and the government states that since 2004 the economy has grown by 42.5 percent, with 7.5 percent growth achieved in 2007 alone (Granma 1/1/08). Miranda Parrondo (2008), on the other hand, says that the growth of GDP between 1993 and 2003 was only 3.3 percent (128). The constant change of the past fifteen years, the "Great Transformation" as Monreal (2008) calls it, has reworked the nation on a number of levels- economically, ideologically, politically, and socially. The economy has been partial successful in re-integrating into the global market. Tourism has replaced sugar as the main source of hard currency, and joint ventures with European and Canadian firms have reached well

beyond just the tourism industry, comprising activities in extractive industries, particularly nickel and now petroleum[40], the pharmaceutical industry, and several food and beverage industries, and infrastructural improvement projects. Additionally, the close relationship between Hugo Chávez and Cuba has provided the island with 90,000 barrels of oil a day in exchange for nearly twenty thousand medical personnel who are stationed in communities throughout Venezuela. After Venezuela, China is Cuba's second largest trading partner and is increasingly providing durable goods, consumer goods, and vehicles. All of these factors indicate a dramatically different and much less isolated economic profile. However, by most measures, living standards throughout Cuba have yet to return to levels achieved during the 1980s.

Throughout the past decade and a half, Cubans have watched many of their proudest achievements from the revolution erode. In addition, with Cuba's further integration into a globalized economy, the nation as a whole is once again facing an increased level of dependence on developed nations, particularly by its continued focus on exports, whether it be tourism, nickel, or oil.

Some argue that reforms need to have a greater commitment to market mechanisms and increased privatization of both small and medium size organizations (Zimbalist 1994). Others fear that since the political and economic reforms are limited in scope, they are reversible when they become politically problematic (Betancout 1999; Nuccio 1999). Once the economy started showing signs of recovery (during 1995), Nuccio (1999) asserts that any of the broader reforms were suspended, and that by 1996 most reforms were beginning to be suppressed as Castro tried to rein the economy back

---

[40] Cuban officials indicate that there are between 20 and 100 billion barrels of recoverable oil located off the north-west coast of the island (Frank, Jeff 10/16/08).

under his control. Miranda Parrondo (2008) argues that the reforms initiated during the

mid-1990s have not only been stopped, but in many cases have been reversed. According

to Pérez-Stable (1999), the political decentralization that occurred, particularly from 1993

to 1996, did not actually generate participatory decision-making, and therefore did not

foster civil society. She argues that these measures were administrative in nature and did

not create any linkages between the state and local citizens. Several scholar argue that

one of the impacts of this crisis and the restructuring that followed is that it has reduced

confidence in the state and therefore reduced the authority and ability of the state to

maintain control (Eckstein 1994; Léon 1997).

The restructuring of the Cuban economy, with the increasing growth and

significance of international tourism, joint ventures, the informal economy, and the

emergence of a dual-economy, has led to changes in social forces as profit incentives and

the inequality in income distribution have caused the re-emergence of class stratification

(Brundenius 2002; Eckstein 1997; Leon 1997; Pérez-Stable 1997). Eckstein (2008)

argues that reforms are transforming Cuban society as the economy shifts from a

centrally planned state run economy to a mixed market economy, and that this shift is

changing the character of the social problems Cuba now faces. While Hammond (1999)

argues that these policies are in fact changing the very structure of society by

encouraging the formation of new classes and social forces, such as the increasingly

marginalized poor, laborers in the informal and tourist sectors, elite business classes, and

even street hustlers and prostitutes. Between 1989 and 1996, the percentage of the

national workforce employed by the state dropped from 95 to 78 percent, with labor

being absorbed in various parts of the private sector, primarily agriculture, as well as the increase in quasi-private joint venture firms (Hamilton 2002).

As Davidson (1996) indicates, the pursuit of dollars has become the most meaningful and lucrative economic activity. Eckstein (2008) says, "informal dollarization has eroded the social and cultural fabric of Castro's Cuba and planted seeds of economic transformation, quite independently of why people sought the hard currency. It had such a system-erosive effects while generating regime-bolstering revenue" (191). Since the government continues to pay workers in pesos, the only way for the average citizen to gain access to dollars, outside of receiving remittances, is through legal and illegal self-employment, black- market activities (prostitution and street hustling), the informal economy, or the tourist industry. Macaulay (1994) argues that with the increasing inequality from dual currencies and dual economies, there is liable to be political unrest by the professionals and government employees who continue to get paid insignificant salaries in pesos. Eckstein (2008) also concurs with this sentiment by clearly stating that, "consumer disparities fueled resentment among the peso-dependent populace" (186). Furthermore, as a result of dollarization and the increasing importance of remittances for family survival, there is unequal burden placed on Afro-Cubans. Since the majority of those who emigrated to the US and other countries over the past forty plus years are white, Afro-Cubans are less likely to benefit from remittances. Additionally, De la Fuente (1998) shows that Afro-Cubans are less likely to obtain jobs in the tourism industry, with the exception of the sexualized Afro-Cuban and mulatto/a images that are marked to the tourism and global cultural industries.

Another impact of the changes in the economy is that there is increasing inequality of income distribution. According to Mesa-Lago (2007), the maximum wage difference between state employees and non-state employees in Cuba was 4.5 to 1 in 1989, while by 2002 it expanded to 12,500 to 1. (200-201). Cubans who work in the tourism industry, or who work for foreign firms, or are self employed have higher standards of living. Those who do not have access to hard currency have experienced a dramatic decline in real income and thus in quality of life.

Hernandez-Reguant (2002) demonstrated that, connected to Cuba's reintegration into the global market there has come a new elite class of Cuban businessmen who work in joint-ventures essentially as the gatekeepers between foreign firms and the state bureaucracy, in ways that often run counter to the official ideology.

The tourism industry not only changed the economic topography of the nation, it also altered the social structure of the island. As Colantonio and Potter (2006) say, 'tourism has been a powerful force in shaping Havana's urban development during the 1990s, contributing to the city's socio-economic and spatial polarization." (341). An example of this change is the serious brain drain of trained professionals throughout Cuba into the tourist sector, caused by the drastically higher incomes available in the tourist sector (both formal and informal). Although this is not the typical brain drain where individuals leave one nation for higher financial incentives in another country, with this form of brain drain professionally skilled labor moves to higher paying non-skilled service jobs. Moreno (2004) says, "many Cubans regarded those who work in tourist places as an emerging new class with access to dollars" (55). Professors, engineers, and other highly specialized workers are leaving their professional jobs to take positions in

the tourist industry in order to get access to dollars through tips, or are even in some cases becoming prostitutes (Avella 1996; Davidson 1996; Smith and Padula 1996). Hodge (2001) argues that the introduction of capitalist market forces, particularly through tourism, has promoted materialist consumption in addition to commodifying bodies and desires.

In addition, younger people throughout Cuba are increasingly not following through with their educations, since they would rather work in the tourist industry to earn more money in order to consume. Hall (1992) argues that as a result of the demonstration effect from tourism, there is an increase in black market activities because local citizens have an increased desire to mimic tourist lifestyles and to have similar consumption patterns. It is partially this desire, or aspiration, for the tourist lifestyle that has produced many of the social problems in Cuba, including prostitution, robbery, and violence (Avella 1996; Davidson 1996; Hall 1992). The transference of alien values through the demonstration effect has long been prominent in Cuba due to the close relationship the country had with the United States prior to the revolution (Pérez 1999). Furthermore, Harrison (1992) equates the demonstration effect to "cultural imperialism", as once again there is the tendency of Cuba to be looking towards its northern neighbor for cultural references and meaning.

Between 1988 and 1998 the number of teachers in Cuba dropped by 17 percent, while graduation rates dropped by 25 percent (Guerra 2007: 176-177). During this same time period, the percentage of youth who attended university dropped from 23 percent in 1988 to only 12 percent in 1997 (Mesa-Lago 2007: 195). Part of this is the result of lack of professional jobs available for newly emerging graduates and the fact that most

professional jobs are with state agencies, which means that having a professional degree is economically disadvantageous since state employee are paid in *pesos*. Additionally, decreases during this period were the result of students leaving academia for higher paying jobs in the tourist and private sector. Between 1989 and 1998, real wages for state workers declined by approximately 44 percent (Mesa-Lago 2007). Other scholars argue that in real terms the average monthly salary for state workers was only 54.8 percent of what it was in 1989 (Ritter 2004: 12). These issues will be explored further in the following chapter that examines the post-1959 Cuban education system and the current problems confronted by a society with generally high levels of education among the population yet within the context of a contracting job market.

Transportation, or lack there of, continues to be a major issue in Cuba. Between 1991 and 2002, the total number of passengers transported dropped by 47.6 percent with 11.5 million trips made by urban bus services in 1991 contracting to only 2.9 million trips made in 2002 (Miranda Parrondo 2008: 130). Although the importation of double extended Chinese buses in early 2008 helped reduce the transportation crisis, for many individuals, hitch-hiking, *coger botella*, still remains the primary means to get around the city.

In the wake of the economic crisis of the 1990s, the Cuban government was forced to decentralize many social service provisions away from national government to local administrative branches, private service providers, and transnational nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) (Cisneros 1996; Colantino and Potter 2006; Coyula 2002; Hearn 2004; Uriarte 2001). This can be seen as a spatial shift in governance through processes of decentralization. As basic social services began to

erode during this period, new actors involved in urban development and service provisioning began to appear resulting in the growth of locally based neighborhood welfare projects built on the collaboration of decentralized state development institutions with a diverse range of community self-help groups (Coyula 2002; Dilla Alfonso 1999; Uriarte 2001). Community-based organizations, hundreds of them, developed in Cuban neighborhoods to address urgent needs facing urban dwellers during the economic crisis (Cisneros 1996; Coyula and Ferez 1996; Roman 1999; Uriarte 2001). This crisis-generated bottom-up development initiative, labeled by Dilla Alfonso (1996) as "neighborhood movements", has assumed many of the responsibilities of the central state government.

With the government increasingly unable to provide basic social and material provisions to its citizens, people had to come up with their own means of survival, what is usually referred to as *lo informal*- the informal strategies and practices Cubans rely on to fill in the gaps left by the state's inability to meet all of the needs of its citizens. A proliferation of informal activities emerged during the crisis, activities not only aimed at survival, but also at capital accumulation and consumption. *Lo informal* can be seen spatially in the architecture and urban landscape as well, with residents, particularly ones with access to remittances or to the dollar earnings, modifying and expanding their homes and apartments. Several scholars argue that this is creating distortions in the urban fabric and image of the city with individuals fencing in their lots, and walling up public stairwells and patios, and using glaring paints on their facades (Coyula 1998; Oliveras and Núñez 2001; Scarpaci et al. 2002). Oliveras and Núñez (2001) say that,

> "The reason for this phenomenon seems to be the protection against robbers and intruders, but in reality is also the need to conceal certain activities and the desire to differentiate the economic status of these families. The number of families that surround

their residences with high walls and fences is rising with terrible consequences for the aesthetics of the block and for the traditional communication among neighbors. There is an evident gap between these houses occupied by families with better income resultant from home based activities, renting or remittances" (20).

On the other hand, Scarpaci et al. (2002) say this reflects "deeper social and cultural changes" (228). Additionally, there are new uses being put to public spaces and buildings throughout the city, spaces for selling goods, food, and crafts in both peso and dollar sectors of the economy.

In addition to these informal practices, many Cubans have increasingly been relying on social networks for survival. Kapcia (2008) says, "Indeed, it was this concept of *solidarismo* that began to provide a social cement as the country pulled out of the worst of the recession, counterbalancing the discontent, the individualizing tendencies and pressures, and the disillusionment with the previously beneficent state." (28). These informal social relations have always existed in Cuba, however, the economic crisis and the roll-back state have increased the importance of these ties for both material and social well being. León (1997) also says,

> "the reduction of the state's spheres of influence in the economy and the society, however, encouraged the development of autonomous activities, practices of mutual help and other forms of cooperation that strengthened family, neighborhood, and occupational relations, and, in general, particularistic relations *entre socios*, or 'between partners'" (41).

Although the government maintains the rhetoric of equality within the revolution, the unpredictable social forces unleashed by the dramatic socio-economic restructuring of the past fifteen years have transformed people's lives and expectations in unforeseen ways, particularly the lives of young people. This current generation coming of age is the first to have been raised entirely during a period of severe economic crisis, and therefore their perspectives of life within the revolution are dramatically different than those of

150

preceding generations. The inability of the Cuban government to rectify the increasing

economic and social polarization that has resulted from this restructuring has impacted

the youth of Cuba by the fact that they have been raised in an environment where status

for youth has increasingly been tied to money.

Pérez-López (1994) most aptly phrases this phenomenon of the sporadic

capitalistic restructuring of Cuba as "islands of capitalism' – within a centrally planned

economy –'an ocean of socialism'" (190). This is appropriate phrasing to conclude with

because it suggestive of the spatial and economic uneven development that is occurring

throughout the island, as well as illustrating the ambiguity and contradiction of many of

the economic models operating within Cuba.

4.6 Conclusion

The current situation in Cuba has lead to a reversal, to some degree, in social and

economic roles, where the social pyramid is flipped and those that were on the bottom are

now on the top, and those previously at the top are now financially at the bottom. This

does not imply that socio-economic classes and marginalized groups that were at the

bottom of the proverbial ladder have risen to the top. It means that those Cubans who

have access to hard currency either through remittances or through formal or informal

employment, such as those in the tourist industry, mixed enterprises, or in the black

market, often have the higher status that money and consumption brings. This is

reflected in the changing career choices of youth, as will be explored in the following

chapter, and by the increasing number of professionals seeking employment in the tourist

or informal sectors of the economy.

This chapter reviewed the events leading up to the collapse of the Socialist project in Europe and the impact it had on Cuba. From there it examined some of the measures taken by the Cuban government to mitigate the effects of this collapse. The path taken by the Cuban government has been erratic and unpredictable, implementing and reversing numerous reforms again and again over the past fifteen years. Spatially, the past fifteen years has transformed Havana in a number of ways. Foreign investment is flowing into tourism investments thereby revitalizing pockets of the city that are seen to have cultural and historic value to the nation. This investment is very unevenly applied, with the result being that beautifully redone parks and squares stand only meters away from utterly neglected tenements, buildings that have seen little investment since the time of the original 'white flight' over a century before. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, time and space have taken on new meanings since the 1990s. Although public transportation has improved slightly in the past year, distance for the average Cuban is often measured in the hours it will most likely take get there. Outside of the capital, conditions are much worse. Neighborhoods, such as those on the east side of Havana Bay, are even more physically and symbolically isolated from the Havana where tourist roam than they were two decades ago. This is the backdrop for the current generation of youth growing up in Cuba.

The following chapter will reconsider the role of youth in the revolution in light of the socio-economic transformations of the past fifteen years. This current generation coming of age is the first to have been raised entirely during a period of severe economic crisis, and therefore their perspectives of life within the Revolution are dramatically different than those of preceding generations. The inability of the Cuban government to

rectify the increasing economic and social polarization resulting from this restructuring is creating consequences for the youth of Cuba as they are raised in an environment where status for youth is increasingly tied to money. While the Revolution was never completely successful in eliminating socio-economic inequality or class-consciousness within Cuba, this project demonstrates that the extremely uneven patterns of access to hard currency and the continuing existence of an internal dual currency system are redefining the nature of relations among the youth of the city.

Chapter 5

Youth in the Revolution

"The politics of youth is a prism through which one can better detect the tensions and fissures in state-society relations both past and present and how these relations are likely to develop in the future" (Fernández 2004: 63).

5.0 Introduction

Youth are fundamentally necessary for the social and demographic reproduction of society. Due to this fact, they are of tremendous important for any social or political discussions regarding the future of a nation, since they inevitably will be the possessors of real political and economic power. In each society and historical period, the roles youth have played in the political, social, and economic processes of a nation vary greatly, with influence being gained and lost over time due to the complex relation of a countless number of social, economic, and political factors. Therefore, when examining 'youth' at a particular moment, it is necessary to also analyze the contingencies that have produced those youth.

This chapter provides the historical context for understanding youth in contemporary Cuba. A theme that runs throughout this chapter is that during periods of economic or political uncertainty or chaos, youth are often the ones who suffer the immediate consequences. This is the case throughout the world regardless of political-economic system, because youth are typically the most vulnerable members of society. However, in the case of Cuba, there is a long history of youth taking a stand and making

change in the face of violent repression, unfortunately often through the sacrifice of their lives.

As this chapter will demonstrate, the youth of Cuban have played an important part in the social and historical transformations of the past century. In each of the major political uprisings and rebellions that eventually led to the 1959 Revolution, youth were intimately involved in the armed struggles of the period. Across the landscape of Havana monuments are dedicated to youth who died fighting for a free and independent Cuba. Fidel Castro, in his earlier years, was one of these youth, and therefore when he eventually came to power with the 1959 revolution he was well aware of the inherent power of youth and therefore made every effort to bring them into the revolution, to incorporate them into the revolutionary process. This was accomplished through a massive literacy campaign in the early 1960s that utilized the labor of young urban Cubans in the process of eradicating illiteracy in the countryside. As will be explained further below, the literacy campaign had a twofold purpose, one of increasing education rates in the underdeveloped interior, and the other of increasing youth participation in the revolution. The government also created a number of institutions and organizations that would continue the tasks of socializing the youth to the new socialist order, processes of socialization that sought to bring the youth into the revolution and make them active participants. The 1959 revolution was very successful with its various educational programs, however, after the initial years of the revolution, the government was confronted by growing levels of delinquency and absenteeism among the youth. Although these issues of delinquency and absenteeism were/and are an important concern for the government, the educational and social reforms enacted during the revolution

produced a large educated young labor force that since the Special Period is increasingly

finding it difficult to be inserted into the formal economy. As will be explained below, it

is the youth in particular who are suffering most form the social and economic

restructuring that has followed the Special Period. The youth are encountering a

changing economic landscape and as a result, the aspirations and expectations they were

socialized to believe in are being unfulfilled. The result, as will be developed below and

in the next chapter, is that the youth of Cuba are increasingly becoming disaffected from

the revolution. First however, it is helpful to understand, historically, the role youth have

played in the struggle for change.

5.1 *Morir por la patria es vivir* (to die for the fatherland is to live)- José Martí

Cuban youth, particularly university students, have not only played the crucial

role of reproducing society, they also have historically been a vital part of political

change and societal transformation. As Bonachea and San Martín (1974) say,

> "traditionally, Cuba's youth was responsible for carrying the torch of sacrifice,
> freedom and dignity. Such was the legacy of their forefather: young people must
> atone for the wrongs of the past… In the end, despite varying motives, every
> generation produced a substantial number of young people who were called to
> martyrdom" (42).

The generation that came of age in the years after World War I faced economic volatility

due to a precipitous fall in sugar prices. Following the 'Dance of Millions[41]' (1916-

1920), in the years after World War I when global sugar prices were overly inflated and

the Cuban bourgeois were dramatically increasing their wealth, the twenties ushered in a

period of tremendous economic crisis as sugar prices fell precipitously and US companies

---

[41] In September 1919, global sugar prices went from 6.5 cents per pound to 22.5 cents per pound, and by
December 1920, sugar prices dropped to 3.75 cents per pound (Thomas 1998).

and investors continued to buy up Cuban land and businesses. By the 1920s, the baby boom generation, the generation born immediately following the Cuban Wars for Independence (1865-1898), was coming of age in a period of dramatic economic instability and uncertainty. Pérez (1995) calls this generation the defining generation of twentieth century Cuba, a generation that was highly nationalistic. As Bonachea and San Martín (1974) point out, many of these young students eventually went on to hold real political power in the following years.

During this period it was almost impossible for young people to secure employment. As these youth entered the job market they were confronted by an economy in ruins, a corrupt political system, and continued US interference in Cuban internal affairs. This becomes a theme for several generations of Cuban youth, including the current generation of youth, that as they prepare to enter the workforce they must confront an insecure labor situation with unemployment, underemployment and intergenerational conflict as preceding generations often block the pathways to employment for the youth.

Youth from this generation increasingly became politicized. In January 1922, a group of students led by Julio Antonio Mella[42], founder of *Federación de Estudiantil Universitaria*, Federation of University Students (FEU), seized control of parts of the University of Havana in order to demand reforms and autonomy for the university (Pérez 1995).   In 1923, the FEU held its first National Student Congress in Havana bringing to Havana 138 delegates representing 49 educational institutions across the island. According to Pérez (1995) the FEU issued a number of declarations during the congress,

---

[42] Directly in front of the main steps of the University of Havana, the 163-step *escalinata*, of the university stands a large monument to Mella, this is also the location of the annual *torca* march on the anniversary of Martí's birth and in remembrance of the students martyrs.

"among the resolutions passed were demands for student participation in school governance, establishing of high professional standards for faculty, and increased government support of education. But not all resolutions were confined to matters of education. The FEU also demanded the abrogation of the Platt Amendment, decried United States intervention in Cuban internal affairs, and denounced corruption in government" (236).

Shortly thereafter, in 1923, there was another student protest called the *Protesta de los Trece* (Protest of the Thirteen), a protest led by poet Rubén Martínez Villena and university students and professors aimed at denouncing corruption and denouncing the administration of then president Alfredo Zayas (1921-24) and its lack of legitimacy (Liss 1987: 64-64). The economic crisis and rampant government corruption brought both young students and embittered veterans of the wars for independence together, however their unorganized political challenge to the Zayas government and the threat of another US military intervention prevented a coup.

Youth were further galvanized and formed new student groups in 1924 in response to the election of Gerardo Machado (1925-33). Machado was a wealthy businessman, war veteran, and essentially was the first representative of the national bourgeoisie to hold office (Pérez 1995; Thomas 1998). Although Machado ran under a 'Moralization Program' to end government corruption, he was closely allied with the landed elite and was vehemently pro-American. Following his election, many labor leaders and organizers began turning up dead throughout the city (Pérez 1995). Throughout his term in office, Cuba was in turmoil and a tremendous angst seized the country. Student groups were formed throughout Havana in opposition to the Machado dictatorship, such as the *Directorio Estudiantil Universitario* (DEU), the ABC Revolutionary Society, and the *Organización Celular Radical Revolucionaria* (OCRR)

(Ibarra 1999; Pérez-Stable 1999; Thomas 1998). With increased protests came increased repression and violence.

5.2 The Youthocracy, (*efebocracia*)

> "Opposition to the Machado regime took place among the Generation of 1930, composed of students, intellectuals, and young professionals who resorted to political action to terminate the tenure of Cuba's repressive government and to institute egalitarianism and political and social reforms: (Liss 1987: 105).

Machado was overthrown in the Revolution of 1933, a coup that started out with noncommissioned officers (NCOs), led by Sergeant Flugencio Batista, at Camp Columbia in Havana mutinying for higher pay and better working conditions. When student movements at the University of Havana heard of the mutiny they joined forces with the NCOs to create a new government on September 4, 1933. The students and NCOs created a provisional government to be led by Ramón Grau San Martín (September 1933 to January 1934). Grau's administration according to Roa (1982) was a regime defined as a 'youthocracy" (*efebocracia*) (as cited by Ibarra 1999: 159). The US was greatly concerned by these events and the threat they potentially posed to US business interests on the island. The government chosen by the US Embassy in Cuba to replace Machado was overthrown by radical students and the NCOs and the 'government of a hundred days,' as it later became known, immediately set about reforming the government and abrogating the Platt Amendment. This was the first reformist government in Cuba with an agenda.

During the four months the students and the Grau San Martín administration were in office they passed an extensive list of decrees, ranging from instituting a minimum wage, developing a Ministry of Labor, compulsory labor arbitration, workers

159

compensation, an eight hour work day, suffrage for women, a 45 percent reduction in utility rates, autonomy for the university, and a reform of land tenure on state owned land (Pérez-Stable 1999: 41). The bourgeoisie and political classes were unsettled by these populist reforms, though their opposition to young reformist government was unorganized. Although these reforms were greeted with enthusiasm by students and the working people, the US government and its representatives in Cuba were increasingly concerned with the direction of this new coalition.

Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Assistant Secretary of State Summer Welles as ambassador to Cuba in May 1933. Originally Welles encouraged Roosevelt to intervene militarily, as the US had done in 1906, 1909, and 1912, however Roosevelt refused. Under Welles' urging the US government withheld recognition of the Grau San Martín government and began working with Colonel Flugencio Batista (Batista went from being a sergeant to the Chief of the Army) behind the scene to orchestrate another coup to end this popular revolution and restore 'social peace and stability' (Ibarra 1999; Pérez 1995; Pérez-Stable 1999). Thus, in January 1934, Batista informed Grau San Martín that the military will no longer support his administration, and with little support outside of the students and intellectuals, Grau was overthrown (Pérez-Stable 1999). The US immediately recognized Batista's new government thereby effectively making him the unofficial ruler of Cuba from 1934 to 1959.

In 1934, in response to the overthrow of the Grau government Antonio Guiterras founded *Joven Cuba*, a commando type youth organization that advocated armed struggle against Batista and his government. Indicative of the repression and violence of the era, Batista's men assassinated Guiterras is in 1935. A period of unrest and uncertainty

followed. As Pérez (1995) says, "assassinations, bombings, and sabotage again became

the dominant mode of political opposition. Anti-government demonstrations became

commonplace, as did labor protests. Between 1934 and 1935, more than one hundred

strikes flared up across the island" (276).   In 1935 a general strike across Cuba is

ruthlessly crushed by Batista.

5.3 The *Batistado*

Batista left the military in 1940, and ran for president as a civilian and won. In

1944 Grau San Martín finally won the presidency though corruption in his administration

was on such a large scale that his party, the *Auténticos* splits and the *Ortodoxo* party was

formed. Ibarra (1999) says, "As had occurred between 1902 and 1923, once the political

representatives of the middle class had obtained power- and become corrupt- the middle

classes lost their nationalist sentiments: Political corruption and weakening of

nationalism were mutually inclusive" (68).

One of the student leaders from the Government of a Hundred Days, Eddy

Chibás, led the *Ortodoxo* party. The charismatic Eddy Chibás was one of the most gifted

political personalities of the first half of the twentieth century in Cuba. "Chibás

articulated public grievances against the incumbent Auténticos, in a campaign that

thrived on spectacular accusations and disclosures of high-level government corruption"

(Pérez 1995: 287). Chibás raised the expectations and hopes of Cubans, particularly

among the youth; however during one of his weekly radio broadcasts he shot himself[43].

---

[43] Louis Pérez (2005) speculates that Chibás, given to histrionics, didn't intend to kill himself and that his
intent was merely to create a spectacle.

The death of Chibás was followed by the collective despair of the population.   Fidel

Castro, a young student at the University of Havana joined the *Ortodoxo* party in 1951.

Corruption was so bad in Cuba that between 1940 and 1952 thousands of Cubans

fled Cuba for southern Florida, a stream of migration that would continue to the present

day. As mentioned previously, since most of the means of production were in foreign

hands, for many Cubans, government office and civil service were some of the only

viable options for employment, therefore the impetus for corruption during this period

becomes clearer. According to Ibarra (1999), between 1939 and 1953, the number of

government employees more than doubled from 58,731 to 133,862 (55).

Finally on March 10, 1952, Batista and the military pulled off another coup.

Within two weeks of Batista's illegal seizure of power, the US government officially

recognized the legitimacy of his power. The existing political parties and organizations

failed to mobilize in face of the coup and in the end failed to do anything at all. The ones

who organized to counter the Batista dictatorship were mostly young Cubans from the

baby boom generation.

From the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s the Cuban economy remained

stagnant, sugar was no longer able to drive the economy, and therefore the economy

stopped growing. Not a single new sugar mill was constructed in Cuba since the 1920s

(Pérez 1995). According to Ibarra (1999), in 1943, there were 492,537 individuals who

were unemployed or underemployed, representing 32.4 percent of the labor force (179).

Ibarra (1999) goes on to say that throughout the 1940s and 1950s the growing masses of

proletarianized labor mode up more than 30 percent of the work force (179). By the mid-

1950s, unemployment was averaging 40 percent annually (Ibarra 1999; Pérez 1995).

Furthermore, since the Cuban economy was inextricably linked with the US economy for more than fifty years, Cubans were able to see the disparities between their lives and those of the US. As Pérez (1999) says,

> "Much of the day-to-day life in Cuba was rendered comprehensible and assigned meaning or value through metaphor and analogy to things North American. Comparisons provided the representations by which to translate the Cuban reality into a comprehensible narrative. The readiness with which Cubans invoked the United States as their frame of reference must itself be seen as a projection of nationality" (430).

Tourism also continued to expand during the 1940s and 1950s flooding the island with tourists. Havana in particular saw the speculative construction of lavish hotels and casinos across the city throughout the 1950s (Scarpaci et al. 2002; Segre 2008). In 1953, Batista appointed Meyer Lansky[44] as his gambling supervisor (Schwartz 1997: 148-49). Havana was an enclave of modernity in comparison to the rural countryside of Cuba, and this tremendous disparity between the city and the countryside would eventually become one of the foci of the revolutionary government.

5.4 Fidel and M-26-7

On March 23, 1952, a few days after Batista's coup, Fidel Castro published a declaration of principles of the Federation of University Students (FEU) in the national magazine *Bohemia* stating,

> "Our unblemished and upright stance in these dark hours for Cuba allows us today to raise our voice on behalf of the people. We are again the standard-bearers of the nation's conscience. The dramatic circumstances that the homeland is experiencing impose difficult and hazardous duties upon us. We have not bothered to measure the magnitude

---

[44] Meyer Lansky, a polish born Jew whose family emigrated to the US in the 1910s. He became prominent in the Jewish Mafia, and also worked in close connection with the Italian Mafia. He established gambling operations in Florida, New Orleans, and Cuba. Lansky was closely allied with Lucky Luciano and Bugsy Siegel. See Lacey, R. (1991). *Little Man: Meyer Lansky and the Gangster Life*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

of the consequences. We are ready to do our duty calmly, responsibly, and firmly. University Hill continues to be the bastion and hope of Cuba's dignity" (as cited in Hart 2004: 66-67).

In the 1952 elections, a young Fidel Castro was running for district elections under the *Ortodoxo* party, and in the following year on July 26, 1953, he led the attack on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba with a number of other young Cubans. It is from this event that Castro eventually created the *Movimiento 26 de Julio* (the July 26 Movement or M-26-7) (Aguilar León 1995). The attack failed miserably and was easily repelled by Batista's US equipped forces. The result was that 70 people were either captured or executed, however it was extremely successful at catapulting Castro into the public's eye. In 1954 Castro made his famous speech 'History will Absolve Me" during his defense, after which he was imprisoned on the *Isla de la Juventud* (Isle of Youth) off the southern coast of Cuba. Batista would eventually grant Castro and a number of others amnesty for their attack on Moncada, at which point Castro and the survivors of the assault left the country to regroup in Mexico. Castro would return to eastern Cuba in November 1956 aboard the yacht *Granma*, which was formerly owned by a US citizen who had named the boat after his grandmother, hence the name 'Granma' (Pérez 1995). Upon his return Castro took the fight to the countryside whereas most of the other student movements challenged the Batista government from the cities. Young people became a vital part of the revolutionary organizations of the 1950s. As Ibarra (1999) says,

> "The student movement created the subjective conditions for the armed insurrection of the country's youth and unemployed workers…Because they were not themselves organically linked to relations of production, the students and other youth were inclined to join other classes of the population in their struggle against the dictatorship" (185).

In 1955, the increasing number of student demonstrations and protests against the Batista's government led to further repression and violence against student organizations and their leaders. The result was that students organized a clandestine armed revolutionary movement called the *Directorio Revolucionario* (DR). The DR performed armed attacks and sabotage throughout Havana and even planned on assassinating Batista himself in a plan called *Golpear Arriba*, 'Strike at the Top' (Pérez 1995). On March 13, 1957, a group of students led by José Antonio Echeverría unsuccessfully attacked the Presidential Palace in Havana in an attempt to kill Batista (Bonachea and San Martín 1974). As Batista was increasingly unable to maintain order and stability in Cuba, the ruling elites again did nothing as the country continued its free fall into disorder and chaos. Arguably many of the upper and middle class professionals assumed that the US government would intervene to defend the business interests of US capital as it had always done throughout the preceding five decades.

The youth involved in the 1933 Revolution enjoyed higher socio-economic status and differed in fundamental ways from the youth involved in the revolutionary movements of the 1950s. The revolutionary youth movements in 1933 were mostly derived from the 'petty bourgeois', while those involved in the revolutionary movements of the 1950s were the product of the growing proletarianization of youth from working-class and peasant backgrounds in addition to those youth from the petty bourgeois (Ibarra 1999: 182). However, it is clear that young people and students, particularly those in Havana, were often the driving force behind political and social change in Cuba for the first half of the twentieth century. Bonachea and San Martín (1974) address this issue by saying,

"Why students become so politicized is open to question, but some generalizations can be made. For a substantial number of students involved in university politics, the university stood as a symbol, as an ideal stepping-stone from anonymity to some public recognition. As such, university education could easily become a means, not an end, and the end would more likely be politics than furthering one's knowledge. Havana, after all, was the mecca of Cuban politics. Considering the university's proximity to the center of political power it was almost inevitable that many students would become politically oriented, regardless of personal motivation" (42).

Between Castro's M-26-7 in the Sierra Maestras[45] in Eastern Cuba and the various factions of urban guerillas in Havana and the other main cities of Cuba, Batista was slowly loosing the support of the US government. In November 1957 Fidel sent a message from the Sierra Meastras to the university students in Havana stating,

"Throughout all the eras of our history, Cuban students have proved to be the most sincere and selfless advanced contingent of our society. Their struggle against tyranny, their condemnation of and opposition to the governments of thieves we have endured, their daring and bold conduct in face of the official criminals and licensed barbarians" (as cited in Hart 2004: 208-09).

In March of 1958 the US declared an arms embargo on Cuba, followed by a general strike called for by Castro's M-25-7 movement in April 1958. The strike failed miserably and was ruthlessly crushed by Batista's military and led to the virtual elimination of all the urban student guerilla movements (Bonachea and San Martín 1974; Thomas 1998). In December 1958, Che Guevarra successfully seized control of the city of Santa Clara in central Cuba, and on December 31, 1958 Batista flees Cuba to his residence in Daytona Beach, Florida. On January 8, 1959, Fidel Castro entered Havana at the head of the Rebel Army and began the immediate radical transformation of the island.

---

[45] The Sierra Maestras are the mountain range in Eastern Cuba where Castro and his 26 July Movement waged guerilla warfare against Batista's military.

From the very beginning of the revolution in 1959, Castro recognized the importance of youth for the revolution, for they were the future of the revolution and were a vital part of spreading and continuing the revolutionary struggle (Fagen 1969). Castro, having himself been a part of the student movements, was well aware of the power the students and youth held. The reason for recounting this history and the role of youth in the political transformations of the nation is because this is the history every Cuban student learns in school. This is the historical backdrop that has produced the current generation of youth.

5.5 Youth *in* the Revolution

From the outset of the revolution in 1959, the Cuban government made it one of its first priorities to provide mass education for the entire population. Education became a right of every citizen and not merely a privilege. Education became a symbol of the revolution, because as Carnoy (1990) points out, it became a means for mass economic participation and mobilization. León (1997) says that education is the 'basic institution linked to the systematic control and generation of consensus" (46). The revolutionary government goes well beyond the reforms enacted during the revolution of 1933 by enacting a number of reforms that create a massive redistribution of wealth. By 1961, all private schools were nationalized and education was made free and accessible to all. Boarding schools sprung up across the landscape, providing housing, food, clothing, books, and transportation for thousands of Cuban youth. Even in the 'de-bourgeoisfied' middle and upper class neighborhoods of western Havana, former mansions of the elite became boarding houses and schools for rural students brought in from the countryside.

Massive literacy campaigns brought volunteer teachers to the farthest reaches of the Cuban countryside. The Literacy Campaign, started in April 1961, brought over a quarter of a million people, very few of them trained professionals, to virtually every portion of the island. The outcome of this massive campaign was that over 700,000 people across the island were taught how to read and write, and that within the space of one year, illiteracy rates dropped from 23 percent to 4 percent (Uriarte 2002: 6). As Martín (1991) says, "The conjunction of these factors opened up a broad social and economic space for the youth of the 1960s" (96).

As a number of scholars argue, the literacy campaign had a clear ideological role of incorporating youth into the revolution while also putting urban youth in direct contact with rural, previously disenfranchised, populations (Carnoy 1990; Dalton 1993; Fagen 1969a; Lutjens 1996). Fagen (1969a) says that the literacy campaign successfully performed the dual role of not only teaching rural Cubans to read, it also allowed urban youth to experience the realities of rural life- thereby creating a system where each was learning from the other as well as learning about civic responsibility. Medin (1990) says, "Not only was social consciousness developed in the emotional and axiological aspects, but advances were made on a cognitive level, stemming from the contact of city-dwellers with peasants and the reality of life in the interior of the country" (69-70).

The youth of Cuba were the frontline of the revolution, contributing not only in the massive literacy campaign, but also to increasing sugar production by working in the cane fields throughout the countryside. While prior to 1959, 45 percent of Cuban youth had not attended primary school, by 1980, 98.8 percent of all Cuban children between the ages of 6 and 11 were attending primary school (Uriarte 2002: 10-11). In many ways

they were the cornerstone of the revolution and the embodiment of Che's *Hombre Nuevo*, New Man, advocating the collective good and moral incentives over the individual and individual incentives, they were the bearers of *conciencia* (revolutionary consciousness or spirit). This ideology of the *Hombre Nuevo*, of focusing on the collective and on moral incentives, became the cornerstone for the new revolutionary society (Azicri 1988; Fagen 1969). From this perspective, education was an important aspect of shaping the behaviors, attitudes, and expectations of people. Carnoy (1990) says that, "the education process was supposed to redefine citizenship in collective terms and nationalism in international revolutionary terms. Schooling was to develop a motivation for collective rather than individual material success, and a sense of belonging to Cuba as a revolutionary society" (155). The revolutionary government sought from the outset to politically socialize the youth to, as Fernández (1993) says, "the values of collective spirit, patriotism, internationalism, and loyalty to Fidel and to the symbols of the revolution were among those values the state wanted to inculcate" (193-4). At the closing of the Second National Congress of the Union of Young Communists (UJC) in 1962, Fidel Castro said,

> "The Revolution has made the young person someone, someone extra-ordinarily appreciated in society. The Revolution has made children and youth practically its reason for being…for they are the objective of the Revolution, precisely those who have to bring this country to the stages that the first revolutionary generation cannot bring it to.." (20).

Bowles (1971) argues that the educational reforms implemented during the early years of the revolution were aimed at eliminating the social inequalities inherent in the pre-1959 educational system- inequalities that reproduced the capitalist class society. By seeing education as a right of all citizens, the government went about creating a new egalitarian and collective society. The Cuban government established a number of institutions and

169

organizations that were responsible for incorporating youth into the revolution. The main

organizations and institutions the state created to perform these tasks are: the Union of

Communist Youth, *Unión de Jóvenes Communistas* (UIC)- youth arm of the Communist

Party of Cuba; the *Pioneros*[46] *José Martí* encompasses children who are 10 to 14 years of

age; the Youth Labor Army –Ejército Juvenil del Trabajo (EJT); Committees for the

Defense of the Revolution (CDR); *La Asociación Hermano Siaz*- the state run cultural

institution for youth; the Federation of Secondary Students- *Federación de Estudiantes*

de Enseñanza Media (FEEM); and the Federation of University Students – *Federación de*

Estudiantil Universitaria (FEU).

As stated in the official newspaper of the Communist Party, *Granma*, the main

purpose of the UJC is, "the integral development of Cuban youth with the purpose of

creating a more fraternal and human society" (4/4/08). In the early 1980s, the Union of

Communist Youth (UJC) tried to invigorate its ranks and incorporate more youth into the

party, however, external and internal conditions would prove to make this an even more

difficult task since it coincided with the 'Rectification of Errors' program underway in

1986. According to Lutjens (1996), the rectification "..called for revitalization of the

mass organizations, citing deficiencies that ranged from overlapping jurisdictions and

top-heaviness to a lack of appeal to younger Cubans" (204). According to Carnoy

(1990), by the end of the 1980s, almost 70 percent of the Cuban population participated

in some form or another in their local CDRs (neighborhood level Committees for the

Defense of the Revolution), in the capacities of mobilizing individuals for community

---

[46] According to Salas (1979a), "the pioneer organization constitutes the first school of communist
education for children and adolescents, contributes to their integral formation and incorporates them
actively and enthusiastically to social life" (29).

projects, public events such as marches, providing local level social services, settling local conflicts, and monitoring fellow residents.

5.6 Delinquency and Anti-Loafing

Following the triumph of the revolution, there was another baby boom, with birthrates increasing as much as 35 percent between 1959 and 1964 (Martín 1991: 96). After the initial baby boom immediately following the 1959 revolution, birth rates dropped dramatically as a result of higher levels of education, increased free access to birth control and abortions, and increased economic stability and social mobility for a broader spectrum of the population (Fleites-Lear 1999). Martín (1991) points out that the combination of these factors caused a sharp drop in birth rates in the early 1970s, a demographic trend that continues today. The generation born between 1962 and 1975 is referred to, as Lutjens (1996) says, as the "Fourth Generation", a generation that is increasingly recognized as being disaffected and discontent with the transformation of Cuban society after the crisis (208).

After the initial euphoria of the early years of the revolution, and in spite of the massive increase in education levels, there was growing concern by the state of the rising levels of criminality and delinquency among the nation's youth. According to Salas (1979a), by 1967, 41 percent of all property crimes committed in Cuba were committed by minors, and in 1968, 27 percent of all thefts were also by minors (15). He goes on to say that by 1977, 33 percent of all robbery arrests were also by youth (Ibid.). Additionally, he states that in 1972, almost 215,500 students between the ages of six and sixteen were neither in school or working (Ibid.: 20). While Dalton (1993) says that by

the beginning of the 1990s it was estimated that 250,000 youth between the ages of

twelve and sixteen were also neither in school or work (75).   The causes of delinquency

were attributed to the class conflicts inherent in capitalist society, and that a study cited

by Salas (1979s) stated, "Cuban hippies and delinquents...were said to have been

planning to leave the country to meet with delinquent counterparts in the United States in

order to 'improve their delinquent skills'" (23). As a result of the rise in criminality and

delinquency, the government lowered the age of criminal responsibility in 1973 from

eighteen to sixteen, and by 1977 Castro declared a war on delinquency (Salas 1979a;

Smith and Padula 1996: 164). In 1971, the government passed an Anti-Loafing Law

(Law No.1231) to battle delinquency and truancy among youth (Salas 1979). The Anti-

Loafing Law states,

> "The working class condemns all forms of loafing and considers this as a crime, similar to
> theft, and repudiates the negative behavior of loafers and demands that severe and effective
> measures be taken against those who, everyday at all hours, steal the social and material
> goods created through the efforts of the working people (Consejos de Ministros 1971: 2).

Léon (2000) states that there has been a significant drop in enrollment rates in schools

across Cuba and that over the past two decades, the student population, those aged 5-25

years old, have dropped by 30 percent in absolute terms (7). He attributes this drop in

part to the economic crisis of the 1990s and the state's inability to maintain admissions

capacity as well as the increased numbers of students deciding to leave school in pursuit

of other objectives.

5.7 The Special Period

> "If young people fail, everything will fail. It is my deepest conviction that young Cubans will
> struggle to prevent this. I have faith in you" (Fidel Castro, message to UJC, July 23, 2007).

In Cuba, along the lines of the official discourse of the state, everything is described as happening either before, *antes*, or after, *despues*, the revolution of 1959. In this case *before* refers to the era of dependency, corruption, inequality, and neocolonialism, while *after* the triumph of the revolution refers to the social reforms in education, medicine, housing, and agriculture, the egalitarian society. However, for the current generation of youth today this dichotomy between *before* and *after* normally refers *not* to the triumph of the revolution, but to the economic crisis of the nineties. Ferrer Zuelta (2006) says, "the crisis witnessed a deterioration of paradigms, values, and existential conditions that in time changed cultural references and society for a good part of the Cuban population, fundamentally of the youth (192).

In 1991, Martín wrote an article on youth and the Cuban revolution for *Latin American Perspectives*. This article was published at the beginning of the crisis and in it he says,

> "The youth of the 1990s will be predominantly mature, for the most part laborers and intellectual workers, with a high level of schooling, a high degree of information due to the density of the mass media network, and the expectation of a high degree of social interaction both because of the life-style created by socialist society and the rapid increase in urbanization" (98-99).

What Martín could not have foreseen was that it was exactly these factors that have contributed to an increasing disaffection by many urban youth. High levels of education in a shrinking job market creates unfulfilled expectations and disillusionment.

The economic growth of the 1970s and early 1980s in Cuba, along with the sustained investments in education, led to rising expectations among Cuban youth. Smith and Padula (1996) also state a similar sentiment by saying, "the educational system was creating hopes of upward mobility that the island's economy could not satisfy" (116). In

1992, when Castro was speaking at a Cuban teachers conference he addressed the issues

of the imbalance between education and employment in Cuba by saying,

> "Education's momentum was so great that, let us say, we ran, we have run, a certain amount of risk. In a way, we have also seen a big exodus from physical activities to intellectual activities. When we talked about universalizing labor, it was because we were also universalizing education. A society cannot be composed of only intellectuals. Such a thing cannot exist. It is terrible that physical work, manual labor, should be looked with disdain. It is terrible. One can see it, the great exodus that occurred from the countryside to the cities. Not only from the countryside to the cities but from certain jobs to other jobs." (1992: 9).

In relation to what Castro said at the teachers' conference, there was a growing

contradiction between educational levels of young people and available jobs that would

match their skills. Increasingly, university and professional degrees were underutilized

since there were not enough jobs available in a shrinking economy, and one that was

increasingly geared towards the service sector.

Education is no longer seen as the only avenue for social mobility and economic

success. As Domínguez (2008) says,

> "education suffered a certain decline in stature in the nineties. It was no longer the channel par excellence of social mobility, nor the main route to a higher standard of living, not an essential mechanism for achieving social status once other paths to higher earnings became available (employment in the emergent sector, self-employment, remittances from abroad, illegal activities, and so forth)" (294).

Occupational expectations have changed in the past fifteen years, no longer is the

traditional avenue of higher education and professional employment seen as the most

practical means of attaining social mobility and material incentives. The number of

students being admitted to university has been shrinking, partially out of financial

constraints and also due to the changing demands on labor. As a result in the changes in

labor needs there has been an increasing emphasis on training youth for technical and

management positions.

Due to the fact that new job creation since the 1990s has been limited to the various components of the tourism industry, mixed enterprises (*empresas mixtas*), and a few other small knowledge based operations such as biotechnology, young people preparing the enter the workforce are confronted by the obstacles of a system of seniority and other implicit and explicit job qualifiers.   The task of moving from one occupation to another requires a lengthy process of applying to the main employment agencies *Cubalese* or *CIMEX.* These agencies then go through a long process of contacting your current employers as well as contacting the head of the CDR for your neighborhood to verify that you are in line with the party.

Bobes (2000) points out, the youth of the 1970s found a society that offered them possibilities of bettering themselves, educationally and occupationally, and of having social mobility and material wellbeing, as well as having the opportunity to be a protagonist in the revolutionary change that was creating a utopian future. The youth coming of age in the 1990s found themselves in an entirely different situation. They found: an economy in crisis, intergenerational conflict as the preceding generations were the gatekeepers of power, a society that had already changed and where the transformations were already institutionalized; and consequently, a utopia canceled (Bobes 2000: 234). Bobes (2000) goes on to say, as a result of these factors, identifying and connecting their personal life objectives and ambition with those of the national project were much more difficult (234).

In 1995, on the 33rd anniversary of the Union of Young Communists (UJC), in front of an audience of Cuban youth, Castro said,

> "I believe that our youth are truly marvelous and without them, these years of Revolution, the work of the Revolution, would have been impossible. However, since there is still so much to do, this youth has a very important role in the history ahead.."

However, throughout the 1990s there was an increasing gap between the promises and rhetoric of the revolution and the expectations of the youth, increasingly youth are confronted with limited economic and political possibilities. Although this is a trend that was observable prior to the 1990s, now it is a gap between revolutionary promises and existing realities that is increasingly glaring to both the state and to the youth. This generation did not experience and witness the corruption and rampant inequality that marked Cuban society prior to the revolution, nor did they experience or participate in the massive euphoric endeavor to transformation Cuba during the early years of the revolution. As Kahl (1981) says, the more recent generations of Cuban youth "take a more matter-of-fact view of life than do aging guerilleros" (352).

In an extensive study on the social impact of the crisis of the 1990s on the youth of Cuba, Domínquez and Ferrer (1996) argue that the crisis has dramatically impacted the social mobility of this generation of youth in particular and that the restrictive economy and the increasing changes in the social class structure are weighing heavily on them (51). The economic restructuring of the past fifteen years or so has devalued the traditional social integration mechanisms for youth, namely school and work. The conditions of the economy have reduced the advantages of the traditional educational and economic structure as well as having created vastly different levels of consumption among the population (Ibid.).

The study done by Dominquez and Ferrer (1996) breaks down the youth they studied into three groups. The first group of youth, as they call it- Group A, has highly internalized the values and expectations of the revolution. For them, the solutions to the

176

problems of the nation are also be connected to their personal difficulties and therefore it orients them towards active participation in the collective work and goals of the revolution. In essence, this group *actualizes*, or as Bobes (2000) says, at least declares to actualize, in complete conformity with the associated values of collectivism, altruism, and sacrifice, privileging national interests overtop personal ones. The second group of youth in Dominquez and Ferrer's (1996) study is Group B, which express more individual and material aspirations that orient them to work toward material benefits. This group would more prefer to work in the tourism industry of in the mixed enterprises, *empresas mixtas*, where they have the opportunity to work towards attaining their personal goals. Dominquez and Ferrer (1996) say that this group manifests a certain incredulity about the future and that they do not think the solution to the nation's crisis depends on their personal activities or involvement. The authors say that this group expresses a "disinterest in political participation" (Ibid.: 41). Although the aspirations of this group of youth are material in nature, these aspirations are still located inside the system and are connected to the national project. The third and final group presented in their study, Group C, express aspirations that focus on material consumption. This group participates in informal, and often illegal, activities and are seen as 'anti-social' or 'anti-moral'. This is the group that is involved in marriages of convenience with foreign tourists, black markets activities, robbery, and emigration. Additionally, this group evidences an overvaluation of North American society and an undervaluation of Cuban society and thus a minimization of the triumphs of the revolution. However, for well over a century now, Cuban youth have borrowed, adopted, and adapted cultural forms from North America that have played a large part in Cuban youth identity formations.

This process is nothing new as Pérez (1999; 2008) has made clear when discussing the influence of North American culture and consumption habits on Cuba.

In 1981, Kahl published an article entitled "Cuban Paradox: Stratified Equality", where he says,

> "At the moment, differences in salaries are to some extent cancelled out by the equalitarianism of the ration book, by inexpensive housing, and by the provision of essential services like education and medical care to all citizens without charge. What will happen to *conciencia* and revolutionary solidarity if luxuries begin to appear on the market and are sold without a ration coupon at very high prices?" (351).

His question is very poignant for this project since it deals directly with his question of what will happen if non-rationed higher end goods become available at high costs. What has happened in the intervening twenty plus years is that now the ration book does not provide sufficient goods for a person to survive for more than two weeks and that now there are an increasing number of state stores throughout Havana that only accept hard currency, where high end imported goods are so marked-up in price that they are beyond the means of most Cubans.

Conspicuous consumption prior to the economic liberalizations of the mid-90s was limited. This was the case because even for Cubans who had disposable income, there were few durable and non-durable luxury goods available to purchase and the few goods that were available in the markets were extremely over priced (Lutjens 1996). For the most part, prior to the crisis, there was a measure of equality across society and the few who had privileges were unlikely to publicly express privilege ostentatiously. 'Privileged consumption' in Cuba is at times based upon historical advantage, meaning that families that owned a car or a house in more desirable neighborhoods prior to the revolution still have those benefits, while in other cases individuals who are members of

178

the party elite or are employed in the upper levels of certain occupations get fringe benefits in terms of housing and automobiles, and thus have a 'current advantage' (Kahl 1981: 336). He goes on to say, "equality in material consumption is distorted by remnants of old privilege and by hints of new privilege, and resentment follows" (352). By this statement, he is saying that there is a tension producing disconnect between revolutionary ideology of collectivism and moral imperatives and the actually existing realities on the ground. As a result of these factors, despite the rhetoric of egalitarianism and equality, there was some degree of consumption stratification in Cuban society, though for sure it was marginal in comparison to most Western capitalist societies. Consumerism, individualism, and the influences of capitalist consumer society on Cuban youth has been a concern of the state since the 1970s, a source of tension that has manifested itself in innumerable ways, such as discourse, fashion, hairstyle, in music, and in alternative life-styles (Fernández 1993: 198).

Prior to the 1990s, there was a small range of outlets for Cubans to spend surplus cash, from pizzerias and restaurants to theaters, clubs, and museums. Prices varied depending on the quality of the establishment, however, prices were *only* in pesos. The current situation is that there are less and less places of leisure that charge only in pesos and the vast majority of new establishments charge only in convertible pesos (CUCs). Therefore, for the majority of workers who are still employed by the state and only receive their salaries in pesos, they are increasingly limited in terms of the number of outlets where their peso salary is accepted and are priced out of the establishments that charge only in CUCs.

As Fernández (1993) says, "socioeconomic constraints, combined with high expectations, foment discontent with, and questioning of, the political system. For youth, specifically, reduced economic and social opportunities set forth political responses to the root causes of oversocialization and desocialization" (193). Dominguez and Ferrer (1996) argue that there has been a rupture for this current generation of Cuban youth between them and the preceding generations, a rupture only comparable to the that first generation of youth in the revolution. Domínguez (2008) argues that this intergenerational rupture is a particularly wide gap between those aged 25 to 30 and the younger age cohorts within the broad spectrum of what is defined as youth in Cuba.

According to another study on youth done by the *Centro de Estudios sobre la Juventud* (Center for the Study of Youth), 79 percent of youth polled were disengaged from the labor market, *desviniculados*, because they had financial support from their household, while an additional 71 percent of those polled indicated that they saw no incentive to work or look for work (*Cuba: Jóvenes en los 90*). Domínguez (2008) says that by 1996, while national unemployment was only registered at 6 to 7 percent, 60 percent of all unemployment was represented by youth with the majority being women (294). Domínguez (2004) argues that the estimated number of Cubans underemployed by state ranges somewhere between 500,000 and 800,000 (38). While Skaine (2004) says that at the turn of the new millennia, unemployment hovered around 30 percent, though statistics from the state differ greatly, arguably due to mechanisms that hide unemployment through overstaffing and underemployment.

The frustrations of Cuban youth have been made evident by the numbers of youth fleeing the country, first during the Mariel boatlift in 1980, and then again in 1994 during

the *balseros* crisis. During the Mariel Boatlift, according to Fernández (1993), 41 percent

of the Cubans who fled during the Mariel Boatlift were under the age of twenty-seven

(198). And then during the *balseros* crisis, more than 75 percent of those who fled were

under the age of thirty-nine. (Eckstein and Barberia 2002). Another factor that is altering

the demographic structure of Cuba is that the majority of those legally and illegally

migrating from Cuba are mostly young urban males (Alfonso de Armas 2006).

Increased social stratification during the Special Period may have contributed to

the exodus of male youth (Dominguez 2008; Eckstein 1997; Leon 1997; Pérez-Stable

1997). Essentially this argument is centered around the fact that with the state being

unable to completely fills its obligations in regards to social service and food

provisioning, a black market and informal market blossomed to fill these gaps.

Individuals who were able to financially take advantage of these gaps became enriched

through a number of illegal activities, stealing from the state and selling those items back

to the populations and by selling goods and items they were able to acquire from

elsewhere. These informal entrepreneurial activities were nothing new in Cuba, as Fidel

had on numerous occasions tried to stamp out these activities (Salas 1979).

Kapcia (2008) says that in relation to the impact of the social and economic

reforms of the 1990s, "the subsequent reforms saw social unity and cohesiveness begin to

disintegrate in the face of multiple individual battles to survive, an atomization of

perspectives, and a growth of individualism rather than collectivism and solidarity" (28).

While Domínguez (2008) argues that the economic restructuring has, "brought about a

reorganization of the social class structure in which the generational aspect has been

particularly relevant" (293). Also as a result of the socio-economic restructuring of the

1990s, Hernandez-Reguant (2002) says, "citizenship was thus redefined under these new

economic and social conditions, in this case becoming a contractual matter between a

new kind of individual and a new form of late socialist state" (6). Bobes (2000) says that

the reforms and restructuring of the 1990s have important social implications, "a

diversification of social spaces and consequently the emergence of new actors (more

autonomous from the state), all of which has indisputable effects on the values, the

conduct and the mechanisms of social integration and can be considered a rupture in

respect to the valid order" (233). At issue for many youth is that the principal sources of

collective identity that had been offered by state discourse were eroded by the economic

crisis and that the deterioration of political directions to achieve social justice, equality

and well-being for all were vastly different the actually existing reality at home, in

school, and on the streets. It is arguably logical that these youth would search for

alternative sources of reference that would help them define their membership in society

and their identity. Alfonso de Armas (2006) argues that studies in Cuba show that it is

single mothers and children under 16 years of age who are the most socially and

economically vulnerable as a result of the changed economic landscape. While Pertierra

(2008) says that,

> *"*Although men's formal work opportunities generally contract in times of scarcity,
> women's work opportunities tend to expand through a heavier reliance upon the informal
> economy or self-employment.   Domestic economies consequently rely on the
> intensification and diversification of paid labor by household members of working age,
> an expansion of domestic labor by women and children, and reductions and
> repriortisations in consumption" (751).

This was also demonstrated by Smith and Padula (1996) who say that since the economic

crisis of the 1990s, the rates of women in management positions and in the labor force as

a whole have decreased, something that they argue is indicative of the fact that women are having to bear more of the burden of social reproduction again.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided some of the historical context for contemporary Cuban youth. It has focused on the role youth have played in the armed struggles for an independent Cuba during the twentieth century. Additionally, it has examined the mechanisms put into place by the revolution aimed at incorporating the youth in the socialist project. Another theme that ran through this chapter was that youth have often been the ones to bear brunt of economic crisis. When the job markets shrink, it is usually young people who are barred entry as a result of intergenerational tension, as is the case today. Yet all of this contextual information presents a conundrum that will be explored in the following chapter- if the history of youth in modern Cuba is one of active youth participation and youth resistance, how can this be the same youth that Nevaer (2008) says are increasingly "tuning out the Revolution with earphones", and how is this now a form of protest? It is clear that over the past two decades there has been a growing disjuncture between the rhetoric of the revolution and the reality of life in the revolution, and how young people negotiate this gap, how they create meaningful lives and identities within a fragmented society is what will be examined in the following chapter.

Chapter 6

Calle G and the Nocturnal Birds of Havana

6.0 Introduction

The Cuban Revolution has long prided itself on the priority it has placed on the youth of the nation, as evidenced by the numerous educational and social programs created during the initial years of the revolution aimed at incorporating the youth into the revolution. While the government maintains this position, the realities on the ground are vastly different. In Chapter 4 it was demonstrated that over the past twenty years, the Cuban government has not been able to completely mitigate growing levels of socio-economic inequality, nor the increasing impact of neo-liberal forms of globalization. The result is that the youth of the nation are now being raised in an environment where status is no longer connected to an individual's degree of incorporation into the revolution. The city of Havana is now a landscape where status for youth, and all Cubans, for that matter is determined by hard currency and material culture. While increasingly there are appearing studies that focus on disenfranchised black youth culture in Cuba (Fernandes 2003, 2006; Lacey 2006), there has been little research to date that focuses more on the emerging privileged Cuban youth from the more elite social classes. This project examines some of these groups of 'middle class' Cuban youth in order to provide a more complete picture of the current metamorphosis of Cuban society.

As will be asserted below, the impact of the broader socio-economic changes underway in Cuba is clearly reflected in the discourse and spatial practices of these young people and the identity politics they engage in. This represents a new phenomenon in revolutionary Cuba as youth differentiate themselves based upon commodities and the status and mobility that hard currency brings. While socio-economic inequality was never completely eradicated in Cuba, due to the legacies of the pre-revolutionary class system and the material advantages they poses, this project seeks to demonstrate that the social and economic restructuring of the past twenty years is causing the relationship between the state and its citizens to be reworked, and this is particularly evident among the youth.

This study is about how young Cubans are producing and reproducing meaning through their spatial practices in the city under the current conjuncture of uncertain and constantly fluctuating social and economic conditions. Following the approach of Wulff (1995), young Cubans should be seen as 'active social agents' that are constructing meanings and symbolic forms cultures that constitute and inform their lives and identities- processes that are taking place outside of the sphere of the state. The problem statements presented in Chapter 1 asked the following questions which will be engaged throughout this chapter:

- What do youth spatial practices reveal about macro-scale processes of socio-economic change?
- How are youth in public space engaging and negotiating the forces and flows of globalization that are impacting their lives and impacting their identities and cultures?
- How are processes of political and socio-economic change promoting new ways of inhabiting public space?
    - What new spatial practices and patterns are emerging among the youth of the city?
    - What new youth cultures are emerging in this process?

185

- How can studying youth in public space be a vehicle for examining the relationship between the state and its citizens?

As mentioned previously, I argue that, in addition to economic restructuring, the ideological changes that have occurred since the crisis are reflected not only in state spaces, but also in the everyday, *lo cotidiano,* in the ways people are using public space in the city. Streets, parks, alleyways, nightclubs, cafes, and street corners, as Skelton and Valentine (1997) point out, are the places and spaces where youth construct and reproduce their culture and their identities. It is in this array of places that youth create an independent identity while creating a form of associative community amongst themselves. Young Cubans are seeking out their own paths as a result of the changing role of the state and the increasing complexity of the social and economic realities they are confronting as they come of age.

In Chapter 2 it was argued that public space is not merely the stage where urban life occurs, it is not a material backdrop for social relations- it is something that must be repeatedly performed and repeatedly produced. Public space is only static once it ceases being used, traversed, occupied, and inhabited, otherwise it is constantly changing and evolving, taking on new roles and new meanings, shifting from a symbolic abstract space of power and spectacle to one of everyday life. For Lefebvre, everyday life represents the 'concrete' form of human nature. He says,

> "Everyday life, in a sense residual, defined by 'what is left over' after all distinct, superior, specialized, structured activities have been singled out by analysis, must be defined as a totality… Everyday life is profoundly related to all activities, and encompasses them with all their differences and conflicts; it is their meeting place, their bond, their common ground. And it is in everyday life that the sum total of relations which make the human – and every human being – a whole takes its shape and its form….The substance of everyday life – 'human raw material' is its simplicity and richness – pierces through all alienation and established 'disalienation.' If we take the

words 'human nature' dialectically and in their full meaning, we may say that the critique of everyday life studies human nature in its concreteness" (Lefebvre 1991b: 97).

In their book *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc,* Crowley and Reid (2002) make a similar argument by stating that "the spaces of the everyday life-places of leisure, learning, consumption and domesticity- were no less important as sites for ideological intervention than the more obviously, 'socialist spaces'" (5). Lefebvre understood that the control of public space was closely linked to the structuring and control of social identities since public space was the venue through which and within which social and cultural meanings of difference were expressed, confronted, and negotiated. Understanding how urban space is socially produced is necessary for understanding how individuals and groups, in this case youth, engage with public space and with one another.

In line with the work of Lefebvre and de Certeau, spatial practices and social relations in space are crucial components for the production of urban space. According to Gottdiener (1993), "every mode of social organization produces an environment that is a consequence of the social relations it possesses" (132). While McCann (1999) states, spatial practice involves the interaction between two types of social space, one that is embedded within the conceived abstract space of planners and architects and the other is social space that is constantly being reworked and reshaped by individual users and their perception of space (172-73). The abstract spaces of Havana (or as Lefebvre (1991) says, the *representation of space* or the *conceived* space- the space of urban planners, architects, and engineers) are already well documented by a number of scholars (Colantnio and Potter 2006; Scarpaci et al. 2002; Segre 1990, 2002; Venegas 1990). What is less studied in relation to the city, are the spaces manifested from below, the

187

representational space (lived) and *spatial practice* (perceived), to again use Lefebvre's terminology.

For many social groups, claiming a social space and being a part of public space, i.e. being seen in public space, is a way for groups to legitimate their right to the city. And as a result of this basic premise, public space often becomes a contested space- a space where individuals and groups struggle to assert and maintain their right to social space through tactics of confrontation, opposition, and resistance (Mitchell 2004). The study site for this project, the public space where predominantly middle-class youth of the city are engaging in this struggle to claim social space and thereby legitimate their citizenship is a thirteen block long street called Calle G located in central Havana in the neighborhood of Vedado.

6.1 Calle G, the Center of the Youth Universe in Havana

From the time of Vedado's original design and planning by Luis Iboleón Bosque in 1859, Calle G (also known as Avenida de los Presidentes), along with *Paseo*, *Línea*, and Calle 23, served as the main thoroughfares of this new residential district (Scapraci et al. 2002: 56). Victoria (2007) says that both Calle G and Paseo were subsequently enhanced, following the tradition of the Garden City Movement[47] of as well as Cerdá's[48]

---

[47] The Garden City Movement originated around the turn of the twentieth century in the UK by Ebenezer Howard who developed the idea of creating planned self-contained mixed-use communities that incorporated the use of greenbelts, in other words, providing ample space in the community for trees and vegetation. This movement was highly influential in the early years of the century in both Europe and the United States. See Buder (1990), *Visionaries and Planners: The Garden City Movement and the Modern Community*, New York: Oxford University Press.

[48] Ildefons Cerdà was the engineer responsible for devising the plans for the modern expansion of Barcelona in the 1860s. His plans focused on sanitation and the creation of integrated urban space that incorporated green spaces with high flow traffic arteries. See Soria y Puig (1999), *Cerdá: the Five Bases of the General Theory of Urbanization*. Madrid: Electa.

plans for the Barcelona's *Enscanche*, by converting these two roads into park/streets (*vías parques*) by placing narrow tree lined parks with benches and sculptures between the two opposing lanes of traffic. Coyula (2007) refers to them as – linear parks. These major roads divided the neighborhood of Vedado into superblocks of five to seven square blocks. Calle G runs a total of thirteen blocks from north to south with two major monuments anchoring each end.
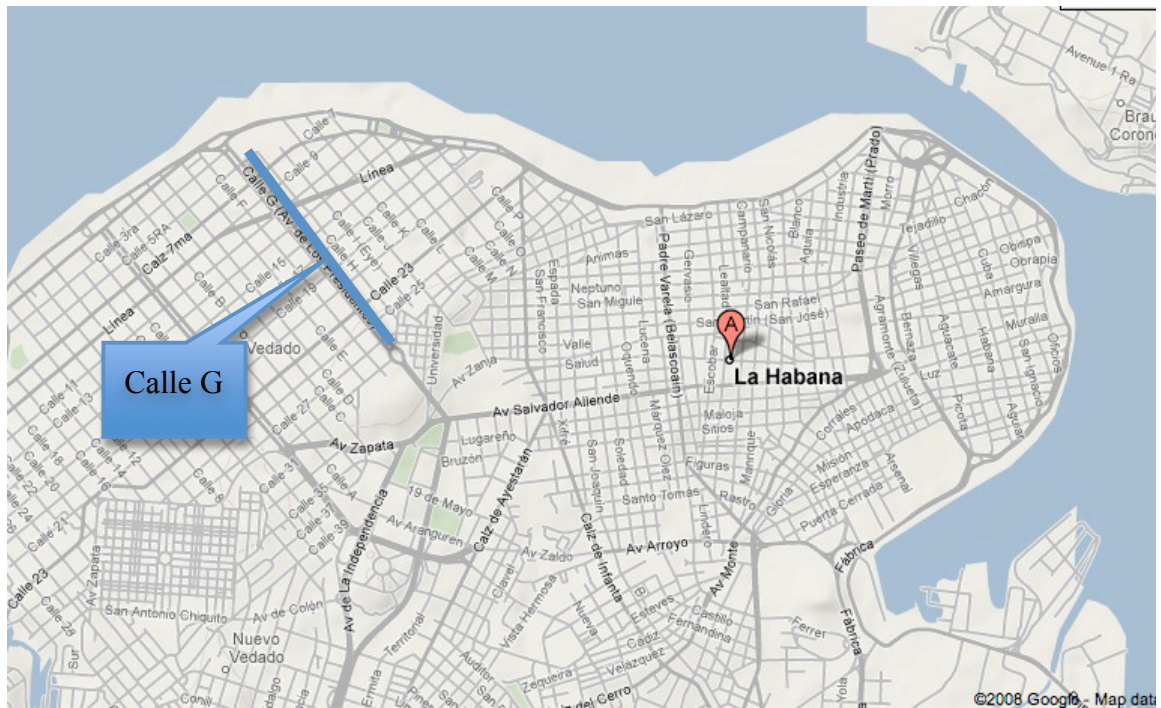

Figure 4 Map showing location of Calle G.

Gómez and Cabrera (2005) argue that Calle G is one the most important places for outdoor sculptors (*sculpturitos*) in the city. During the initial years of the

development of Vedado there were motions put forward to make Calle G a boulevard dedicated to the presidents of the Republic, hence the name *Avenida de los Presidentes*. Though the name *Avenida de los Presidentes* still technically applies to this street, the plans to have the entire street dedicated to the presidents of the nation never materialized, and why it still has this name is unknown, see Figure 2. Although most Cubans use the name Calle G, almost all maps in tourist guide books label this street as *Avenida de los Presidentes.*

Figure 5, Historic postcard of Calle G/ Avenida de los Presidentes

The first large monument erected to a republican presidents was located at the southern end of the boulevard in the form of a monumental tiered structure in honor of Tomás Estrada Palma (1902-1906), the first president of the Republic. The monument was inaugurated on June 26, 1921, with a statue of Estrada Palma done by the Italian artist Giovanni Nicolini located on top of a pedestal. The statue of the president was removed after the 1959 Revolution for symbolic reasons and according to Gómez and Cabrera

(2005), only his shoes remain and now it is recognized by the ironic name "los zapaticos rosa" (little red shoes) (90) (see Figure 5).

Figure 6, Monument to Tomá Estrada Palma (1902-1906), first president of Cuban Republic, located at the northern end of Calle G.

This action of removing any vestiges of the republican period brings to mind what Verdery (1999) says about the political lives of dead bodies, that

> "among the most common ways in which political regimes mark space are by placing particular statues in particular places and by renaming landmarks such as streets, public squares, and buildings. These provide contour to landscape, socializing them and saturating them with specific political values: they signify space in specific ways. Razing and tearing down statues gives new values to space (re-signifies it), just as does renaming streets and buildings" (39-40).

Gómez and Cabrera (2005) go on to say that between 1925 and 1930 the construction of monuments along Calle G changed to a mode of more formal sculpture dedicated to showing the history of the Republic that became highly definitive of Vedado. These authors say, "this period was when the political power had recovered in the city like a monumental object, in a logic that before the crisis [referring to the economic depression of the *vacas flacas* (thin cows) as described in chapter 3] to stimulate the consolidation of national identity and of the republican era, looking to formally inscribe in the symbolic

191

space its importance like a gesture that articulated this process in the republican history"

(89). In 1929, President Gerardo Machado, the 'dictator' who was ousted in the 1933

revolution, attempted to build a large monument to commemorate his own presidency at

the bottom of Calle G and the Malecón, however it never materialized and in its place

was built a monument to General José Miguel Gómez (a general of the Liberation Army

during the Independence Wars). There was much debate about the monument that was

constructed since it was deemed disproportionately large for the space and eventually it

ended up being a composite of the Victor Manuel II monument in Rome. This statue was

also removed after the 1959 revolution, however it was recently replaced by the Office of

the Historian of the City of Havana (OHC)[49].

On August 4, 1959, another monument was erected on Calle G, this time in honor

of General Calixto García, another of the generals of the Independence Wars. It was also

placed at the bottom of Calle G along the Malecón. Since the 1959 revolution all of the

other statues and monuments that line Calle G are donations made by other governments

to the people of Cuba. There are statues and monuments in honor of Simón Bolívar from

the Venezuelan government; Benito Juárez, donated by the Mexican government; and in

honor of Salvador Allende, from Chilean government. All of these monuments

---

[49] The Office of the Historian of the City has been in existence since 1938, however since Old Havana was made into a UNESCO World Heritage Site[49] on December 14, 1982 the OHC has gained increasing power over how the colonial core of the city is preserved and developed (Baroni 2000). However, it was the passing of Law Decree 143 in 1994, and Law 77[49] in September 5, 1995, that essentially shifted all legal and financial control of the colonial core from the Cuban Council of State to the OHC that propelled it to become the single most powerful actor in the redevelopment and preservation of Habana Vieja (Hill 2004; Scarpaci 2000b, 2005). The OHC, and its subsidiary organizations, is a complex network of decentralized institutions that represents a dramatic multi-scalar and multi-institutional shift in urban governance. The OHC has extensive control over all areas of urban redevelopment and preservation. Not only does it maintain control over its for-profit arm Habaguanex, but the OHC is the planning and housing authority, parks commissioner, tax collector, accounting and financing, zoning board, and has the autonomy to enter directly into joint venture contracts with foreign investors, in addition to having the authority to expropriate property (Hill 2004; Peters 2001; Rodríguez 1999).

commemorate individuals who had ideological leanings in line with revolutionary Cuba,

see Figure 4.

Calle G is a boulevard that has always been representative of state power, first of

the bourgeois republic, and then of the socialist state. Celik et al. (1994) say,

> "The naming, citing, and form of streets, and the iconography of the buildings and street
> furniture that help shape them are a means of communicating ideological messages to the
> public domain…. Its aim was to communicate the ability of a regime to provide and
> control. The presumed semiological control of power over space, however, is at best
> transitory" (4).

And as Duncan (1990) says that the urban landscape is "a vast repository out of which

symbols of order and social relationships, i.e. ideology, can be fashioned" (17).

Therefore, the appropriation of this tree-lined boulevard by the youth of the city is a very

symbolic gesture, for the actions of these youth and the new meanings they are inscribing

in this space are in many ways a confrontation to the power relations and ideology that

are embedded there. Therefore, this can be seen as a tension within Lefebvre's dialectic,

for this is an abstract space, or *representation of space* – a 'dominant space', created,

manipulated, and ordered by the Cuban state; yet as will be demonstrated below, it is also

now a *representational space*- the 'lived' space of inhabitants and users, where artists and

philosophers challenge 'dominant space' through appropriation and imagination

(Lefebvre 1996: 38-40).

There are many similarities between what is currently happening on Calle G and

what has occurred in many post-Socialist cities. As Crowley and Reid (2002) say in

relation to youth in public space in Soviet Moscow, "young people would display their

disregard for the socialist moral economy and official valorization of labor by spending

hours 'hanging out', while others would trade currency illegally in the very places most

charged with producing a socialist mentality" (16). New meanings are being

superimposed on those of old, this quintessential Republican-era tree-lined and sculptured street is the location of a newly emerging and diverse youth culture that is no longer intricately linked to the state. Calle G is strategically located in the center of Havana, the crossroads of Calle G and Calle 23 is one of the main nodal points in the public transportation system, from there individuals can find transportation to many parts of the city. One respondent explained the rationale of youth occupying Calle G by saying it has a "strategic position on G and 23rd street. There are several buses that pass over there, it is a central place in the city. This is the part of Havana's downtown" (Rámonm age 23, 3/04/08). Additionally this location is central to numerous clubs, restaurants, movie theaters, bars, and cafes, see Figure 4.

Figure 7, Calle G facing north.

Another important factor is that it is located only a few blocks from the University of Havana. Therefore due to its strategic location, it is able to draw youth from virtually every part of Havana. However, although this space is strategically located along a main

transportation corridor within a few blocks from the University of Havana, it is also only

a few blocks from the Plaza de la Revolución- the physical and symbolic heart of

government power. Calle G is the antithesis of the new economic spaces of tourist, such

as the colonial core of the city, Old Havana, where numerous multinational joint ventures

are transfiguring and redeveloping the old part of the city under the guise of heritage

preservation and tourism development. This is an anti-tourist place directly under the

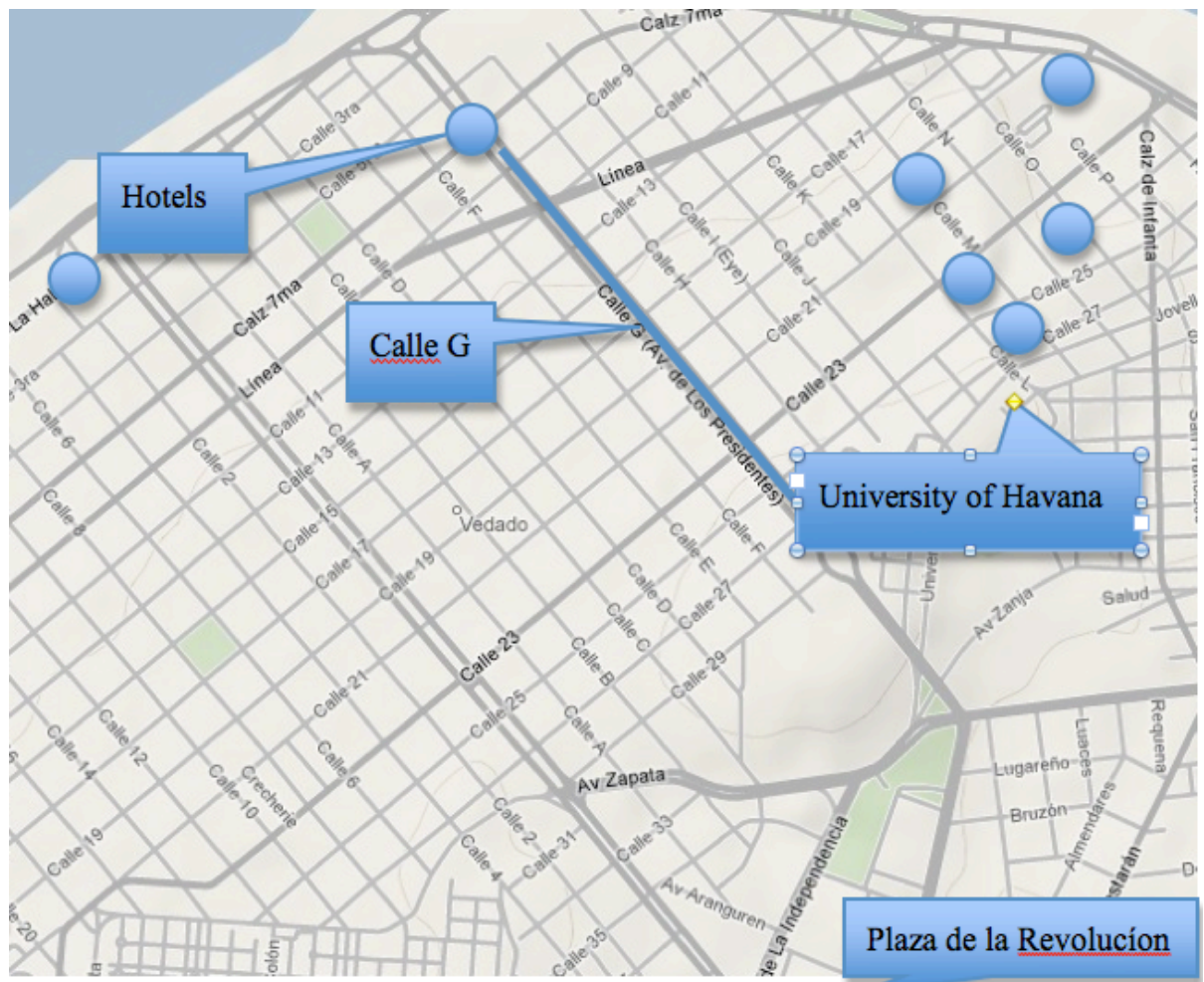eyes of state power. (See Figure 8).

Figure 8, Location of Calle G in relation to tourist hotels and Plaza de la Revolución.

Therefore this space has different meanings depending on the time of day, and in some ways it can be considered a temporally defined space. Just as Law (2002) describes the ways in which Filipino domestic workers transform and redefine a central public space in Hong Kong every weekend from a space quintessentially representative of state and financial power into a disorderly local space of informality and community, the youth of Calle G are also transforming and redefining this public space from one representative of former bourgeois power into a disorderly space of everyday social life.

6.2 Defining 'youth'

Defining the subjects of this study is difficult since the category of 'youth' itself is a very flexible and shifting term that varies through time and space. Defining who is, and who is not, a 'youth' is historically and culturally contingent. The boundaries created by age definitions for young people are, as Valentine et al. (1998) say, boundaries of exclusion 'which define what young people are not, cannot do or cannot be" (5). As Tranberg Hansen (2008) says, "definitions of youth are contextual and they shift. Regardless of whether our concern is with young people in the West or in a developing country, definitions of youth in terms of biological age are shaped by the cultural politics of their time and place, and by who defines them" (7). Furthermore, Ruddick (1996a) argues that the term 'youth' traditionally referred to a pre-modern form of transition, while the term 'adolescence refers to a more age based definition, a more modern notion (203). Therefore, in many ways the term *youth* is a loaded word that needs to be handled with care.

The other issue with using youth as an identifier is that there is a tremendous amount of disagreement among scholars in defining the age range of the category of youth. For instance, Côté and Allahar (1994) claim that the age range for youth is between 13 and 19 years of age. While others, such as Valentine et al. (1997), argue that it encompasses individuals between 16 and 25 years of age. Wyn and White (1997), on the other hand, define young people as between the ages of 12 and 25 years. While according to Tranberg Hansen (2008), the UN's World Program of Action for Youth defines 'youth' as those between 15 and 24 years of age. In the case of Cuba, according to Fernández (1993; 2004), many Cuban sociologists disagree with what constitutes the age range for 'youth' in Cuba. He says that some argue that the period of youth spans from 16 years old to 30 years of age, while others say that youth begins at 13 years and goes as far as the mid-30s, which he says is the age range of membership in the Union of Communist Youth (UJC). For the purposes of this study, I will be following the guidelines of the *Centro de Estudios sobre la Juventud* (the Center for Youth Studies) which classifies the age category of youth as being between the ages 15 and 29 years. Since this project is examining Cuban youth, it seems appropriate to use the guidelines of the main Cuban youth research center.

According to the *Oficina Nacional de Estatistícas,* the Cuban National Statistics Office (ONE), in 2007 the total number of youth in the age range 15 to 29 years represented 20.5 percent of the total population of 11,239,043, with 51.5 percent of this youth population being male and 48.5 percent being female (ONE 2007). Furthermore, out of the total of 2,305,578 youth in this age cohort, approximately 73.9 percent live in urban areas, with over 20 percent officially residing in Havana (Ibid.). These numbers do

not take into account the large number of floating youth population who reside in Havana illegally while still maintaining an address in the countryside or in other urban areas throughout the island. Although Cubans have been migrating from the interior to the capital city for centuries now, as mentioned in Chapter 4, since the crisis of the 1990s, there has been a large rate of increase in rural-urban migration, therefore actual numbers of youth living in Havana, both temporarily and permanently, is much higher. Another important factor that is impacting the demographic structure of Cuba, and Havana in particular, is that the majority of both legal and illegal migrants leaving Cuba are coming from the same age cohorts and are mostly young urban males (Alfonso de Armas 2006).

6.3 *Fruiqis, Rockeros, Muiquis, Repas,* **and the rest - youth identities in Havana**

Before proceeding with the data analysis it is necessary to present and define the various youth subgroups because the names through which these youth self-identify and label each other will repeatedly appear in their discourse and throughout the rest of the chapter. The following descriptions of these youth subcultures are based on interview data from the youth themselves, along with some additional external referencing for verification. Most of the following youth identities are flexible and are used interchangeably. These identities overlap quite frequently and are therefore very fluid. Table 1, provides a brief description of the varying subcultures, highlighting the differentiating attributes, namely music, fashion, and group characteristics. Narrative descriptions follow below.

Table 1. Youth Subcultures at Calle G

Youth Subculture	Identifying Music	Identifying Fashion	Attribute
Repartero/Repas	reggaeton	Baseball caps, sleeveless t-shirts, brand names, gold chains, jewelry…	Marginalized, predominantly Afro-Cuban
Miquis	Techno, house, disco	Designer clothing, tight jeans, electronic accessories (cell phones, digital camera	Fashion conscious, middle-class
Rockeros	Classic rock'n'roll, heavy metal, death metal, black metal	Dress entirely in black, leather boots, rock t-shirts, long hair	Typically older, less consumption oriented than other groups
Friquis & Hippies	Classic rock, techno, less selective about music	Dress in black, more fashion conscious than *rockeros*	Similar to *rockeros*, yet usually younger, more consumption oriented
Faránduleros	Musically diverse, not set type of music, but follows the music scene	Fashionable clothing. No set style, yet consumption oriented	Seen to have money and access to clubs and material goods, associates with foreigners
Emos	Hard core punk, pop punk music, goth	Dress in all black with bright day-glow colored, often pink, hair and/or eye shadow	Prone to depression, self-destructive, suicidal behavior. Influenced by Japanese comics.

Reparteros/Repas-

The word *repa* is a short variation of the word *repartero* which historically was a

derogatory word referring to individuals who lived in the marginalized neighborhoods on

the periphery, or urban fringe, of the city. The type of music that characterizes this

subgroup today is typically *reggaeton*[50]. The style of clothing this group tends to wear

---

[50] *Reggaeton* is a type of music that originated in Panama with the blending of Jamaican reggae and dancehall with Latin beats. Since then is has evolved to be a blend of the musical influences of reggae,

emulates the fashion of hip-hop and rap artists, baseball caps, t-shirts without sleeves, jeans, gold chains and earrings, tattoos. There tends to be a strong affinity for certain brand names of clothing, such as Puma, Adidas, and Fila. The consumer imaginaries of this group parallel those of youth worldwide who are targeted audiences of the mass-marketing of hip-hop culture and the 'ghetto wear' that companies like these produce. Klein (2002) suggests that companies like Puma, Adidas, Fila, Nike, and Tommy Hilfiger all market this 'ghetto' fashion style that appropriates the commercialized images of marginalized and racialized inner-city youth cultures.

This is a predominantly urban based group, mostly Afro-Cuban, and from the marginalized neighborhoods of the city. Several interviewees said that previously, prior to the 1990s, this group would normally be called *guapos* (tough street guys). As will be discussed below, there is much discrimination against this group, not only by the other sub-groups, but also by many Cubans in general. Repeatedly in the interviews, the *repas* are referred to as being aggressive and exhibiting anti-social behavior, and that they frequently use of vulgar language, and conducting themselves poorly in public. Although this term applies to both males and females, this group is largely perceived as a male when it is used. This group slightly differs from *raperos*[51](rappers), which is a term that refers to rap and hip-hop musicians.

---

salsa, dancehall, merengue, bomba, hip-hop, and rap. It is widely popular throughout Latin America and in the United States.

[51] See, Fernandes (2003), "Fear of a Black Nation: Local Rappers, Transnational Crossings, and State Power in Contemporary Cuba." *Anthropological Quarterly*, 76 (4): 575-608; and Fernandes (2003), "Island Paradise, Revolutionary Utopia or Hustler's Haven? Consumerism and Socialism in Contemporary Cuban Rap." *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 12(3):359-375; or Lacey (2006), Cuban Youth finds in rap a voice of freedom. *The International Herald Tribune*. December 14, 2006.

Miquis-

It is difficult ascertaining the origin of this word, however, several interviewees

argue that it derives from Mickey Mouse and the Mickey Mouse pullovers that were

popular in Cuba a number of years ago. This is a new group that has emerged out of the

crisis years of the 1990s, it is considered to be a middle class group due to their access to

hard currency and the material consumption it allows. Often their access to hard

currency and material goods is through their parents and extended family sending

remittances. The music that is characteristic of this group is much more varied than the

repas, but mostly it is defined by techno, house, and disco music. This is a very fashion

conscious group that follows what is in style in North America, Europe, and throughout

Latin America. This group publicly displays their status through material commodities

such as high-tech mobile phones, digital cameras, and digital audio players. Their style

of dress is usually tight jeans (*tubitos*) or pants, dark T-shirts, and accessories such as

silver belts and belt buckles, Converse sneakers, and clothing with brand names on it.

They are also concerned with 'fashionable' hair styles. One respondent defined the

behavior of this group as, "in general 'anti-government', independent, liberal, and

decidedly middle-class".

Rockeros-

This subgroup is overwhelmingly defined by their musical preference- classic

rock music and all of its more recent variants- heavy metal, black metal, death metal.

Although music is claimed as the focus of this group there is a generational divide among

them, with one group being called the "*Rockeros Dinosaurio*" or *dino rockeros*- meaning dinosaur rockers, which implies any rockers over the age of 25, according to the interview data. This group typically dresses almost entirely in black, with black t-shirts, preferably rock concert T-shirts or memorabilia, black jeans, and leather boots. They are described by other subgroups as having long hair, tattoos, and a lack of concern regarding hygiene. The older members of this group are the ones who originally began occupying Calle G in the early 1990s. A generational divide between them and the younger generations is evident in their discourse because they can reference life *before* the crisis, while the younger cohorts of this subculture only knows life *after* the crisis.

Friquis/Hippies-

This term is often used interchangeably with *rockeros* although many argue that they are typically younger than *rockeros* and generally less selective about music. However, many *rockeros* self-identify as *frikis* which suggests that both words are often interchangeable. Although this term has been in use in Cuba for a number of years, its current meaning is slightly different. Their style of dress is similar to that of the *rockeros*, wearing all black and having the same type of accessories, see Image 5. Like the *miquis* they are also consumption oriented, and claim status through consumer goods. Some argue that they are similar in many ways to *muiquis* but prefer the appearances of *rockeros*. Also within this group are the *punks* who are seen as similar but with the characteristics of being less sociable and more exclusive.

Farándula-

This is a term that refers to people who are avid music fans and followers of the music scene, in English the closest equivalent would be 'groupie'. It refers to individuals that are connected into the music scene and frequently go to attend music performances and keep track of popular bands and musicians. They are seen as having greater access to clubs, money, and material items through their social networks. Although they differ from *jineteros/as*[53] they are said to hang out with foreigners, due to the fact that foreigners can pay for their entrance into clubs, discothèques, bars, and restaurants. The dress of the *farándulas* does not follow a standard stereotype but varies and is marked by clothing and accessories that are in fashion. As one young respondent said, "Farándula are the people who are after every trendy musician…. The farandula people go to places

---

[52] In any of the photos used to identify different subcultures, the individuals in the photos were asked how they would self-identify. Therefore, the labels to these photos are chosen by the individuals in them, not by the author.

[53] *Jineteros/as* refers to individuals who are either street hustlers, and/or prostitues. Hodge (2005) makes the distinction that male prostitutes normally use the word *pingueros* to refer to themselves, thereby differentiating themselves from their female counter parts, *jineteras*.

like Macumba, Sala Atril (Karl Marx theatre club), Habana Libre hotel, Nacional Hotel.

Places very recognized, with prestige, the ones where we can't go because we can't

afford the cover. People from farandula have money. Money and age… Farándula is also

to hang around with foreigners. Cubans go with foreigners to different places so that they

pay them." (Clara, age 17, 02/02/08). This is a diverse group without clear defining

characteristics.

Emos[54]-

The term 'emo', derived from 'emotional', refers to an increasingly global

phenomenon of young people who are known for their marked emotionalism and who at

times are known for cutting themselves and for suicidal tendencies. The term originated

in reference to hardcore punk and pop punk music, but has since spread in relation to the

associated fashion and stereotypes connected to it. These are teenagers and youth who

are supposedly prone to depression and self-destruction. The particular fashion or style

that is globally linked to these youth is a combination of being clad in black, much like

the 'goth' subculture, yet combining it with bright pinks and day-glow colors in their hair

and around their eyes. It is said that these influences come from Japanese anime called

Manga[55]. This combination of styles is often seen as sexually ambiguous, and therefore

in many countries it provokes hostility and violent discrimination against these youth. As

Grillo (2008) points out, in Mexico, earlier this year there was a number of assaults

---

[54] See, Popkin, Helen, (2006). What exactly is 'emo' anyway?, *MSNBC.com*, (March 26, 2006): http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/11720603/

[55] Manga refers to Japanese comics and print cartoons that cover the entire spectrum of of subject matters from sports, romance, histroy, sci-fi, horror, sexuality, to fantasy and action-adventure. Their audicene is from virtually every age group. See Gravett, Paul. (2004). *Manga: Sixty Years of Japanese Comics*. NY: Harper Design.

against the *emo* community[56]. A recent article in *Juventud Reblede*, the Communist

youth newspaper in Cuba, wrote a piece on these youth. As Martín and Fuentes (2008)

say, "In the world, the emos community is easy to identify by their codes, but not all

youth that imitate this fashion assume the misanthropic philosophy that governs their

identity". As it says in the article, "when the emos do not have any money they go to G,

but when they carry five CUC the go to *la Sala Atril*, and there they pass the night

exchanging songs on their cellulars…" (Ibid.).

6.4 The "Phenomenon" of Calle G

If viewing Calle G from a dialectical perspective, one movement of the dialectic

presents this space as a dominant space of abstract power. As mentioned above, this is

the space of planners and architects, a space that seeks to assign and control the uses and

users of that space. This is the space that is appropriated by daily use, the space where

users resist the dominant imposed notions of space, a space that is adapted and reworked.

As Lefebvre emphasized, it is by way of inhabiting urban space, through such things as

play, creativity, and imagination, that individuals can resist and refashion the quotidian

disciplines of abstract dominant space.

As a number of authors have demonstrated, for young people, the nighttime in the

city opens up the streets and public spaces from the control and regulation of the adults,

providing opportunities for young people to congregate and socialize together in

autonomous spaces outside of the sphere of adult control (Hebdige 1988; Ruddick 1996a;

Massey 1998; Skelton 2000). Franck and Stevens (2007) argue that for young people,

---

[56] See, Grillo, Ioan. (2008). Mexico's Emo-Bashing Problem. *Time*, (Thursday, March 27, 2008).
http://www.time.com/time/arts/article/0,8599,1725839,00.html?xid=site-cnn-partner

public space is particularly important since it is the space where they search for and develop their identities, as well as display their self-identities (20). As one interviewee said, "Those nocturnities [referring to the night time activities of these youth] are challenges of social groups wanting to express some way or feeling different to the rest" (Irina, age 25, 01/31/08).

The 'phenomenon' of Calle G is something that has been taking place at the intersection of Calle G and Calle 23 for over ten years now. Originally it was occupied mostly by the *rockeros*, however since 2000 a growing diversity of youth are occupying this space. The discourse of the youth, as well as numerous others from older age cohorts, interviewed for this project repeatedly describe the youth appropriating this street as a "growing phenomenon", something that is gaining momentum and strength. Now on any given weekend, for anywhere from five blocks to the entire stretch of the boulevard, there are hundreds and even thousands of youth creating a social space for themselves. During the day, the central park which divides Calle G is virtually empty, save for the random tourist meandering about or the occasional Cuban sitting on a bench. However, by nightfall this space is transformed as groups of youth descend on the area. While it is possible during the week to see gatherings of youth along this street, it is particularly during the weekend that it truly becomes a spectacle. As one interviewee states,

> "This phenomenon in G has been happening for some years now. There are boys and girls who are 24, 25 years old now, and since they were teenagers they have been experiencing and living this phenomenon. The phenomenon is now expressed with a great deal of strength. Since two or three years ago I have seen it grow with a tremendous strength. They [the youth] have been pushed out from one place to another, but finally, this is the place of confluence….And it is like stating: you can not expel us from here because we are too visible and we are many more than before, we are no longer a little group – to a certain extent it must be seen as a culture of resistance" (Juan Luis, age 28, 01/23/08).

206

This statement by a Cuban youth captures much of what makes this public space of interest for this project. As he says, after years of be pushed by the police from one public space to another, they have finally found a space to call their own, and the fact that their numbers of constantly growing is seen by them as a legitimation of their presence there. Yet what is also interesting is that he also acknowledges that their presence there is probably seen as a 'culture of resistance' by others. Repeatedly throughout the interviews, youth described their gathering at Calle G as a 'phenomenon', a phenomenon that is 'growing in strength', a phenomenon that is occurring as a result of a 'confluence'. The fact that the exact same terminology was used by numerous individuals, both young and old, is very revealing of the power they see in this movement, and I use the word 'movement' loosely. The other reason I point out the repeated usage of the word 'phenomenon' is because it is suggestive of the fact that what is happening along Calle G is unprecedented in revolutionary Cuba. In the past, informal public gatherings have typically been suppressed by various state mechanisms, the police, rapid action brigades, undercover security, CDRs, Committee for the Defense of the Revolution[57] etc. Over the past ten years, as referred to in the quote above, gatherings of youth like that at Calle G have been broken up by the authorities. Larson (2004) writes about the struggles homosexuals have had in creating and maintaining a public space of their own. While one of the main spaces for homosexuals in Havana is only a few blocks from Calle G, it is a space of constant contention and struggle between the homosexuals and the

---

[57] As mentioned in Chapter 4, the CDRs were originally set-up as militias during the early 1960s, at the height of the crisis between the US and Cuba. Since that period, their function has shifted to mobilizing their respective neighborhood, and providing assistance to the elderly and needy in their neighborhood, as well as continued monitoring of their neighborhood and its residents.

authorities. As will be discussed further below, the question therefore becomes, why are the authorities now allowing the youth to gather at this location? Why are they allowed to stay at Calle G and not some of the other locations the youth have used in the past? Why are they allowing this to happen so close the seats of national power? And why now?

Valentine (2004) says that such autonomous spaces for youth are important because, "with nothing particular to do, young people often roam the streets looking for excitement because the street can be a place where special things happen" (84). She goes on to say that often, the spatial practices of youth, the 'hanging out', in streets and parks, the drinking and listening to music and being rowdy are forms of resistance to adult power, they are practices of 'non-adherence' to the order and normal regulation of behavior in public (85). The activities of the youth at Calle G vary from walking up and down the park, socializing, sitting on the benches chatting with friends (it is prohibited to sit on the grass, according to the police who patrol the area), drinking, playing music, singing, doing drugs, buying and selling things from other youth, or merely using this space as a rendezvous point. Even inclement weather does not drastically diminish the numbers of youth who regularly go there. On a few of the occasions when it started raining while I was conducting observations and interviews at Calle G, I feared that the rain would cause everyone to leave the park and disperse to the bars and restuarnats in the area. However, when the rain started to heavily fall, people just crammed under the large ornamental shrub bushes and trees that line the park. Although this didn't keep them completely dry, it was quite interesting seeing ten or fifteen young Cubans wedged in a

shrubbery, with someone invariably passing around a bottle of rum for everyone to drink from.

Another factor that explains the large numbers of youth on the weekends is that on the weekends many of the students who attend schools in the countryside around Havana spend their weekends in the city, and thus they also end up on Calle G. As one interviewee describes it,

> "There are people of different neighbourhoods such as: La Palma, Playa, and all municipalities that are near or far. Most of the people know each other. People share views, bring guitars and start singing, some drink some rum. Everything is okay. That is what we do there [Calle G], instead of staying bored at home. Every time we go out to a disco, or any place when we finish, we end up getting together in Calle G. That is the point to talk and meet people. Almost everybody goes there" (Miladis, age 18, 01/27/08).

It is exactly as Valentine (2004) says above in relation to youth in English cities, these youth are 'hanging out'- looking for excitement. Although several interviewees describe Calle G as more than merely a place to 'hang-out', for some it is not just a space for social interaction, it is also a space of commerce. As one interviewee stated,

> "I think G is always going to be maintained, we are going to keep it....It is like this is a house. The whole world comes here to have social relations, to enjoy themselves, to meet others, to buy things and sell things" (Osmany, age 23, 3/04/08).

As described in Chapter 4, the informal economy and informal economic activities have grown considerably throughout Cuba since the crisis of the 1990s. The mechanisms of *lo informal* are abundantly apparent along Calle G. One 23 year old *desviniculado* (literally unattached, unconnected, referring to those non-working, non-students), who has a university degree and is from the marginalized neighbourhood of San Miguel del Padron[58] has been selling sells bracelets along Calle G since 2000. He says,

---

[58] A marginalized neighborhood to the south of central Havana.

"I invest to buy more yarn to make more bracelets and then I can buy admission to the theatre, to buy books….I give culture to the new generation, they give me money and, will I embellish their body" (Rámon, age 23, 3/04/08).

Another interviewee says that many youth, from all of the youth subcultures, engage in these informal activities. She says,

"*Muiquis* and *faranduleros* sell many things, phones, clothes, etc., at G. When they see that they do not have money, they sell anything in order to get some dough to go to concerts. They not only go to those expensive concerts and places, but they also have good clothes that are in fashion. They see video clips from the US and Puerto Rico, or anywhere, and then they go to expensive stores (boutiques) and buy those clothes. For example a very tight jean (tubito) is expensive and cost 25.00 CUC. They are always with foreigners, so that they pay for them" (Clara, age 17, 02/02/08).

This statement reflects a number of issues. Firstly, it reflects the impact of the increasing flows of transnational consumer culture as Cuban youth create their identities based upon appropriating and adapting foreign cultural references in the ways in which they dress. Additionally, it also demonstrates that for many youth, they are not relying on traditional forms of employment to meet their consumption desires, therefore they are relying on informal networks and on informal practices outside of any traditional employment structure. In relation to the youth appropriating foreign cultural references, Massey (1998) argues that youth culture today is spatially open as youth from all parts of the globe are utilizing, appropriating, and claiming aspects of an international cultural reference system, thereby creating hybrid cultures. She goes on to say that in these hybrid youth cultures, "all of them involve active importation, adoption and adaptation….'Hybridity' is probably a condition of all cultures" (122-124). The fact that these Cuban youth are appropriating bits and pieces of foreign culture through fashion and music and then turning them into something *Cuban* demonstrates Massey's argument about cultural hybridity among youth.

While it is often argued that the presence of young people in public urban space is due to the fact that they do not have any ownership rights over spaces of their own and therefore are forced to appropriate public space, Childress (2004) contends that their presence in public space is also because they are "more intensely public beings" (196). For Malone (2002), the streets and public spaces of the city are the places where "communities come together to express and perform a variety of cultural activities – a space with open boundaries" (161). This same sentiment was expressed by another youth who said,

> "G is a giant community. Yes, differences among us in fact exist. We cannot deny the differences just as we cannot deny the whole group. There is, unlike music, style, how to behave, dress, there is thinking, ways of thinking (*sentimiento*)" (Juan Manuel, age 21, 2/12/08).

In order to provide a clearer image of what youth are actually doing on the weekend and how Calle G fits into this, I asked a group of youth to describe a 'typical' weekend for them. This was a group of both boys and girls in their early twenties, who self-identified as *miquis*. Friday night they said they begin by meeting and going to listen to techno music at the club *Rosado de la Tropical*[59] from 10 pm until about 1am. Then they would take the bus to Calle G. There they would stay until five or six in the morning, socializing, drinking some rum, and meeting other people, see Figure 7.

---

[59] Large open-air club located in Marianao of mixed age, gender, racial, and class clientele at 41 y 46.

Figure 10, Youth hanging out on Calle G at night.

Normally they would get home by between seven or eight o'clock in the morning depending on how far away they live. On Saturday night they start by going to Calle G around 9:30 pm and stay most of the night unless there is an event going on at one of the nearby clubs. On Sunday they go to the *Sofia*[60] disco from 3 pm until 8 pm, and then go to Calle G, which gets crowded on Sundays around 8:30 or 9 pm since many of the Sunday daytime clubs close at 8 pm, or they would go to the club *La Casona*[61], which continues from 8:30 until 10 pm. After which everyone goes to Calle G and stays until early morning. Due to the constant crowds along this street there is some backlash from local residents and from the state, as will be described in the following section.

6.5 Opposition to the youth of Calle G

---

[60] A disco located at Calle 23 and Calle O.

[61] A club located on Línea and Calle F, frequented by Cubans and tourists.

Because youth are often economically dependent they lack space of their own,

and therefore, they must occupy and appropriate[62] public space, which is often seen as

transgressive behavior that resists the hegemony of the adult world and of authority.

Concentrations of youth in public urban spaces are often seen as a potential risk by adults

and by the authorities (Frye & Bannister 1998; Lucas 1998). This fear of youth in public

space is a mechanism of exclusion, as Sibley (1995) demonstrates, because while youth

are often 'doing nothing' but hanging out, they are often seen by adults as a polluting

presence in public space (Baumgartner 1988). As Valentine (2004) says, "Hanging

around on street corners and larking about in public space become (deliberately and

unintentionally) a form of resistance to adult power. A strategy of resistance that is often

read as a threat to the safety of young children, adults and to the peace and order of the

street" (83). In regards to perceptions of youth in public space, there was evidence in the

interviews of some intergenerational conflict as the discourse of those interviewees over

the age of 40 often framed the spatial practices of these youth in terms of moral panic,

citing the issues of loud music, shouting, informality of dress, drinking, doing drugs, and

unruly behavior.

Valentine (1996b) argues that, processes of 'othering' young people, deeming

youth as either 'dangerous' or 'in danger', are meant to maintain adult hegemony over

public space and that this process is constantly being re-worked and re-produced through

space (582). In interviews with local residents of Calle G and with some older Cubans,

---

[62] "Appropriation should not be confused with a practice which is closely related to it but still distinct,
namely 'diversion' (*détournement*). An existing space may outlive its original purpose and the *raison
d'être* which determines its forms, functions, and structures; it may thus in a sense become vacant, and
susceptible of being diverted, reappropriated and put to a use quite different from its initial ones"
(Lefebvre 1991: 167).

there was a sense of apprehension about the youth activities that would go on every

weekend there. There were numerous complaints about the noise late at night and about

the music and the youth drinking and doing drugs. One woman described the youth

along Calle G in this way,

> "I don't know how to qualify those parties, they have this sense of being something underground. There must be drugs around, there must be other motivations for these people to get together like that. They are young, sometimes with a scandalous behaviour attitude, which is not good at all" (Wina, age 44, 01/25/08).

Another older Cuban, a photojournalist who lives in Vedado, who was interviewed for

this project described the youth practices along Calle G as being 'antisocial activities', he

said,

> "But now a worrisome phenomenon is taking place, let us say that at night some public places are becoming places for some antisocial activities. It doesn't mean that everyone going and gathering in those places at night engage in antisocial activities, but for example in those places some people use drugs, they drink heavily, sometimes there are fights, some times different types of illegal activities" (Roberto, age 42, 02/05/08).

The government response to the growing number of youth who spend their weekend

nights along Calle G has been twofold. One response has been the continued presence of

police, both uniformed and plain clothed, to monitor the activities of the youth and to

ensure that nothing gets out of control. The other response has been to try and co-opt this

gathering of youth by using youth organizations like the *Unión de Jóvenes Communistas,*

(the Union of Communist Youth- UJC), or the *La Asociación Hermano Saiz*[63] to sponsor

cultural events for the youth to attend. These state sponsored youth associations and

organizations are meant to provide, as Valentine (2008) says, "'meaningful' and

politically correct leisure for young people" (77). One woman who I interviewed, who

---

[63] the state run youth cultural institution

214

had previously worked for *La Asociación Hermano Siaz,* said that the state was working

to use public space to actively incorporate the youth. She said,

> "I think that regarding public spaces there has been a positive posture of revitalization because emerging from this campaign launched by the revolution of linking political activities with culture, and of the cultural revolution that has been unleashed in the country, we have had to use public spaces again to meet theses objectives and goals of providing culture to the people, so that people will attend those activities and have some fun" (María Elena, age 45, 2/25/08).

The police presence is clear at Calle G, with uniformed police officers checking IDs of

young people regularly, and with the unseen but collectively understood presence of

undercover police and security forces amongst them. Just as Valentine (2004) points out

in relation to the UK, "most of this 'peace keeping' is done without invoking the power

of the law through arrest but through 'rough informality' such as controlling people's

behavior in space or moving people or groups between spaces" (95). As Massey (1998)

says, "the control of spatiality is part of the process of defining the social category of

'youth' itself" (27). Much in the same way that Thomas (2001) states in relation to urban

space in Vietnamese cities, economic liberalization and restructuring in Havana have

created spatial and economic changes in the uses of public space that are far to complex

for the state to properly police and control. One youth described the two approaches of

the government to the situation at Calle G by saying,

> "The responses go from reactions equally violent with a visible and exaggerated police presence, particularly in certain night hours and during weekends, that is when most of the youths are free from the schools in the countryside. On the other hand, terms used by police- this is a zone we have to 'freeze or cool'(*congelar*), a vocabulary from the Cold War. They ask for ID's etc. that is, these kind of reactions seem absurd to me, and even those responses that are more creative and well-thought like getting rid of these groups by means of providing some facilities and trying to include them under the umbrella of a wider project, like the UJC" (Yander, age 30, 02/09/08).

After decades of banning certain forms of rock music, the government is playing heavy

metal videos in public on a giant screen that is set up on some weekends on Calle G, at

the main intersection of Calle G and Calle 23, on the corner occupied and claimed by the

rockeros and *friqus*. One of the youth interviewed made a very poignant remark about

the state's attempt to co-opt the youth there by saying,

> "This also has had an official counterbalance because suddenly you find that a huge
> screen with videos is setup there. In some ways the state is saying: 'You are not counting
> on me that I am the State, I am the Almighty, therefore that can not happen here in that
> way. Here, even for partying in such a way you have to count on me!' Counterbalance
> and I put a big screen and make things less noisy. It is somehow a reply to such a
> phenomenon" (Yanisbel, age 23, 02/03/08).

Both of the actions taken by the government in response to the large numbers of youth

along Calle G raise an important question. If, as stated in a number of interviews, the

police had previously coerced the youth, particularly the *friquis* and *rockeros,* to move

the locations where they were gathering in the past, why would the state allow them to

continue to occupy Calle G, particularly when it is in such a prominent location.   Figure

7[64] depicts the movement of *friquis* and *rockeros* over the course of a number of years,

with each arrow representing the location they were forced from and where they ended up

moving to. When I posed the question to several youth during a focus group as to why

the government is allowing them to stay at Calle G, the unanimous response was that the

reason the police did not prevent the youth from gathering there was because most of the

youth who go to Calle G are the children of '*funcionarios*' (government officials). The

group that these youth were referring to was not the *friquis*, but the *miquis*, the group that

---

[64] This map was put together with information from several of the older *rockeros* and *friquis*, it was then
corroborated by several others. While there was a general consensus on the places they previously
congregated at and were forced from, there was little consensus on the exact dates they occupied these
spaces.

is said to be 'middle-class'. I was unable to verify this with any officials or in any Cuban

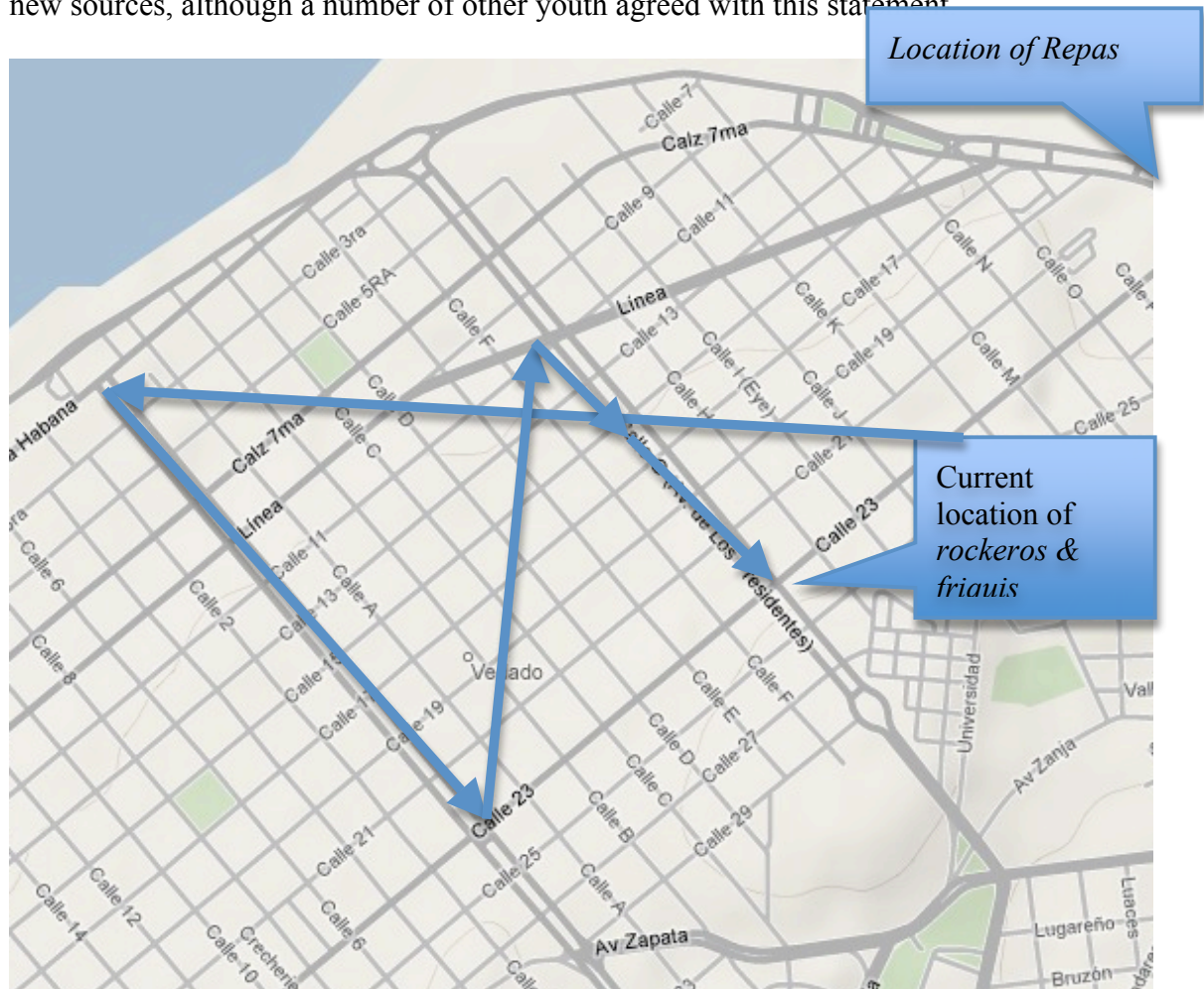new sources, although a number of other youth agreed with this statement.

Figure 11, Spatiality of *friquis, rockeros,* and *repas*

The fear of youth and the view that they are transgressors to the established norms

is nothing new in Cuba. As discussed in the previous chapter, the revolutionary

government began battling delinquency back in the 1960s and 1970s, with the passages

of such laws as the Anti-Loafing Law (Law No.1231). As Salas (1979a) points out,

Castro and the government were very concerned about the growing levels of delinquency

among youth. Increasingly strict measures were taken to reduce juvenile crime and to

keep the youth in school. This question of *desviniculados*, non-working, non-studying

youth (literally unattached, unconnected) youth was quite serious, as Smith and Padula

(1996) point out, Castro was worried that these youth would become a permanent

underclass of Cuban society.

Additionally, as argued by a number of authors, these same issues have

confronted almost every advanced capitalist society (Aitkens 2001; Côté and Allahar

1994; Holloway and Valentine 2000). Furthermore, as discussed by many of the *dino*

rockeros (older rockers), the government has monitored their movement for years, and

has coerced their movement previously, as displayed in Figure 6. When describing the

1980s one interviewee said,

> "There was a misconception that every state within the movement friqui was frowned
> upon…if your hair was a little too long, you were a *friqui*, and you can not go to school,
> you have to cut your hair. And the Ministry of Culture had long hair, and Fidel, Raul and
> Che went down with long hair…These things are illogical…The Beatles were at one time
> frowned upon here. It was thought that this music was bourgeois. Rock'n'roll was seen
> as capitalist" (Yorell, age 37, 3/02/08).

What Yorell is referring to was the backlash against *frikis* and *rockeros* by the

government throughout the earlier years of the revolution. According to Juan Castelanos

(1997), the music of the Beatles was rigorously censored between 1964 and 1966 and

was then restricted to the medias of mass communication (156). During the period of the

repression of the Beatles,[65] nearly 15,000 youth were arrested by the Cuban authorities

for having long hair, for the style of clothing they were wearing, and for their loud parties

---

[65] It was not just the Beatles that were prohibited during this period (1964-1966), it was also the Rolling
Stones, John Lennon, and any Cuban musical artists that had fled the island. According to Valdés (2008),
"The Cuban political, economic and cultural leaderships assumed that in order to overcome
underdevelopment it was imperative to foster an ideology that would be the revolutionary equivalent of the
Protestant ethic. Work hard, consume little, defer gratification, invest in further development. The early
stages of mass consumerism was considered an external threat. The Beatles were perceived as the vanguard
of selfish consumerism and not as revolutionaries who were musicians"

and anti-social behavior (Ibid.). Juan Castelanos (1997) describes the impact of the

Beatles and of the hostile opposition of the government towards their music by saying,

"simply, both sides were only victims of stubborn bureaucratic mimesis that in the long-

run made us want them [the Beatles] more, because after a mysterious and magical

journey by a long and tortuous road, the four from Liverpool still live among us" (149).

One of the local residents interviewed for this project referred to the previous oppression

of Beatle fans and rock music when I asked her what she thought should be done about

the large numbers of youth on Calle G every weekend. She said,

> "How do you drive them out of there or how do you create an alternative public place for
> them where they will not disturb us? If all these youths are getting together, what are you
> going to do? Beat them up and put them in jail? Are we going to return to the repression
> with rockers as it was in the 70's?" (Mayra, age 46, 1/24/08).

While music is often a source of integration and identification among youth, Wicke

(2006) points out that it also has the capacity to exhibit symbolic patterns of segregation

among youth as well. He says, "the line between 'us' and 'them' was henceforth drawn

on the basis of music. At first this line was drawn along lines of age, later, separating

different social realities, and ultimately today, dividing people on the basis of virtual

realities of highly differentiated social networks around scenes and subcultures, which are

as fragile as they are variable in terms of their consumption, orientation, patterns of

communication, and cultural codes" (Ibid.: 118). Aguierre (2002) argues that such

gestures as what one wears, one's body language, one's gestures and words, and even

one's presence in certain locations can be seen as cultures of resistance in Cuba, he says

these are indirect forms of political criticism.

The theme of music as an individual and group signifier was prevalent throughout

all of the interviews and among all of the groups. For many youth, music is a means to

create self-identity as well as to demarcate one's group. As mentioned previously in

Chapter 2, the Birmingham School (CCCS) focused on youth subcultures, identifying

them as forms of resistance to dominant post-war culture in the United Kingdom.

Notions of resistance to hegemonic ideology manifested themselves through language

(slang), music, dress, self-identity formation, and 'rituals of resistance'. The work of

Hall and Jefferson (1976) and Hebdige (1979) have suggested that the formation of many

youth subcultures is dependent on music and visual displays (i.e. fashion and

performance) as a means of differentiating themselves from other youth and from the

dominant society and hegemonic culture. According to Garrat (2004) "for most young

people, subcultures are at best, nothing more than a means to create and establish an

identity in a society where they can find it difficult to locate a sense of self. At worst,

subcultures prove to be symbolic challenges to a symbolic order" (145).

    While Wicke (2006) is writing about youth in the context of post-war Germany,

his statement rings true also for youth in contemporary Cuba when he says, "music suited

to absorb the developing system of young people's values and their interests because

music's symbolic function was neither reliant on the unambiguous meaning of words not

on ideologies, but rather based on emotional impulses" (116). The discourse of the youth

reflect these arguments. Throughout the course of the revolution, Cuban music has

changed a great deal and the changes in popular music often reflect broader societal

changes in Cuba. One of the interviewees described this change by saying,

> "University students always had one thing in common, and is was the protest song, it is
> the song of the Nueva Trova[66]. But now you go to a university party and what you hear

---

[66] Nueva Trova is Cuban political protest music influenced by folk music that originated during the 1960s.
This music was widely supported by the revolutionary Cuban government since much of the lyrics
supported the ideology and policies of the revolution. Artists such as Silvio Rodríguez and Pablo Milanés
are some of the most famous musicians of the Nueva Trova.

is reggaeton. It does not mean that the university does not play salsa, but if a party at the university is not for listening to all the music that is heard on the streets, and that is lost today, it has been lost. Those who are doing the letters of protest in a more serious and deeper into that kind of music is hip-hop. But hip-hop has ceded to the commercial space by the push of reggaeton" (Yorell, age 37, 3/02/08).

Although there is some degree of overlap between the musical cultures of reggaeton and hip-hop, Cuban hip-hop is seen as being closely connected to the rise of black identity within the marginalized inner-city neighborhoods in Cuba. Fernandes (2003) says, "Cuban hip-hop is shaped by a highly specific set of social and economic conditions, including the demographic restructuring of the urban metropolis and increasing racial inequalities in the current period of crisis" (360).

When speaking with one young Cuban about the different categories they use to describe the different groups on Calle G and the ways they determine this, she said,

> "Well actually, it depends on the music because it gives you an idea of how a person is. For example, *repas* listen to reggaeton whose lyrics are very dirty, with a lot of obscene words. Because there is reggaeton and there is reggaeton. but the ones that people listen to in parties are with very dirty lyrics that give you an idea of how repas are: vulgar" (Alessandra, 18, 02/09/08).

What this youth says exhibits the discrimination against *repas* that was present in a number of interviews with individuals from almost every group. Almost the same remarks were made by another youth when I asked her to describe the characteristics of her group, the *miquis*. She said,

> "We like house music and we are calm and tranquil people. We are not like *repas* who are always looking for fights. They just create riots. They discriminate what we like. They discriminate house music. They say that *miqui* are "nerds" because of the way they dress, but it is not like that. They are always mocking about *miquis*" (Yasmin, age 17, 02/02/08).

In addition to giving an indication of where the *repas* fit among the various subcultures, the other factor that needs to be mentioned is that these comments are suggestive of a

221

latent racism since it is well known that the majority of *repas* are Afro-Cuban or

mulato/a. Although the youth of Calle G are mostly white, this does not mean that it is an

exclusively white social space because there are black and darker skinned mulatto Cuban

youth who go there frequently. In terms of 'black' youth spaces, as some of the interview

data points out, these spaces are typically located in close proximity to the marginalized

neighborhoods that have higher percentages of Afro-Cuban populations. Although

'racism' was rarely discussed or mentioned by any of the interviewees, there were many

comments during the interviews that could be interpreted as racist. I think part of the

explanation for this is that the rhetoric that Cubans have heard most of their lives is that

the revolution eliminated racism, and therefore racism is not openly discussed. Espina

and Rodríguez (2006) say that although the revolution has improved the conditions for

most blacks in Cuba and has removed many of the social and economic barriers that

inhibited them prior to the revolution, since the 1990s racial inequality has become more

visible. Although these comments mostly came from *miquis*, there were also some

friquis who had similar sentiments. As one *friqui* youth said,

> "On the contrary- we [los friquis] are the more peaceful people. But there are repas who
> go around with knives and are always looking for a fight. The discriminate against us. I
> do not know why they discriminate against us" (Osmany, age 23, 3/04/08)

Cuban essayist and journalist Enrique Ubieta (2008) recently gave a talk on socialism and

consumer society at an International Congress on Marx in Cuba where he discussed some

of the issues surrounding these youth subcultures. It was at this talk that he discussed the

socio-class tension between the two youth subcultures of the *miquis* and the *repas* by

saying,

> "Of humble origin, the reparteros or repas, the word refers to those living in peripheral neighborhoods, and listen to salsa music and reggaeton - are despised by the miquis in general…They have their own aesthetic in the manner of their dress, in their identity. In fact, this tendency is only among teenagers or youth. They are attributed to have some aggressiveness, especially when consuming alcohol. Unlike the miquis and the friquis, the repas are mostly children of parents (or are parents) who are not professionals and are sometimes seen to be from dysfunctional families." (Ubieta 2008).

As is noted in other studies on youth in public space, young people in their struggle for identity formation and independence territorialize, however temporarily, public space through processes of inclusion and exclusion (Sibley 1995; Ruddick 1996a; Valentine 2004). The quotes above suggest that although this is seen as an open inclusive space for all youth, some subgroups are more excluded than others. One of the other subcultures that occupies Calle G is the *emos*. As described above, this new subculture in Cuba has concerned the Cuban government, particularly the suicidal connotations and misanthropic philosophy associated with them. When speaking with one Cuban youth and discussing the various subcultures that exist along Calle G, he began speaking about the *emos* and said,

> "About the *emos*, the fashion of the *emos* has already been around in the outside, but suddenly it comes here and is established here in Cuba in the aspect of the clothing and fashion. I did not think it was going to get here. But suddenly there are people that are putting this history of cutting themselves and all that. This is a fashion imported, like almost everything else that arrives here in Cuba. But that part about cutting oneself and all that…it is so violent" (Rámon, age 23, 3/04/08).

Martín and Fuentes (2008) make a poignant comment in regards the *emos* in Cuba when they say, "on this island there can converge all the subcultures that globalization inserts, but in the end we can accommodate and we live in peace, despite the differences" (7). The authors argue that in the case of Cuba this phenomenon is more about fashion than philosophy, thereby rejecting the misanthropic connotations that associated with it. The emergence of *emo* youth in Cuba is suggestive not only of the growing influence of

cultural globalization, but also of the impact of socio-economic changes and the growth

of socio-economic inequality, for the fashion of the *emos* and the various accessories that

go along with it are out of the price range of many Cubans- essentially this group has a

different purchasing power than say, the *repas*. Another youth voiced similar sentiments

concerning the *emos*, his statement meant that this subculture has no real history and was

therefore not a legitimate group,

> "Most of the cultures that exist in Cuba are real. All have their sense of being and of
> history. But not the *emos*. The *emos* do not know why they are *emos*. You can question
> the *friquis*, the *miquis*, the *repas*, and the *rastas* why they like that lifestyle they choose
> and they will give you a dissertation about why. All but these people, the *emos*" (Tomás,
> age 24, 3/01/08).

Many of these youth's identities overlap, as they draw aspects from several groups to

form their own self-identities. However, another interesting component of this process is

the spatiality of these groups. Whether through self-segregation or more overt acts of

exclusion, certain spaces in this area are understood to be the territory of one group or the

other. As one young Cuban described, the *repas* occupy the space below the Hotel

Nacional, at *la cascada*, the waterfalls under the hotel along the Malecón. From that

point east along the Malecón is their territory, while all along Calle G is for the *miquis*

and *friquis*, while the designated spot for the *rockeros* is the part of Calle G just to the

south of Calle 23. During a focus group session with some youth, I was asking them

about what are some other public spaces like Calle G. While they all said there were no

other spaces like Calle G, one girl went on to describe how the public spaces of this area

are carved up by the youth. She says,

> "No there aren't. Outdoor places such as this one, I think they don't exist...There is also
> the Malecón. La cascada (the waterfall underneath the Hotel Nacional) is more for the
> *repas*. From that place, la cascada, and further down the Malecon is for the *repas*. From
> la cascada up until here [Calle G] is for the *miquis*. It is like Calle 23, it is always full of

people, due to the fact that there are a lot of discos, cafeterias that are for the *faranduleros*, for *repas* and *miquis*. It is for everybody. So when the activities on Calle 23 are over, when everything closes, the *repas* go to the Malecón and the *miquis* go to Calle G" (Yasmin, age 17, 02/02/08).

Another subject that was repeated in a number of interviews was inter-generational difference. This was particularly mentioned by older youth and by those who grew up prior to the economic crisis of the 1990s. One older *friquis*/*rockeros* whom I interviewed for this project was discussing the *friquis* of his pre-crisis generation by saying,

> "I think that this is one of the greatest differences- the conception of the group, all are human beings and all have convergences and differences. To me that is the main thing. And it was all a society that we lost, we were all equal as we shared everything. Today you see that within the same group there are subgroups" (Yorell, age 37, 3/02/08).

This notion of equality came up several times during the interviews with individuals saying that prior to the 1990s, everyone was more or less equal, everyone had the same consumption options and that there was a much stronger sense of solidarity. Yorell, the same *friqui* quoted above, went on to say,

> "The 80s had an ease about it, in some ways we were all equal…in the end we were all part of one group who resolved to express ourselves culturally in the same way and we were excluded from society for it" (Yorell, age 37, 3/02/08).

What is interesting about a number of the quotations above is that several of these youth are discussing cultural capital, referring to the ways in which people interact and socialize (e.g. language, communication, movement) and the ways in which they present themselves (e.g. dress, behavior, values). The interview data indicates that many of the youth are aware of the different social status that each subculture brings to its memebers, this was particularly evident among youth who discussed the *miquis* and the perceived elevated status they have through their higher levels of consumption, i.e. their mobile

225

phones, their digital cameras etc. The data also indicates that the *repas* are seen as

having the least amount of cultural capital among the groups who occupy Calle G. As

Aitken (2001) says, "cultural capital comprises a symbolic repertoire, the meaning of

which is learned and used by members of particular social networks. Social capital

depends on reciprocal relations between individuals in the group" (136).

As reviewed in Chapter 4, issues of material consumption are of increasing

importance in contemporary Cuba, and this is particularly true among the youth of the

city.   In discussing the institutionalization of adolescents and youth, Lefebvre (1971)

argues that youth consumption has been made 'innocent' and that youth and youthfulness

have been commercialized (170). He goes on to say,

> "Youthfulness with it operational environment (organization and institution), the
> hypostasis of real youth, enables these adolescents to appropriate existing symbolizations,
> to consume symbols of happiness, eroticism, power and the cosmos by means of
> expressly elaborated metalanguages such as songs, newspaper articles, publicity- to
> which the consumption of real goods is added; thus a parallel everyday life is
> established" (Ibid.: 171).

It is apparent in the interview data that one of the primary means of self-differentiation

among Cuban youth is through the consumption and the display of material commodities.

In a recent article on this issue of consumption in Cuba, Porter (2008) claims that,

"consumption is now perceived to be a substantive right of citizenship and therefore

affects beliefs around national belonging, identity, and personal power" (136). This is

something that has been well studied in Western capitalistic economies and post-socialist

economies for a number of years. In his famous text *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*,

Hebdidge (1979) argues that style, in the form of fashion and self-presentation, in itself

communicates symbolically, and that in the post-war years in Britain, style became the

field of resistance to cultural hegemony. Part of the ability of post-war youth subcultures

to form in the UK and in North America was connected to the rapid growth of capitalist

economies and the increasing amount of leisure time and consumption abilities that youth

acquired (Aitkens 2001; Côté and Allahar 1994; Valentine 2004). From the perspective

of Hebdige (1979), the act of material consumption in the form of dress and style more

broadly, is more than just a symbolic act of resistance, it is an integral part of the

performance of resistance itself.

In Verdery's (2000) work she examines the role consumption played in Soviet

and post-Soviet Eastern Europe. She says that,

> "consumption goods and objects conferred an identity that set you off from socialism,
> enabling you to differentiate yourself as an individual in the face of relentless pressures to
> homogenize everyone's capacities and tastes into an undifferentiated collectivity.
> Acquiring objects became a way of constituting your selfhood against a deeply unpopular
> regime" (Ibid: 29).

While in *Russia's Youth and its Culture: A nation's constructors and constructed*,

Pilkington's (1994) study on Russian youth cultures in the aftermath of the collapse of

the Soviet Union, she examines how during the Soviet period the paradigm for youth was

"youth as constructors of communism", while in the post-Soviet period the paradigm for

youth shifted toward "youth as victims of western influence".   She points out that during

the Soviet period in the USSR, there was often a tension between the official conception

of the role of youth in the revolution and the actually existing aspirations and beliefs of

young people. This tension manifested itself in number of ways, however, none more

obvious than the processes of identity formation and youth's resistance to the state

imposed identity of youth as "constructors of communism". Youth resisted this identity

by creating alternatives identities through music and fashion and through their spatial

practices, and hence this connects to the paradigm shift Pilkington (1994) refers to as "youth as victims of western influence".

In the work of Hodge (2005) on male sex workers in Havana, he states that many urban Cuban youth "embrace the values of consumption in order to display a winning location along the new axis of material stratification …The affluence they seek is really only the image of affluence, based largely in performance and style through dress." (362). Hodge (2005) goes on to demonstrate that the male sex workers in Havana, *pingueros*, differentiate themselves through conspicuous consumption, or at least the performance of conspicuous consumption and that this performance at times represents resistance or opposition to the state. This is similar to what one interviewee said about the youth of Calle G, by describing it as a 'catwalk'. He said, "when you view all of these young people who come to G it is like watching a catwalk". This notion of the role fashion and style play in the creation of status and differentiation was mentioned by one interviewee who said,

> "Here we see certain status connected to the ways people dress, and this status that they
> get is internalized, in their feelings. And that must be moderated. It occurs in all
> movements- the *repas*, in *miquis*, in *rockeros*, in *friquis*" (Rámon, age 23, 3/04/08).

The role of fashion and style among Cuban youth for purposes of differentiation is nothing new in Cuba. What is new in this regard is that the sources, types, varieties, and quality of the clothing and accessories entering Cuba now is vastly different than during the Soviet period when there were limited consumer markets for all goods. Ferrer Zuelta (2006) says that the Special Period had a dramatic impact on people's social behavior and even the ways people dressed. She says that, "traditional notions of 'elegance' or 'the good way to dress', traditionally connected to the collective conscience of Cubans was

eroded during the crisis of the 1990s (Ibid.). Fundamentally during the early years of the

crisis, during the period of excessive shortages, people's social imaginaries were

impacted and what they were forced to do was to *resolver*[67], their circumstances.

Therefore, what Ferrer Zuelta (2006) says in regards to fashion and clothing is that

individuals had to *resolver* the shortages by dressing with what they already had at home

or with what they could create. She goes on to say that one of the positive outcomes of

this period was that people returned to traditional practices, innovations and creativity in

home textile production and among artisans who created a cottage industry that

increasingly now caters to the tourist dollar market (Ibid.). However, along with the

growing market for traditional Cuban fashion she says that there is also an emergence of

"mercantile relations" that are creating a 'mercantile logic' among those engaged in

artisan textile production and that these mercantile relations are increasingly becoming

more and more conflictive and competitive (192).

Fernandes (2003) says that for many urban marginalized black youth, their

strategies of consumerism and hustling are a means of survival for them, additionally she

argues that consumerism and hustling are ways to contest the Special Period (360).

While Fernandes (2003) concedes that the conspicuous consumption associated with the

hip-hop lifestyle from the West isn't a realistic or feasible option for most young Cubans,

these dreams and fantasies are "part of the process by which diverse logics come to

flourish against the homogenizing visions of a singular socialist utopia. In a period of

economic uncertainty and stagnation, Cuban rappers devise multiple strategies by which

---

[67] While *resolver* literally means to solve, to resolve, in Cuba since the 1990s, this term has taken on a greater significance because as the state was increasingly unable to provide for its citizens, citizens were required to take matters into their own hands, utilizing their social networks and relying on *lo informal* to survive. Since the 1990s a new lexicon has emerged that signifies the hardships of the period.

to revitalize utopian promises and express their needs and desires" (373). These issues of self-differentiation through consumption and the status that certain styles bring appears repeatedly in the interviews. One youth explained that you can identify *miquis* from other subgroups based upon the clothing they wear and the accessories they carry. He said,

> "You recognize them because of their clothes. You may have more than 40 comments and opinions about their clothes. But you will see that is of a particular trend and style they have, but it is expensive clothes, shoes, purses and wallets, state-of-the-art mobile phones with cameras. We are talking about a group that for snobbism, among other things, they are also gathering in G Street. They haven't felt themselves excluded, but they see and some how they feel that they belong to a group that has particular and well defined qualities." (Carlos, age 25, 01/26/08).

His comment is interesting because it alludes to the sense of exclusiveness that some of these youth perceive they have through the material consumption they are able to obtain. When speaking with another Cuban youth about the *miquis* and Calle G, he said,

> "..they are a sector that effectively has been excluded from Cuban society –because of the music they listen to, because of certain behaviors and practices they have, ways of dressing themselves or stereotypes regarding hygiene (individual or collective)....But most of the people that are getting together in Calle G right now, we could say that they belong to a sector of society -although I do not like to use comparisons – we could say that they belong to the middle class in any country, with a different purchasing power" (Armando, age 26, 01/29/08).

This issue of different purchasing powers among the different youth subgroups is the issue truly at the core of the intergroup tensions. Ubieta (2008) also makes the distinction that the *miquis* are the children of the new economy, they are the children of managers and employees of foreign firms, successful musicians, and other cultural producers- they are now the ones with money and status.

Although the *miquis* are attributed to be 'middle-class' and therefore have a 'different purchasing power', Ubieta (2008) says that even among the *reparteros* there is

a class of nouveaux riche. He says that, "among the reparteros there is also a layer of

"new rich" with more desire to appear, for reasons that - that loves chains, rings and gold

teeth, loud music in the car, full of bright trinkets and whether they are men, young and

pretty plastics" (Ubieta 2008). What Ubieta is referring to in English would be called,

'bling' and is a term connected to the 'gansta rap' originating in the US (Rose 1994). In

several of the interviews, the youth discussed the *miquis* as if they were the 'cool-kids' in

town, the group that others either want to emulate or become part of. One girl told the

story of when she decided she wanted to become a *miqui*,

> "In the Sofía disco, during the afternoon hours, everybody got together there, but when
> we found the *miqui* trend, everybody was becoming a *miqui*. There were guys who liked
> reggaetton but they stopped listening to the reggaetton music and converted to *miqui*, just
> like us. (Isaily, age 17, 02/02/08).

As mentioned in a number of interviews, one of the main reasons that Calle G is

such a popular sites for youth in Havana is because of its central location in the midst of

an endless number of clubs, bars, theatres, and cafes. However, another more basic

reason that it is so popular is because it is free. Although many youth say they want to be

or are aspiring to be *miquis*, the reality is that the 'middle-class' in Cuba is still quite

small, and a number of the youth at Calle G do not have adequate 'purchasing power' to

regularly partake in the clubs and bars that surround the area. Another theme that came

out in most of the interviews was the issue of the dual currency system in Cuba.

Although almost every person who was asked, in a survey[68] on public space, what they

considered were 'public spaces' in Havana stated that public spaces were: hotels,

theatres, the cinema, clubs, the beach, parks, etc. And since they were 'public' they were

---

[68] One hundred surveys on how public space was viewed and understood were completed during an early
stage of this project, while portions of the data are being used for this project, the bulk of it will be used for
a future paper.

therefore open to all. However, in the same survey many people wrote that they normally can't afford to go to many of these same places they considered 'public'. As one youth said when discussing the weekend nightlife schedule and some of the clubs they like to go to,

> "But not everyone has 10.00 CUC [about $13.00 USD] for the cover. Almost all covers to all those places are 10.00, 15.00 or 20.00 to see all those groups and bands. And the majority of young people don't have the money. Most of girls have boyfriends who pay for them, but I do not have a boyfriend, so I can't go because I can't afford such places" (Alessandra, 18, 02/09/08).

What is interesting in this girl's comment is that as she refers to role of the boyfriend in paying admission to the clubs for the girls, it can be seen as characteristic of the machismo culture of Cuba, or it can also be seen as another of the mechanisms individuals use to cope with the current economic situation. Whether it is a *farándula*, a *jinetero/a*, a *pinguero*, a *repas*, or a *miqui*, many Cubans have creatively used whatever means at hand to overcome the limitations imposed by a weak economic system and an unstable political structure. However, as the following quote from another young Cuban indicates, although many Cubans are employing tactics and strategies to live and create a more meaningful existence, other Cubans do have access to hard currency through remittances, legal and illegal informal activities, and employment in tourism or mixed enterprises. In reference to a question about public space in Havana, again this interviewee discussed public space as clubs, theatres, cinemas etc. He said,

> "And unfortunately most of them, except that the theatres are in Cuban pesos, the clubs and all are in CUCs. The odd thing is that when you go to a club or a discotheque most of those inside are Cuban. With only about thirty percent being foreigners" (Rámon, age 23, 3/04/08).

Both of these quotes refer to the to the fact that the dual currency system is creating an uneven landscape based upon types of currency. At the end of the day it is the possession of hard currency that is important and not the ways in which it was obtained. Therefore, social and entertainment possibilities are much less limited if one has hard currency- in essence this represents differential citizenship. Porter (2008) says, "in contrast to those Cubans who have begun to embrace conspicuous consumption, the majority of Cubans do not have the funds and social networks necessary to purchase goods. This inability to consume is causing some Cubans to feel substandard and less-than-citizens in their own country" (134). As one interviewee stated,

> "Today, the more beautiful you are, the better hairstyle you have, and you bring your pullover from the latest album of Korn[69], and you are validated" (Yorell, age 37, 3/02/08).

In reference to the *repas*, one youth said, "for *repas*, life if based on *guapería* (looking good, being beautiful, but also being tough)." Although this notion of *guapería* is something that was a part of Cuban culture prior to the crisis of the 1990s, this can be seen as its latest manifestation. What these statements are implying is that the socio-economic transformations that have occurred in Cuba sine the 1990s, and the resulting increasing levels of consumption, are transforming the ways in which youth are legitimating their self-identities. In discussing the style of the *repas*, Fernandes (2003) says that, "this style is not simply an adoption of American styles and capitalist culture, it is also a gesture of defiance that signals a refusal to conform to the dominant society" (370). Returning to Hodge (2005), he says, consumption is increasingly becoming the means to establish a competitive identity, and it is becoming a "battleground between

---

[69] A famous 'nu metal' band from the US.

traditional and revolutionary ideals on the one hand, and the demands of the increasingly

dominant global economy on the other. The men's embrace of the symbolic system of

US materialism includes a reciprocal rejection of the revolutionary ethic which denies the

value of material wealth" (23).

However, not every youth that was interviewed shared these desires to consume.

Several respondents, particularly those over the age of 30, though not exclusively, viewed

the growing consumption among youth and in the wider society as a dramatic change in

value systems in Cuba. A song called "Pobre Corazon[70]", by a Cuban troubadour, in the

tradition of Nueva Trova, named Andres Berazaín engages with these issues of

consumerism as he narrates his encounter with a girl *miqui*.

> "That girl, with green Benetton eyes / excuse for a Chanel scent, / and her short Cristian-
> Dior dress. What a look! / Take a cell phone / in order to call your dad / he has a car and
> take it for a ride / you live quite happily in Miramar. What a picture! / Poor heart, who
> does not realize it / I found it, of course, outside the fishbowl. / And I approached her as
> if she were the hero of his telenovelas. What a pity! / But I'm not like either Brad Pitt or
> Alain Delon, / and only had a little money for my good intentions, disillusion! / Never
> again I have seen her, / because in their world I do not exist, / surely she dances to the
> repeated rhythm that governs fashion, / and your poor heart, / is the pink that aids in their
> speculation" (Ubieta 2008).

These issues of the superficiality of materialism and consumerism were a topic that

surfaced in a number of interviews in often indirect ways. One of the youth interviewed

who did not regularly go to Calle G said it was a 'sad phenomenon'. He went on to say,

> "Every time I pass by here [Calle G] on Saturday there are a lot of people from here to
> down there [from the top of Calle G all the way to the bottom] talking about subjects so
> banal, so silly- talk about a pair of shoes, or if their hair is in fashion, or about the belt-
> buckle they brought" (Tomás, age 24, 3/01/08).

---

[70] A video of Andres Berazaín performing his song "Pobre Corazon" can be seen at:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZiD6kfK8nU

Another youth also spoke of the moral and value changes among young Cubans by referring to it as 'a poverty of the soul'. He goes on to say that there is a need to be more spiritual and less material,

> "What I do it to appeal to what I call the poverty of the soul. I call it the poverty of the soul when you do not have an adequate system of values to know how to behave appropriately with other people, that perhaps what you are saying does not fall within the parameters of adequate conversation, it goes further and becomes vulgarity, using obscene words that do not have anything to do with the music you play or with the person you are. I do a wake-up call for the same reason- to be a little less material and more spiritual." (Rámon, age 23, 3/04/08).

As Porter (2008) says, "ultimately, the abilities of some individuals to consume and the limitations forcing others to not consume have created a situation of emerging class differentiation that is anathema in a country that bases its revolutionary past and present on the concept of equality attainable by all" (135). Now whether the youth who made the following response is an active participant of the revolution is not known, he is a self declared *friqui*, but he expressed a sentiment that was present in a small number of the interviews. He says,

> "I say that happiness is in the small moments. If you want to express your happiness, be happy...Now, do not say you do not live happy when there are certain social problems, or political and economic consequences that affect you and affect the whole world. Try to set that aside a little more and look inside yourself- the internal rather than external constraints". (Rámon, age 23, 3/04/08).

As the study on Cuban youth by Domínquez and Ferrer (1996) pointed out, even though there are growing portions of the youth population that are increasingly driven by individual and material aspirations, there study also showed that there still remains a segment of the youth population that actively engages in working towards the goals of the revolution.

6.6 Youth Claiming Space- Spatial Practice

Typically, youth are seen as having limited social and spatial power, yet they negotiate these limitations through the creative processes of contesting their perceived powerlessness in public, in the public spaces of the city (Massey 1998; Ruddick 1996a; 1998; Valentine 1996, 2004). Part of this contesting of perceived powerlessness is through claiming space. How differing individuals and groups vie for control or access to public space is an important aspect of understanding the politics of public space. The processes that produce space are an essentially component of understanding how these individuals and groups engage public space. Massey (1998) states that in addition to conceptualizing space as the product of the complex interaction of social relations, it is also just as important to be aware that within this process, groups and individuals are relentlessly staking claims to space and are territorializing and re-territorializing space through processes of exclusion and inclusion. From this perspective, the process of youth claiming public space often changes the meanings of the public space. These, to use de Certeau's (1988) terminology, are forms of tactical appropriation of public space and are a crucial component of youth identity formation. A woman who works at the University of Havana and is aware of the youth who congregate at Calle G every weekend said,

> "These youths run very far away from what has been established. Within the concepts of freedom they are trying to create their own spaces, and not have those spaces be imposed on them. It is like an alternative or different position to the official one. For example the Union of Young Communists (UJC) creates a project, but not all youths like that project, because sometimes they are a little bit schematic. Then they [the youth] create projects of their own. And if there is a space created by UJC that they like, they go, but if it isn't they come and get together here. And perhaps, in other official spaces there are certain restrictions that do not exist here where they spontaneously meet and get together. And there are more than 40 policemen looking at them hostilely or distrustfully, and it is like a challenge to defy" (Marta, age 40, 03/03/08).

Much like Fiona Smith (1998) pointed out in respect to youth in East Germany, the ways the youth used space subverted the official state definitions of public space by discounting the state's intentions and by merely ignoring the state's claims over these spaces and thus over the youth themselves. She goes on to say, "Many young people actively or passively resisted the ideology and actions of the state by creating other geographies which challenged and subverted state intentions at a series of scales from the body to the home, the club, the street, the church and other niches created in the margins of the official geographies of the GDR." (Ibid.: 296).

These urban spaces that are appropriated by individuals and groups for purposes not espoused by state authority are called by Franck and Stevens (2007), "loose space". In regards to loose space they say, -"loose space is most likely to emerge in cities since, traditionally, it is there that certain social and physical conditions that encourage looseness exist. Free access to a variety of public open spaces, anonymity among stranger, a diversity of persons and a fluidity of meaning are all urban conditions that support looseness" (Ibid: 4). However, they argue, that spatial practice alone does not constitute or create a loose space, it necessary that users of these spaces must also be aware of the looseness and potentiality of the space, taking full advantage of this condition to meet their own needs regardless of the risk of transgressing into illegality. Additionally they say that,

> "..looseness of space varies across time. Many spaces are only called upon to serve their primary functions at particular times of day, week, and year. At other times, these functions are in abeyance, as are the management practices and user groups that maintain them. Then the space becomes available for other, more informal activities." (Ibid.: 15).

This notion of 'loose space' provides an interesting way to examine the phenomenon of youth and Calle G, because as a result of the spatial practices of the youth the space of

237

Calle G has become a space with shifting, multiple, and varied meanings. Therefore, urban spaces become 'loose' spaces through the spatial practices of the inhabitants and users. They also say that the spatial practices and social behavior of individuals in this loose space may also be transgressive, for example, selling counterfeit or illegal goods, underage drinking, public sex etc. Additionally these transgressive performances are constantly testing the limits of what is socially acceptable and thereby pushing the limits and redefining the boundaries of what is acceptable behavior in public (Franck and Stevens (2007). That transgressive practices are consistently reworking notions of what are permissible practices and behaviors parallels the comments of a Cuban urban planner who was interviewed during the course of this project. When discussing how the public spaces of Vedado have changed over the past fifteen years he said that one of the noticeable differences was how social relations in public space have changed. He went on to say,

> "The way people dress has changed, it is less formal than in the past, too informal if you ask me…There is a relation between the way people dress and how people behave. So I think there has been a relaxation not only on the way people dress, but there is also a relation to a relaxation in urban discipline, like playing loud music late in the evening or shouting or even painting facades in very striking colors, because this is also a way of shouting" (Omar, age 52, 02/18/08).

A number of scholars have demonstrated how youth resist hegemonic culture and the meanings embedded within this structure through the ways in which they adapt, appropriate, and transform the meanings of their surrounding urban landscape through spatial practices such as hanging out, playing, socializing, and even merely occupying urban space (Matthews 1995; Ruddick 1998; Valentine 1996, 2004; Skelton and Valentine 1997). Often times, the mere presence of youth in public space is seen as an act of transgression. Thomas (2002) argues that the everyday cultural practices in the

urban public spaces of Hanoi, Vietnam are destabilizing the control of the state over the meanings of the public spaces of the city, since it is through everyday cultural practices that transgressive ideologies and desires become manifest. She goes on to say that clearly cities and urban environments shape and influence the everyday lived lives and experiences of its citizens, however the changes in how people *use* and occupy public space represents the potential of "new public and built environments" (Ibid.: 1614). While it is true that public space is increasingly becoming commodified, it is also always, "in a process of being shaped, reshaped, and challenged by the spatial practices of various groups and individuals whose identities and actions undermine the homogeneity of contemporary cities" (McCann 1999: 168). Thomas (2001) argues that the illegal use of public space for personal financial gain is the foundational moment of people using public space for non-established state reasons, and that this represents a challenge to the traditional norms of the state. She goes on to argue that the increasing growth of people using public urban spaces through new forms of non-political consumption and leisure activities may be seen by the state as "transgressive acts" (Ibid.).

The same urban planner who was quoted above went on to describe why he thought social relations and urban discipline had became increasingly 'relaxed'. When discussing urban regulation and transgressions he said,

> "They were controlled in the past through regulations, and they [the government] stopped enforcing them. There already were some signs in the early 80s, but there was still a fight against these transgressions, but with the Special Period it became like a free-for-all. So a lot of people just started caring a lot less about the city, about others, about history and they only cared about their next meal….Basically, people became more primitive, and the government officials became more relaxed…You can't find that written down any place, but in my opinion it was kind of an agreement, basically the government said- I can't give you what you need to cover your basic needs so the only thing I can do is allow you to do what ever you want to do, and it is up to you- and it has been a suicidal relaxation, because things start with very simple violations, like painting your house in striking colors, or playing loud music and then there is a progression of transgressions

until you arrive to crime and I think the officials didn't realize that. And in my opinion it can turn political, once people realize that they are on their own and no body cares about them…why stop at a certain point when you can go on and on…." (Omar, age 52, 02/18/08).

The comments by this urban planner describe the spaces left by a roll-back state, in some ways similar to Peck and Tickell's (2002) neo-liberal state. As the government became almost financially bankrupt in the early 1990s, it was not only services and rations that dried-up, it was also citizen-state relations that atrophied. Since the government was no longer able to meet all of their needs, individuals began searching for new sources of material well being, as well as alternative sources of meaning. For the youth of Calle G, their spatial practices, their mere presence throughout the park, in many ways can be interpreted as not only as a collectively produced space in its own right, but it can also be seen as a collective withdraw from the mythology of the state. As the literature cited above repeatedly points out, youth are legitimate social actors who create meaning in their lives through their social relations, and in this case, through the spaces they create and the spaces they inhabit and interact in. Since these spaces are outside of the sphere of the state, the question then becomes, can these spaces therefore be seen as 'resistance' to the state?

While arguably, the spatial practices of these Cuban youth are not overt forms of resistance, they are clearly forms of disengagement from the broader national and ideological projects put forth by the state. Law (2002) says, "resistance can be understood as overt conflict as well as symbolic strategies and tactics that can invert or transgress the social relations reflected by landscapes. But because power is exercised rather than possessed, they argue, it can also be subverted" (1629). This is also the case in Vietnam, where Nguyen (2005) says,

240

> "the state no longer occupies a central position in the construction of youth and the shaping of their life course. Instead, the boundaries of its authority are constantly tested and redrawn through the workings of social change and market forces as well as through a process of negotiation and compromise between the state, with its authority and ideology on the one hand, and youth, with their desires and aspirations on the other" (18).

According to Hodge (2005), the Cuban state has lost part of its, "ideological control of Cuban citizens, particularly those who now mingle with foreigners. And since the capitalists have the cash, some young Cubans- who have no memory of pre-Revolutionary capitalist misery- come to believe that the foreigners' cultures and political-economic systems must be better than things Cuban" (6).

Looking at youth in the context of post-socialist or late-socialist countries can provide some comparative framework for understanding the youth of Cuba. According to Nguyen (2005), the rapid economic liberalizations taking place in Vietnam is causing cultural and social fragmentation that is often in contradiction with communist ideology and the values of the Vietnamese revolution and therefore is creating the conditions for popular unrest and resistance to the monopolistic state. In Nguyen's work, he examines the relationship and the interactions between the state and the youth of the nation, where he argues that while this relationship is complex, the rhetoric and discourse of the state is often contradictory to the actually existing realities of economic liberalization on the ground, and therefore, there is a growing divergence between the official state commitment to the communism revolution and the hopes and aspirations of young people (Ibid.). His conclusion is that in the case of youth in Vietnam, the state is no longer the "sole driving force that motivates all members of society" (Nguyen 2005: 17). This is also the case for the youth of Cuba, as the state is unable to provide for the expectations and aspirations of the youth, the youth end up producing meaning for their lives from other sources and on their own terms.

6.7 Conclusion

The 'phenomenon' of Calle G is a localized articulation of social and spatial

practices, relations and processes. It is a *place* constructed through practice and

performance, a product of social relations and the urban landscape. Spatial practice and

everyday life, *lo cotidiano*, are a significant part of the production of urban and social

space. I agree with Massey (1998) when she says that the most appropriate way to think

of social space is to think of it as a complex net of interactions and interrelations drawn

from across the globe and from across scales. As was evident throughout the interview

data, Cuban youth today are creating their identities by drawing from a wide variety of

global influences, influences such as North American and European music and fashion,

Japanese comics, and Latin American telenovelas[71].

While Carmona Báez (2004) argues that the Cuban state has continued to actively

resist neo-liberal forms of capitalism over the past fifteen years, the practices and

discourse of the youth demonstrates a desire to embrace capitalist globalization and the

cultural and economic changes that are a direct part of it. It would be overly naïve to

assume that the growing presence of an independent youth culture and the increasing

presence of a consumer society will directly lead to the political transformations,

liberalizations, or democratizations that were witnessed in Eastern Europe and in the

Soviet Union. As Power (1999) says, "the revolution to a certain extent homogenized a

reality that has now been broken into a milliard of facets: each nucleus has its own

particular reality and survives, glistens, glows, or crumbles within it" (26). My research

---

[71] Telenovellas are similar to American soap-operas, they are aired nightly and are watched by virtually everyone. Most of them originate in Brazil, Miami, as well as domestic ones that are not as popular.

shows that the youth of Calle G are constantly challenging and testing the boundaries of authority, a process that is reworking and reshaping the relationship between the state and society, a back and forth that is being propelled by the state's rhetorical commitment to the ideology of socialism and nationalism on the one hand, and the desires, aspirations, and expectations of the youth on the other.

McCann (1999) says, "the contradictions inherent in abstract space provide the opportunity for oppositional groups continually to play a part in the production and reproduction of social space" (171). His statement regarding the contradictions inherent in abstract space is similar to the ways Frank and Stevens (2007) describe the 'loose space' mentioned above. McCann's contradictions provide moving room in much the same way that 'loose space' provides individuals opportunities to take advantage of the full potential of urban space. In both cases individuals exploit the gaps between abstract space and lived space. The inability of the state to maintain complete hegemony provides openings where individuals and groups produce and reproduce social space through their spatial practices, thus, as Lefebvre says, secreting their own space. It is impossible for the Cuban state, or any state for that matter, to impose its notion of abstract space on the entire population at all times and in all spaces.

The actions of the youth in merely inhabiting the space of Calle G challenges the dominate representations of public space, and therefore implicitly challenges the authority of the state. How the youth perceive of themselves is clearly linked to broader scale socio-economic issues since for many, the categories they create and self-identify with are based upon access to dollars. This resistance to imposed notions of what it means to be a revolutionary does not mean that all youth in Cuba are disaffected with the

government. The reality is far from this- what it implies is that the youth of Cuban have the ability to make their own space independent of dominate conceptions of revolutionary 'youthfulness" and independent of legitimation from the state. Therefore, by the youth claiming this space for themselves, they are making a very political statement, essentially saying that they do not need the state to create meaningful lives and identities. In the context of state socialism this has the potential to be problematic.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

> "None of you were alive when the Revolution triumphed… If the young people fail, everything will fail…It is my profound conviction that the Cuban youth will fight to stop that. I believe in you." (Fidel Castro, letter to the Union of Young Communists (UJC), June 23, 2007).

Since the beginning of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the revolutionary government has consistently worked at integrating young people into the revolutionary process. Although the government maintains the rhetoric of this position, the unpredictable social forces unleashed by the dramatic socio-economic restructuring of the past twenty years have transformed young people's lives and expectations in unforeseen ways. This new generation has vastly different expectations and aspirations than the preceding generations and, as mentioned previously, their perspective of life *within* the revolution is markedly different. For almost two decades the Cuban state has been loosing legitimacy as socio-economic inequality is (re)-emerging alongside the growing presence of market forces and logics. The youth are encountering a changing economic landscape and as a result, the aspirations and expectations they were socialized to believe in are being unfulfilled. The obvious result of these circumstances is the increasing disaffection with the revolution. Some scholars argue that one of the impacts of the crisis of the 1990s and the Special Period is that confidence in the regime has eroded, thereby reducing the effectiveness of the government and its ability to maintain control over the population (Eckstein 1994; Léon 1997). As the state looses legitimacy there is an erosion

of confidence in both the regime and in the revolutionary ideals of egalitarianism and collectivism that have sustained it form nearly five decades.

Differentiated regimes of accumulation now exist in Cuba. This is due, in part, to the dual economy and the dual currency system in Cuba; whereby, some Cubans are earning their salaries and pensions only in local pesos, while others are acquiring hard currency through either remittances; employment in tourism or mixed enterprises; or through informal activities. And as a result of this phenomenon there has also emerged differentiated forms of social regulation and norms of social consumption. The higher incomes, status, and consumption that are earned through the activities listed above are causing youth to change their career choices and their expectations and aspirations. Since restrictions were removed barring Cubans from staying in the hotels, resorts, and beaches that were previously reserved for foreign tourists, a false sense of spatial equality prevails. Although all Cuban nationals have the right to utilize these spaces not all Cubans have equal access to forms of employment that enable them to earn the hard currency required to these newly acquired rights of access. The social and economic polarization resulting from the crisis and the subsequent restructuring has created an environment where the status of an individual is increasingly tied to hard currency and the material benefits it brings. While class-consciousness and socio-economic inequality where never truly eradicated by government policy, this project has demonstrated that extremely uneven patterns of access to hard currency and the continuing existence of an internal dual currency system are redefining the nature of relations among the youth of the city.

The meanings of space in Havana are being reworked because with the introduction of foreign investors and transnational stakeholders, the Cuban government is being forced to reconfigure notions of property value in order for them to reintegrate the Cuban economy into global capitalist markets, and part of this process is redefining the nature of public and private space. The increasing influence of neoliberal forms globalization, in the form of foreign investment, culture, people, and ideas, means that the fate of many Cubans is increasingly tied to changes of scale beyond the territorial bounds of their local nation (Amin and Thrift 1997; Smith 2001). Additionally, with the government increasingly unable to provide basic social and material provisions to its citizens, people have to come up with their own means of survival, what is usually referred to as *lo informal*- the informal strategies and practices Cubans rely on to fill in the gaps left by the state's inability to meet all of the needs of its citizens. This refers to, as I stated in the introduction, the creation of a culture of informality. In other words, the complex outcomes of the social and economic restructuring that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union dramatically altered actually exiting conditions on the ground, leaving a gap between revolutionary theory and ideology and praxis. As mentioned previous, urban public space in Havana is shifting from universalistic access under collective ownership and normative control by the state to spaces that are more fragmented and markedly particularistic and individualistic, and this is evidenced through the spatial practices of the youth and of the vast majority of habaneros. Much in the same way that Valentin (2008) demonstrated in the case of youth in post-*doi moi* Vietnam, the youth of Calle G are producing localized understandings of the socio-economic transformations that have reshaped their city.

The moral and ideological fiber that had supported and legitimated the revolution for so many years is losing strength. The social unity and spirit of collectivism that bound the nation together began to dissolve in the face of the immediate individual need to survive and the seeming abandonment by the state. When discussing the social and psychological impact of the crisis of the 1990s in Cuba, Ferrer Zuelta (2006) says that, "the crisis witnessed a deterioration of paradigms, values, and existential conditions that in time changed cultural references and society for a good part of the Cuban population, fundamentally of the youth (192). This is leading to, as Fernández (1993) says, the 'desocialization' of the youth. However, instead of focusing solely on the institutions and mechanisms that socialize youth in Cuba, this project has focused on the youth spatial practices and youth created worlds, the articulations from below.

While the current generation of youth have greatly benefited from the social mobility created by the revolution, they are increasingly encountering a shrinking job market with fewer job opportunities and less access to higher education as the labor force is being retrained for the new economies that have emerged since the economic crisis of the 1990s. Intergenerational conflict is exhibited between youth and the generations from the 1960s, as they are seen as barring young people's entry into the labor force. Additionally, every year there is a constant flow of young people migrating out of the country in search of better opportunities and lives, which represents not only a lose of talent, but also a growing burden on the state as the population that remains is increasingly getting older. As a result of this, youth are denied access to the adult world of power, and consequently they are forced to assert their own legitimacy and their rights to urban public space, in other words- their right to the city. Part of this project has

looked at how young Cubans are making meaning for themselves under conditions that they have little control over.

The spatial practices of these youth along Calle G represents a local response to political and economic uncertainty and to the growing influence of transnational culture and ideas. Furthermore, the identities of Cuban youth are increasingly informed by the accelerated flows of foreign knowledge and culture- through movies, music, fashion, and the media, and by artifacts that bear the mimetic imprint of the Western 'other'. The role of both music and fashion in the creation of the youth subcultures discussed in this dissertation reveals the importance of these cultural flows in the lives of Cuban youth and the ways that have adapted and appropriated these cultural references for their own identities. The struggle against 'Western' capitalist culture was an issue for the revolutionary government well before the Special Period and the crisis of the 1990s. Fernández (1993) argues that, ever since the 1970s, the issues regarding the external cultural influence on fashion, music, life-styles, and discourse have troubled the government.

These youth are not only social actors negotiating conditions of socio-economic transformation and uncertainty outside of their control, they are also actively engaged in transforming and appropriating global flows of information, culture, and technology. This dissertation has demonstrated, as Massey (1998) contends, that youth cultures are spatially open. Due to this openness, youth are often one of the main points of entry for cultural globalization, and therefore they are inherently hybridized. The increasing globalization of Cuban youth cultures is a clear indicator of the growing openness and integration of Cuban society into the global economy.

As with most urban public spaces, Calle G has overlapping meanings and functions. During the daytime it functions as the state intends it to- as a park, as a space that legitimates the state. However, during the nighttime, Calle G becomes a spectacle, a space that is "linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life" (Lefebvre 1991: 33). For the youth of Havana, through their nocturnal wanderings, their play and their imagination, they have transformed the abstract space of Calle G into a collectively created alternative social space.

To return to the work of Lefebvre (1991) that influenced this project throughout, this project examined youth spaces that were manifested from below, the lived and perceived spaces of these youth that are challenging the abstract space of the state through appropriation and imagination. What this means is that while abstract space is defined and carved up for particular uses and functions, individual perception may distinguish different uses for urban space or different understandings of the meanings of urban space. Therefore there is a constant tension between the two, with one being imposed from above and the other being manifested from below. These youth geographies can be seen as both active and passive resistance to the ideology of the state, because they are resisting and subverting the dominant space of the state. In other words, these youth, following the argument put for by de Certeau (1984), these youth are creatively constructing their own space through the practices of living in place, a process that demonstrates the capacity of groups and individuals to resist the dominant power that tries to structure and order space from above. Therefore, Calle G is a perfect example of de Certeau's 'practiced place'. In many ways, these youth are merely resisting abstract urban space, and the hegemonic power that enforces order and structure on place through

defining the identity of place and instilling appropriate norms of behavior for such spaces.

Youth are legitimate social actors who create meaning in their lives through their social relations, and in this case, through the spaces they create and the spaces they inhabit and interact in. Since these spaces are outside of the sphere of the state, the question then becomes, can these spaces therefore be seen as 'resistance' to the state? As Lefebvre (1991) says, "Inasmuch as adolescents are unable to challenge either the dominant system's imperious architecture or its deployment of signs, it is only by way of revolt that they have any prospect of recovering the world of differences- the natural, the sensory/sensual, sexuality and pleasure" (50). However, I argue that perhaps the youth of Calle G represent not an organized form of resistance or protest, but rather, an informal response to the changing socio-economic circumstances of their lives and recognition that the state and the revolution are no longer the main sources of meaning in their lives. This can also be interpreted as a collective resistance to imposed notions of what it means to be a youth in contemporary Cuba, because as the state is increasingly unable to provide for all of the material and ideological needs of the youth, they are turning to other sources of meaning outside of the traditional spheres school, work, and the state.

Calle G represents a space where young people are negotiating the dominant ideologies of the state by creating new subjective meanings in a struggle to control their lives and their identities. This has become a social space for the contestation of meanings and subjectivities. It also demonstrates the potentialities inherent in public space in the city, because it has become the associational space of collective action and social transformation.

"Those practicing contestation make use of multiple spatialities in complex and unpredictable ways to make new geographies…Thus, it is vital to theoretically and empirically investigate the simultaneity of such multiple engagements with (and imaginaries of) space, and how different spatialities are complicated. Contestation frequently entails resignifying place: the strategic manipulation, subversion and transgression of everyday spaces, and the social relations they stand for, within a city and beyond" (Leitner et al. 2007: 20).

Additionally this process of transgression is constantly testing the limits of what is socially acceptable and thereby pushing the limits and redefining the boundaries of what is acceptable behavior in public (Franck and Stevens (2007).

Public space can be used to perpetuate the dominant discourse of the state, along the lines of Lefebvre's abstract space, yet it is also the site of counter practices, acts of resistance by counter-publics. Along the lines of Fraser's (1992) argument, counter-publics function as spaces of withdraw and yet they are also the spaces where counter-publics learn and practice 'agitational activities' that then get focused out on the public (124). Therefore, this dialectical functioning gives rise to an emancipatory potential.

Through merely being present along Calle G, through their spatial practices such as playing, socializing, hanging out, and being seen, these youth are transforming the meanings of the urban landscape and resisting the hegemonic power and culture of the state. These youth are creating a 'meaningful public space' through the process of claiming this space and actualizing their agency and publicly expressing identity (Goheen 1998). This is a process of adaptation, transformation, and appropriation that occurs through the repeated performances of these youth, through their seemingly transgressive performativity. Claiming public space and being seen in public space, being 'public,' becomes a way for different groups and individuals to legitimate their right to the city. Because of this fact, public spaces are by nature, contested spaces, places of contestation,

confrontation and resistance as individuals and groups contend for their spatial rights (Mitchell 1995; 2003). The process of people traversing, inhabiting, claiming, and playing in public space creates a common temporary ownership of that space, thereby constantly reworking the meanings and redefining the space all together. The youth of Calle G are inscribing different meanings into this public space, they are undermining and resisting notions of space being imposed from above. Therefore these youth are claiming their spatial rights, their rights to be in public and be *a public*, thus they are claiming their right to the city.

For many of the youth on Calle G, their spatial and social practices are not solely focused on confrontation and resistance to hegemonic culture and society, but are rather concerned with creating a social space where they can create their own meanings and legitimate their identities. In many ways, the identities formed by these youth can be seen as critical spatial identities that are the product of a faithfulness or adherence to critical values that are, "connected with a localized culture, firmly linked with a place or a locality. This serves as the material basis, the home range of the critical group. All this is connected with the notion of "identity", the belonging of individuals to these groups and ideas, linked with the place as spatial identity" (Best and Strüver: 1). Stravrides (2007) considers social identities as being "interdependent and communicating areas", and he argues that we must examine urban spatial practices that oppose the spatial fixing of meaning from above since these spatial practices are the "articulations" that produce spaces of in-betweeness (174). He goes on to say that these in-between spaces, or "thresholds" as he refers to them, afford the possibility to "concretize the spatiality of a public culture of mutually aware, interdependent and involved identities" (174). Notions

of urban 'in-betweeness' or 'thresholds' present an interesting concept since the view-from-above, that fixes abstract spaces and meanings, will always have gaps, temporal or otherwise, and interstial spaces between the fixed spaces of power. The 'phenomenon' of Calle G is a localized articulation of social and spatial practices, relations and processes. It is a *place* constructed through practice and performance, a product of social relations and the urban landscape. There is a gap that has formed between the official rhetoric of the revolution and the actually existing conditions on the ground. How young people negotiate this gap and how they create meaning and identity within the context of pervasive social and economic uncertainty and change is of extreme importance for offering insight into any potential futures of Cuba.

Public space is the venue through which and within which social and cultural meanings of difference were expressed, confronted, and negotiated; and therefore the control of it is directly linked to the control and structuring of social identities. In the process of producing an alternative social space and place of meaning, the youth of Calle G are destabilizing the official state definition of this space and thereby discounting the traditional claim the state has over these spaces and therefore over the youth as well (Smith 1998).

This project makes clear the crucial importance of public space for the youth of Havana, since for many youth, public space is the one of the few spaces they can claim as their own outside of the rigid social structures of family, school, work, and the nation. Youth are creating their own social space outside of the control or sphere of state regulation and influence, and this space provides Cuban youth with a space to explore and create their own identities in relation to local as well as transnational cultural flows

increasingly penetrating Cuba. This represents a complicated web of interconnections and interrelations that cross scales and localities at this historical conjuncture in Cuba. While in the end this may not represent a form of organized resistance or protest to the state, it is clear that the 'loose space' of Calle G and the spatial practices of the youth who repeatedly transform and rework the meanings of this space through their nocturnal performances, does hold the emancipatory potential that collective association can bring. Furthermore, the temporal appropriation of Calle G can be seen as a very symbolic performance of resistance and opposition if one considers that the actions and practices of these youth are inscribing new meanings in this space that are in many ways a confrontation to the power relations and ideology that are embedded within the landscape.

Bibliography

Acosta, M., and Hardoy, J. E. (1973). *Urban Reform in Revolutionary Cuba*. New Haven, Conn.: Antilles Research Program Yale University.

Altman, I., and Zube, E. H. (1989). *Public Places and Spaces*. New York: Plenum Press.

Amin, A., and Thrift, N. (1997). Globalization, socio-economics, territoriality. In ed. R. Lee and J. Wills (eds.), *Geographies of Economies* (pp. 147-157). New York: Arnold.

Arenas, R. (1993). *Before Night Falls*. New York: Viking.

Aguilar León, L. (1995). La "década trágica", In Jacobo Machover (ed.), *La Habana, 1952-1961* (pp. 67-83). Madrid: Alianza Editorial.

Aguirre, B. (1981). The conventionalization of collective behavior, In I. Horowitz (ed.), *Cuban Communism* (pp. 241-265). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

Aguierre, B. E. (2002). Social control in Cuba. *Latin American Politics and Society,* 44:2.

Alfonso de Armas, M. (2006). Población y yulnerabilidad. In Alain Dasail Rodríquez (Ed.), *Sociedad Cubana Hoy: Ensayos de Sociología Joven*. (pp. 7-22). La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Socialies.

Alvarez-Tabio Albo, E. (1989). *Vida, Mansion y Muerte de la Burguesia Cubana*. La Habana: Editorial Letras Cubanas.

Amit-Talai, V. (1995). Conclusion: The 'multi' cultural of youth, In Vered Amit-Talai and Helena Wulff (eds.) *Youth Cultures: A Cross-Cultural Perspective (*223-233). London: Routlegde.

Aries, P. (1962). *Centuries of Childhood*. New York: Vintage Press.

Aguierre, B. E. (2002). Social control in Cuba. *Latin American Politics and Society,* 44:2.

Aitken, Stuart. (2001). *Geographies of Young People: The Morally contested spaces of Identity.* London: Routledge.

Auyero, J. (2003). The geography of popular contention: an urban protest in Argentina. *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*. 28, 55-56.

Avella, A. E. (1996). Tourism in Cuba in the 1990s: Back to the future. *Tourism*

Management, 17, 55-60.

Avritzer, L. (2002). *Democracy and the Public Space in Latin America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Azicri, Max. (2004). Cuban socialism in the twentieth century. In Max Azicri and Elsie Deal, (eds.), *Cuban Socialism in a New Century: Adversity, Survival, and Renewal* (pp. 3-50). Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press.

Ball, S.J., Maquire, M. and Macrae, S. (2000). *Choices, Pathways and Transitions Post-16: New Youth, New Economies in the Global City*. London: Routledge.

Banerjee, T. (2001). The future of public space: Beyond invented streets and reinvented places. *Journal of the American Planning Association,* 67 (1), 9–2.

Barberia, L. (2002). Remittances To Cuba: An Evaluation of Cuban and US Government Policy Measures. Rosemary Rogers Working Paper Series: Harvard University, #15, 1-46.

Bastlund, K. (1967) *José Luis Sert*, New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers.

Bater, J.H. (1980). *The Soviet City: Ideal and Reality*. London: Edward Arnold.

Beck, U. and Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2002). *Individualization*. London: Sage.

Bell, D. and Valentine, G. (1995). *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities*. London: Routledge.

Benjamin, W. (1989) *Charles Baudelaire*. London: Verso.

_____ (1999). *The Arcades Project (Das Passagenwerk)*. trans. Eiland, et al, (first published 1982 in German), Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.

Bennett, A. (2000). *Popular Music and Youth Culture, Music, Identity and Place*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Boyer, M.C. (1994). *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Bennett, A. (2000). *Popular Music and Youth Culture, Music, Identity and Place*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Best, Ulrich. and Strüver, Anke. (n.d.). The Politics of Place: Critical of Spatial Identities and Critical Spatial Identities. Retrieved October 02, 2008, from http://econgeog.misc.hit-u.ac.jp/icgg/intl_mtgs/UBest.pdf

Blomely, N. (2004). *Unsettling the City: Urban land and the politics of property*. New York: Routledge.

_____ (2005). The borrowed view: privacy, property, and the entanglements of property. *Law and Social Inquiry*, 30(4), 617.

Blue, S. (2004). State policy, economic crisis, gender, and family ties: Determinants of family remittances to Cuba. *Economic Geography*, 80(1), 63-82.

Bobes, V. C. (2000). *Los Laberintios de La Imaginación: Repertorio Simbólico, Identidades y Actores del Cambio Social en Cuba*. Mexico D.F.: El Colegio de México.

Bohlen, C. (1998, January 23). Pope urges Cubans to find their Christian roots again. *The New York Times*, p.E6.

Bonachea, R., and San Martín, M. (1974). *The Cuban Insurrection, 1952-1959*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

Bray, D., and Woodford Bray, M. (2002). Introduction: The Cuban revolution and world change. *Latin American Perspectives*, 124(29)(3), 3-17.

Britton, S. (1980). The Spatial organization in a neo-colonial economy: A Fiji case study. *Pacific Viewpoint, 21*, 144-165.

Brundenius, C. (2002). Whither the Cuban economy after recovery? The reform process, upgrading strategies and the question of transition. *Journal of Latin American Studies,* 34(2), 365-396.

_____ (2003). El turismo como "locomotora" de crecimiento: reflexiones sobre la nueva estrategia de desarrollo de Cuba. In Mauricio de Miranda Parrondo (ed.). *Cuba: reestructuración económica y globalización* (pp. 265-294). Bogotá: Centro Editorial Javeriano.

Burawoy, M. and Verdery, K. (1999) *Uncertain Transition: Ethnographies of Change in the Postsocialist World*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Burchardt, H. (2002). Contours of the future: The new social dynamics in Cuba. *Latin American Perspectives, 29*(3), 57-74.

Cabezas, A. L. (2004). Between love and money: Sex, tourism, and citizenship in Cuba and the Dominican Republic. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 29(4), 987-1015.

Cabrera Infante, G. (1990). *Tres Tristes Tigres*. Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, Remition.

258

Carmona Báez, A. (2004). *State Resistance to Globalisation in Cuba*. London: Pluto Press.

Carpon, G. (2002). Accessibility to 'Modern public spaces' in Latin-American cities: a multi-dimensional idea. *GeoJournal, 58,* 217-223.

Carnoy, M. (1990). Educational reform and social transformation in Cuba, 1959-1989. In Martin Carnoy and Joel Samoff (eds.), *Education and Social Transformation in the Third World* (pp. 153-208). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Carr, S., Francis, M., Rivlin, L. and Stone, A. (1992) *Public Space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Castells, M. (1979). *The Urban Question*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Castro, F. (August 18, 1962), Castro's closing address at the Second national congress of the union of young communists. As printed in Martin Kenner and James Patras, (eds.), *Fidel Castro Speaks*. New York: Gove Press 1970.

Castro, F. (1992, June 5). Castro addresses teachers' conference 30 May. FBIS-LAT-92 109, 6-18.

Castro, F. (1996). Remarks at the closing ceremony of the Second Pioneers Congress on 20 July at the Conventions Palace in Havana. FL0504125495 http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1996/19960721.html (accessed September 12, 2008).

Castro, F. (2007). Response to the Message from the Young Communist League", http://www.cuba.cu/gobierno/discursos/2007/ing/f230607i.html (June 23, 2007).

Castro, F. (2007). Response to the Message from the Young Communists League, July 23, 2007. http://www.cuba.cu/gobierno/discursos/2007/ing/f230607i.html (accessed October 20, 2008).

'Castro steps down as Cuban leader', (2008). *BBC News* (February 19, 2008): http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7252109.stm (accessed October 13, 2008).

Carmona Báez, A. (2004). *State Resistance to Globalization in Cuba*. London: Pluto Press.

Catasús Cervera, S. (2004). In Max Azicri and Elsie Deal, (eds.), *Cuban Socialism in a New Century: Adversity, Survival, and Renewal* (pp. 100-122). Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press.

Cater, E. (1995). Consuming spaces: global tourism. In J. Allen and C. Hammet (eds.), *A Shrinking World? Global Unevenness and Inequality*. Milton Keynes: Open University.

Celik, Z., Favro, D. and Ingersol, R. (eds.), (1994), *Streets: Critical Perspectives on Public Space*. University of California Press: Berkeley.

Centeno, M.A. (2004). The return of Cuba to Latin America: the end of Cuban exceptionalism? *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 23(4), 403-413.

Centeno, M. A. and Font, M. (eds.) (1997). *Toward a New Cuba? Legacies of a Revolution.* Linne Rienner Publishers.

Centro de Estudios Sobre La Juventud. (1999). *Cuba: Jóvenes en Los 90*. La Habana: Casa Editorial Abril.

Chardy, A., De Valle, E, and Merzer, M. (2008, February 20). Reaction to Castro news is subdued. *The Miami Herald*.

Charmaz, K. (2000). Grounded theory: Objectionist and constructivist methods" In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 509-535). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.

Chatterton, P. and Holllands, R. (2003). *Urban Nightscapes: Youth Cultures, Pleasure Spaces and Corporate Power*. London: Routledge.

Childress, Herb. (2004). Teenagers, territory and the appropriation of space. *Childhood*, 11, 195-205.

Colantino, A., and Potter, R. B. (2003). Participatory and collaborative planning in 'special period' Cuba. In J. Pugh, and R. B. Potter (eds.), *Participatory Planning in the Caribbean : Lessons from Practice* (pp. 68-98). Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate.

_____ (2006a). "City profile: Havana". *Cities, 23*(1), 63-78.

_____ (2006b), *Urban Tourism and Development in the Socialist State: Havana During the 'Special Period'*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate.

Companioni, N. (2002). The growth of urban agriculture. In F. Funes, G. Luis, M. Bourque, N. Pérez, and P. Rosset, (eds.), *Sustainable Agriculture and Resistance: Transforming Food Production in Cuba (pp. 220-236)*. Oakland: Food First Books.

Consejos de Ministros. (1971). Ley No. 1231. Gaceta Oficial, March 26: 1-4.

Côté, J., and Allahar, A. (1994). *Generation on Hold: Coming of Age in the Late Twentieth Century*. Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Co.

Coyula, M. (2002). City, tourism and preservation the old Havana way" [Electronic Version]. *ReVista: Harvard Review of Latin America*. Retrieved February 10, 2005 from http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~drclas/publications/revista/Tourism/coyula.html.

_____ (2007). Más acá del río y bajo los árboles a la sombra de un Vedado que ya no es más. In *Regulaciones Urbanísticas, Ciudad de La Habana: El Vedado: Municipio Plaza de la Revolución* (pp. 61- 71). La Habana: Ediciones Boloña.

Coyula, M. and Ferez, M. (1996). *The GDIC: Advanced Ideas for a Sustainable and Participatory Urban Development in Havana*. Havana: GDIC.

Coyula, M., Uggen, J., and Angotti, T. (1996). The Neighborhood as Workshop. *Latin American Perspectives,* 23(4), 90-103.

Coyula, M., Coyula, Miguel and Oliveras, R. (2001). *Towards a New Kind of Community in Havana: the Workshops for Integrated Neighborhood Transformation*. Havana: GDIC.

Cravey, A.J. (2008). Media and uprising in Oaxaca: Documenting the people's guelaguetza. *Aether: the Journal of Media Geography*.

Crawford, M. (1992). Introduction. In J. Chase and M. Crawford and J. Kaliski (eds.) *Everyday Urbanism*, New York: The Monacelli Press.

_____ (1995), Contesting the public realm: struggles over public space in Los Angeles. *Journal of Architectural Education,* 49(1), 4-9.

Crespo, N. (1998). Back to the future: Cuban tourism in the year 2007. *Cuba in Transition*, 8, 42-49.

Cresswell, T. (1998). Night discourse: producing/consuming meaning on the street. In N,. Frye (ed.) *Images of the street: planning, identity, and control in public space*. London: Routledge.

_____ (2004). *Place: a short introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Crowley, D. and Reid, S. (2002). Socialist spaces: sites of everyday life in the eastern bloc," In David Crowley and Susan Reid (ed.), *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc* (pp. 1-23). Oxford: Berg.

Dalton, T. (1993). *"Everything Within the Revolution," Cuban Strategies for Social Development Since 1960.* Boulder: Westview Press.

Davies, C. (2000). Surviving (on) the soup of signs: Postmodernism,
        politics, and culture in Cuba. *Latin American Perspectives,* 113, 27(4), 103-121.

De Certeau, M. (1988). *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley: University of California
        Press.

De la Fuente, A. (1998). Recreating racism: Race and discrimination in Cuba's
        special period. *Cuba Briefing Paper Series,* 18. Washington, DC: Georgetown
        University.

        _____ (2001). *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-
        Century Cuba*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

        _____ (2008). The new Afro-Cuban cultural movement and the debate on
        race in contemporary Cuba. *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 40, 697-720.

de Leuchsenring, E. (1963). *Historia de La Habana*. La Habana: Editorial del Consejo
        Nacional Oriente.

De Miranda Parrondo, M. (2008). The Cuban economy: Amid economic
        stagnation and reversal of reforms. In Philip Brenner, Marguerite Rose Jiménez,
        John Kirk, and William LeoGrande (eds.), *A Contemporary Cuba Reader* (pp.
        128-135). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (1994). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks,
        CA: Sage.

Dilla, H., (ed.) (1996). *La Participación en Cuba y Los Retos del Futuro. La
        Habana: Centro de Estudios Sobre América (CEA).*

        _____ (2000). The Cuban experiment: Economic reform, social restructuring , and
        politics. *Latin American Perspectives, 27*(1), 33-44.

Dimitriadis, G. (2008). *Studying Urban Youth Culture*. New York: Peter Lang.

Domenech Nieves, S. (1996). *Cuba, Economía en Período Especial*. La Habana.

Domíguez, F. (2008). The rise of the private sector in Cuba. In Alexander I.
        Gray and Antoni Kapcia (eds.), *The Changing Dynamic of Cuban Civil Society:
        Contemporary Cuba* (pp. 65-89). Gainsville: University Press of Florida.

Domínguez García, M. I. (1995). Las investigaciones sobre la
        Juventud. *Temas,* (1)(Enero-Marzo), 85-93.

        _____ (1998). La juventud Cubana en una época de crisis y reestructuración. In

Cuba: Período Especial: Perspectivas (pp. 223-249). La Habana: Editorial Ciencias Sociales.

_____ (2008). Cuban Youth: Aspirations, Social Perceptions, and Identity. In Philip Brenner, Marguerite Rose Jiménez, John Kirk, and William LeoGrande (eds.) *A Contemporary Cuba Reader*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers: 292-298.

Domínquez García, M. I. and Ferrer Buch, M. E. (1996). *Jovenes Cubanos Expectiva en Los 90*. La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales.

Domínguez, J. (2007). Cuba's civil-military relations in comparative perspective. In Marifeli Pérez-Stable (ed.). *Looking Forward: Comparative Perspectives on Cuba's Transition* (pp/ 47-71). Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Domínguez, J., Pérez-Villanueva and Barberia (eds.) (2004). *The Cuban Economy at the Start of the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Drucker, S. and Gumpert, G. (1997). *Voices in the Street: Explorations in Gender, Media, and Public Space*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Drummond, Lisa, B. W. (2000). Street scenes: practices of public and private space in urban Vietnam. *Urban Studies*, 37(12), 2377-2391.

Duncan, J. (1990). *The City as Text: The Politics of Landscape Interpretation in the Kandayan Kingdom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eckstein, S. (1981). The debourgeoisment of Cuban cities. In I. Horowitz (ed.), *Cuban Communism* (pp. 119-140). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

_____ (2004). Cuban Border Crossing: The Reproduction of Inequalities and Transnational Contradictions (pp. 1-55). Radcliff Institute: Boston University.

_____ (2003). *Back from the Future: Cuba under Castro*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

_____ (2008). Dollarization and its discontents in the post-Soviet era. In Philip Brenner, Marguerite Rose Jiménez, John Kirk, and William LeoGrande (eds.), *A Contemporary Cuba Reader* (pp. 179-192). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Eckstein, S. and Barberia, L. (2002). Grounding immigrant generations in history: Cuban Americans and their transnational ties. *International Migration Review,* (Fall), 799-837.

Edge, K., Scarpaci, J., and Woofter, H. (2006), Mapping and designing Havana:

Republican, socialist and global spaces. *Cities*, 23(2), 85-98.

Engel, B. (2007). Public space in the 'blue cities' of Russia. In Kiril Stanilov (ed.)
    The Post-Socialist City: Urban Form and Space Transformations in Central and
    Eastern Europe after Socialism (pp. 285-300). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.

England, M. (2008). Stay out of drug areas: Drugs, othering and regulation of
    public space in Seattle, Washington. *Space and Polity,* 12(2), 197-213.

Enyedi, G. (1996). Urbanization under Socialism. In Gregory Andrusz, Michael
    Harole, and Ivan Szelenyi (eds.), *Cities After Socialism* (pp. 100-118). Oxford:
    Blackwell Publishers Inc.

Erikson, E. (1968). *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. New York: Norton.

Espina Prieto, M. and Núñez Moreno, L. (1990). The changing class structure
    In the development of socialism in Cuba. In Sandor Halerbsky and John Kirk,
    (eds.), *Transformation and Struggle, Cuba Faces the 1990s* (pp. 205-218). New
    York: Praeger.

Espino, M.D. (1994). Tourism in Cuba: a development strategy for the 1990s? In
    Pérez-López, J.F. (ed.), *Cuba at a Crossroads*. Gainesville: University Press of
    Florida.

Espina Prieto, R., and Rodríguez Ruiz, P. (2006). Raza y desiqualda en la
    Cuba actual. *TEMAS,* 45(enero-marzo), 44-54.

Everlyeny Pérez, O. (2003). Cuba: Una visión general de su economía en los años
    noventa. In Mauricio de Miranda Parrondo (ed.), *Cuba: reestructuración*
    económica y globalización (pp. 65-116). Bogotá: Centro Editorial Javeriano.

Faber, S. (2006). *Origins of the Cuban Revolution Reconsidered*. Chapel Hill, NC:
    University of North Carolina Press.

Fagen, R. (1969). *The Transformation of Political Culture in Cuba*. Palo Alto, CA:
    Stanford University Press.

Fagen, R. (1972). Mass mobilization in Cuba: The symbolism of struggle. In
    Rolando Bonachea and Nelson Valdés (eds.), *Cuba in Revolution* (pp. 201-224).
    Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.

Fernandes, S. (2003a). Fear of a black nation: Local rappers, transnational
    crossings, and state power in contemporary Cuba. *Anthropological Quarterly*,
    76 (4), 575-608.

_____ (2003b). Island paradise, revolutionary utopia or hustler's haven?

Consumerism and socialism in contemporary Cuban rap. *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies,* 12(3), 359-375.

_____ (2006). *Cuba Represent! Cuban Arts, State Power, and the Making of New Revolutionary Cultures*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Fernández, D. (1993). Youth in Cuba: Resistance and accommodation. In Enrique Baloyra and James Morris (eds.), *Conflict and Change in Cuba*. (pp. 189-214). Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

_____ (2004). The politics of youth in Cuba: patterns, dynamics, and future challenges. In Edward Gonzalez and Kevin McCarthy (eds.), *Cuba After Castro: Legacies, Challenges, and Impediments*, RAND Corporation: Santa Monica: 61-104.

Fernández, N. (1996). The Color of Love: Young Interracial Couples in Cuba. *Latin American Perspectives,* 23 (1), 99-118.

_____ (2001). The changing discourse on race in contemporary Cuba." *Qualitative Studies In Education,* 14(2), 117–132.

Ferrell, J. (1997). Youth crime and cultural space. *Social Justice*, 24(4), 21-38.

Ferrer Zuelta, E. (2006). Cambios en la moda: actors, lógicas productivas y estrategias de creación. In Alain Dasail Rodríquez (ed.) *Sociedad Cubana Hoy: Ensayos de Sociología Joven* (pp. 182-205). La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Socialies.

Ferriol Muruaga, A., González Gutiérrez, A., Quintana Mendoza, D., and Pérez Izquierdo, V. (eds.) (1998). *Cuba: Crisis, Ajuste y Situación Social: 1990-1996*. La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales.

Fleites-Lear, M. (1999). Women, family, and the Cuban revolution: a personal and socio-political analysis. *Global Development Studies*, 1(3-4), 31-56.

Forbes, D. and Thrift, N. (eds.). (1987). *The socialist Third World: urban development and territorial planning*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Formiga, N. (2007). El derecho a la ciudad y la cuestión del espacio público: Experienceias en la ciudad de Bahía Banca. *Journal of Latin American Geography*, 6(1), 173-196.

Franck, K. and Stevens, Q. (2007). Tying down loose space. In Karen Franck and Quentin Stevens (eds.) *Loose Space: Possibility and Diversity in Urban Life* (pp. 1-34). London: Routledge.

Fraser, N. (1992). Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. In C. Calhoun. (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (pp. 109-142). Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press.

French, R.A., and Hamilton, I. (1979). *The Socialist City: Spatial Structure and Urban Policy.* Chichester, NY: Wiley.

Fuller, L. (1988). "Fieldwork in forbidden terrain: the U.S. State and the case of Cuba. *The American Sociologist,* 19(2), 99-120.

García, G. (2006). *Beyond the Walled City: Urban Expansion in and around Havana: 1828-1909*, dissertation submitted to UNC-Chapel Hill, Department of History.

García Freyre, L. (2008). De la iglesia a la plaza: Las damsa de blanco y la lucha por el espacio público en la Habana". Paper presented at Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy (ASCE), Miami, August 2008: 1-22.

Garratt, D. (2004). Youth cultures and subculturers. In Jeremy Roche and Stanely Tucker (eds.), *Youth in Society: Contemporary Theory, Policy, and Practice* (pp. 143-152). London: Sage.

Gelabert-Navia, J. A. (1996). American architects in Cuba: 1900-1930. *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, 22:(Cuba Theme Issue), 132-149.

Glaser, B. and Strauss, A. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theroy: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co.

Gómez, E. and Cabrera, T. (2005). Los monumentos de calle G. *Arquitectura y Urbanismo*, 26(2), 89-94.

Gottdiener, M. (1993). A Marx for Our Time: Henri Lefebvre and the Production of Space. *Sociological Theory*, 11(1), 129-134.

Gray, A. and Kapcia, A. (2008). Introduction: Responding to crisis at the grass roots. In Alexander I. Gray and Antoni Kapcia (eds.), *The Changing Dynamic of Cuban Civil Society: Contemporary Cuba* (pp. 1-19). Gainsville: University Press of Florida.

Gregory, D. (1994). *Geographical Imaginations*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Grillo, I. (2008). Mexico's Emo-Bashing Problem. *Time*, (Thursday, March 27, 2008). http://www.time.com/time/arts/article/0,8599,1725839,00.html?xid=site-cnn (accessed November, 18. 2008).

Grødeland, Å. (2008). Informal practice, cultural capital and politics in the Czech

Republic, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania. In John Pickles (ed.), *State and Sociaety in Post-Socialist Economies* (pp. 229-252). New York: Palgrave.

Guger, J. (1980). A minimum of urbanism and a maximum of ruralism: the Cuban experience. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 4(4), 516-35.

Guerra, L. (2007). Redefining revolution in Cuba: Creative expression and cultural conflict in the special period. In Francisco A. Scarano and Margarita Zamora (eds.), *Cuba: Contrapuntos de cultura, historia y sociedad* (pp. 173-206). San Juan. PR: Ediciones Callejón.

Gupta, A. and Ferguson, J. (1997). After "peoples and cultures." In Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, (eds.). *Culture, power, place: Explorations in critical anthropology* (pp. 1-29). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Habermas, J. (1989). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a category of Bourgeois Society*. Trans. Burger, T. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Hall, D. (2001). Tourism and development in communist and post-communist societies. In D, Harrison (ed.), *Tourism and the Less Developed Countries: Issues and Case Studies*. Wllingford: CABI.

Hall, S. (1904). *Adolescence: Its Psychology, and its Relation to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education*. New York: D. Appleton.

Hall, S. and Jefferson, T. (eds.) (1976), *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-war Britain*. London: Hutchinson.

Hamberg, J. (1990). Cuba. In Kosta Mathéy (ed.). *Housing Policies in the Socialist Third World* (pp. 35-70). Munich: Profil Verlag.

Hamilton, D. (2002). Wither Cuban soicalism? The changing political economy of the Cuban revolution. *Latin American Perspectives*, 29(3), 18-39.

Harloe, M. (1996). Cities in transition. In G. Andruz, M. Harloe, and I. Szeleny (eds.). *Cities After Soicalism* (pp. 1-29). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Hart, A. (2004). *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban revolutionary underground, 1952-1958*. New York: Pathfinder.

Harvey, D. (1978). The urban process under capitalism: a framework for analysis, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*.

_____ (1989). *The Urban Experience*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

_____ (1990). *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Cambridge: Blackwell.

_____ (2003a). Debates and developments: the right to the city. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 27(4), 939-941.

_____ (2003b). *The New Imperialism*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

_____ (2006). The political economy of public space. In Setha Low and Neil Smith (eds.), *The Politics of Public Space* (pp. 17-34). Routledge: New York.

Hebdige, D. (1979). *Subculture, the meaning of style.* London: Methuen.

_____ (1988). Hiding in the light: youth surveillance and display. In Dick Hebdgide (ed.), *Hiding in the Light: On Images and the Things* (pp. 17-36). London: Routledge.

Hernández, R. (2003) *Looking at Cuba: Essays on Culture and Civil Society*. University of Florida Press: Gainesville.

Hernandez-Reguant, A. (2002a) *Radio Taino and the Globalization of the Cuban Culture Industries*, dissertation for Dept. of Anthropology, University of Chicago: Chicago.

_____ (2002b). Artistic labor and contractual citizenship in the Cuban culture industries. *Anthropology of Work Review*, 23, 3-7.

Herzog, L. (1992). Between Cultures: Public Space in Tijuana. *Places*, 8:(spring), 54-61.

_____ (2006). *Return to the Center*: *Culture, Public Space, and City Building in a Global Era.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

Hill, M. (2004). *Globalizing Havana: World Heritage and Urban Redevelopment in Late Socialist Cuba*. Ph.D. Dissertation submitted to Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago: Chicago, Illinois.

Hidalgo, V. and Martinez, M. (2000). Is the U.S. economic embargo on Cuba morally defensible? *Logos,* 3(4), 100-120.

Hobsbawn, E. J. (1994). *The Age of Extremes: a History of the World, 1914-1991.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Hodge, D. (2001). Colonization of the Cuban body: The growth of male sex work in Havana. *NACLA Report on the Americas,* 34(5), 20-24.

_____ (2005). *Colonization of the Cuban Body: Nationalism, Economy, and Masculinity of Male Sex Work in Havana.* Dissertation submitted to Anthropology Dept. at the City University of New York.

Holloway, S. and Valentine, G. (eds.). (2000). *Children's Geographies: Playing, Living and learning*. London: Routledge.

Hung, W. (2005). *Remaking Beijing: Tiananmen Square and the Creation of a Political Space*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Ibarra, J. (1998). *Prologue to Revolution: Cuba, 1898-1958*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Infante, G.C. (2004). *Three Trapped Tigers*. Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press.

Irazábal, C. (2008). Citizenship, Democracy, and Public Space in Latin America. In Clara Irazábal (ed.), *Ordinary Places, Extraordinary Events: Citizenship, Democracy, and Public Space in Latin America* (pp. 11-34). London: Routledge.

Jatar-Hausmann, A. J. (1999). *The Cuban Way: Capitalism, Communism, and Confrontation*. West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press.

Jones, G. and Wallace, C. (1992). *Youth, family and citizenship*. Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press.

Jones, G. and Varley, A. (1994). The contest for the city centre: Street traders versus Buildings. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 13, 27-44.

Juan Castelanos, E. (1997). *Los Beatles en Cuba: un viaje mágico y misterioso*. La Habana: Ediciones Unión.

Juan de las Cuevas Toraya, L. (2001). *500 Años De Construciones En Cuba*. D.V. Chavín: Madrid.

Kahl, J. (1981). Cuban paradox: Stratified equality. In I. Horowitz (ed.), *Cuban Communism* (pp. 331- 350). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

Kapcia, A. (2000). *Cuba: Island of Dreams*. Oxford: Berg.

_____ (2008). Setting the stage for a discussion of Cuban civil society. In Alexander I. Gray and Antoni Kapcia (eds.), *The Changing Dynamic of Cuban Civil Society: Contemporary Cuba* (pp. 20-39). Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Kenner, M. and Patras, J. (eds.). (1970). *Fidel Castro Speaks*. New York: Gove Press.

Klein, N. (2002). *No Logo*, London: Flamingo.

Koont, S. (2004). Food security in Cuba. *Monthly Review*, 55(8).

Kovacs, Z. (1999). Cities from state-socialism to global capitalism: an introduction. *GeoJournal*, 49, 1-6.

Kunstler, J. (1996). *Home from nowhere: remaking our everyday world for the twenty-first century*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Lacey, M. (2006). Cuban youth finds in rap a voice of freedom. *The International Herald Tribune*. December 14, 2006.

Lacey, R. (1991). *Little Man: Meyer Lansky and the Gangster Life*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Larrison, C. (1999).The end of Cuban contradiction in U.S. refugee policy. *International Migration Review*, 33(1), 176-187.

La Groy, M. and Pipkin, J. (1981). *Urban Social Space*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Larson, S. (2004). *El Mundo Bajo: An Exploration of Male Homosexual Space in Havana Cuba*. Thesis submitted to Hunter College, Department of Geography.

Law, L. (2002). Defying disappearance: cosmopolitan public spaces in Hong Kong. *Urban Studies*, 39(9), 1625-1645.

Laws, G. (1997). Spatiality and Age relations. In A, Jamieso, S. Harper, and C. Victor (eds.), *Critical Approaches to Ageing and Later Life* (pp. 90-101). Buckingham: Open University Press.

Lechuga, C. (1995). *In the Eye of the Storm: Castro, Khrushchev, Kennedy and the Missile Crisis*. Melbourne, AU: Ocean Press.

Lefebvre, H. (1971). *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, translated by Sacha Rabinovitch. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.

_____ (1991a). *The Production of Space*. Oxford, OX, UK ; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell.

_____ (1991). *Critique of Everyday Life*. London: Verso.

_____ (2003). *The Urban Revolution*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press.

Lefebvre, H., Kofman, E., & Lebas, E. (1996). *Writings on cities*. Oxford, UK ; Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell.

Leitner, H, Peck, J, and Sheppard, E. (2007). *Contesting Neoliberalism: Urban Frontiers.* New York: Guilford.

Leogrande, W. (2005). The United States and Cuba: strained engagement. In Morris Morley and Chris McGillion (eds.), *Cuba, the United States, and the Post-Cold War World* (pp. 12-58). University Press of Florida: Gainesville.

Leogrande, W. and Tomas, J. (2002). Cuba's quest for economic independence. *Journal of Latin American Studies,* 34(2), 325-363.

León, F. (1997). Socialism and *sociolismo*: Social actors and economic change in 1990s Cuba. In Migueal Angel Centeno and Mauricio Font (eds.), *Toward a New Cuba? Legacies of a Revolution* (pp. 39-52). Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner Publishers.

_____ (2000). Cuba: Human Resources Development and Employment: What to do after the "Periodo Especial"?. Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL), http://www.cubasource.org/pdf/francisco.pdf (accessed on October 15, 2008).

Le Riverend Bruson, J. (1992). *La Habana, Espacio y Vida*. Madrid: Editorial Mapfre.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1966). *The Savage Mind*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ligget, H. and Perry, D. (1995). *Spatial Practice: Critical Explorations in Social/Spatial Theory*. London: Sage Publications.

Lincoln, Y. and Guba, E. (1994). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage: Thousand Oaks.

Liss, S. (1987). *Roots of Revolution, Radical Though in Cuba*. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press.

Llanes, L. (1993). *1898-1921: La Transformación de La Habana a Traves de La Arquitectura*. La Habana: Editorial Letras Cubanas.

Lofland, L. H. (1998). *The Public Realm: Exploring the City Quintessential Social Theory*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Lofland, J. and Lofland, L. (1984). *Analyzing social settings: A guide to qualitative*

observation and analysis, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.

Low, S. (1999). Spatializing culture: The social production and social
construction of public space in Costa Rica". In Setha Low (ed.), *Theorizing the City: The New Urban Anthropology Reader* (pp. 111-137). New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

_____ (2000) *On the Plaza: the politics of public space and culture.* University of Texas Press: Austin.

Low, S. and Smith, N. (eds.) (2006), *The Politics of Public Space*, Routledge: New York.

Lutjens, S. (1996). *The State, Bureaucracy, and the Cuban Schools*. Boulder: Westview Press.

_____ (1998). Education and the Cuban revolution: A selected bibliography source. *Comparative Education Review,* 42(2), 197-224.

Machover, J. (1995). Memoria de La Habana desaparecida. In Jacobo Machover (ed.). *La Habana 1952-1961, El final de un mundo el principio de una illusion* (pp. 17-26). Madrid: Aliaza Editorial.

Malone, K. (2002). Street Life: Youth, Culture and competing uses of public space, *Environment and Urbanization*. 14: 157-168.

Maira, S. and Soep, E. (2005). Introduction. In Sunaina Maira and Elisabeth Soep. (eds.). *Youthscapes: The Popular, the National, the Global*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania: xv-xxxv.

Martín, J. L. (1991). Youth and the Cuban revolution: Notes on the road traversed and its perspectives. *Latin American Perspectives*, 69(18)(2), 95-100.

Martín, M. and Fuentes, A. S. (2008). El precio de una identidad. *Juventud Rebelde*. (October 27, 2008), http://www.juventudrebelde.cu/cuba/2008-10-26/el-precio-de-una-identidad (accessed October 30, 2008).

Martín Zequeira, M. and Rodríguez Fernández, E. (eds.). (1998), *La Habana: Guía de Arquitectura*, Ciudad de la Habana: Dirección Provincial de Planificación Física y Arqutectura.

Martin de Holan, P. and Philips, N. (1997). Sun, sand, and hard currency: tourism in Cuba. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24, 777-795.

Massey, D. (1994). *Space, Place, and Gender*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

_____ (1998). The spatial construction of youth cultures. In Tracey Skelton & Gill Valentine (eds.), *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures.* London & NYC: Routlege: 121-129.

_____ (2005). *for space*, London, Sage Publishing.

Masud-Piloto, F. (2004). Migrating to the United States. In Max Azicri and Elsie Deal, (eds.), *Cuban Socialism in a New Century: Adversity, Survival, and Renewal* (pp. 283-302). Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press.

Matthews, H., Limb, M. & Taylor, M. (2000). The 'street as thirdspace'. In S.L. Holloway, and Gil Valentine (eds.), *Children's Geographies*. (pp. 63–79). London: Routledge.

McCann, E. J. (1999). Race, protest, and public space: contextualizing Lefebvre in the U.S. city. *Antipode*, 21(2), 163-184.

McDowell, L. (1999). Gender, identity and place. *Understanding Feminist Geographies*. London: Polity Press.

Mead, M. (1955). *Childhood in Contemporary Cultures*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Medin, T. (1990). *Cuba, The Shaping of Revolutionary Consciousness*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Merrifield, A. (2006). *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*, New York: Routledge.

Mesa-Lago, C. (1981) *The Economy of Socialist Cuba: A Two Decade Appraisal*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico.

_____ (1998). Cuba's economic policies and strategies for the 1990s. In Horowitz, I.L. and Suchlicki, J. (eds.), *Cuban Communism* (9th edition). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

_____ (2000). *Market, Socialist, and Mixed Economies: Comparative Policy and Performance- Chile, Cuba, and Costa Rica*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

_____ (2002). Growing economic and social disparities in Cuba: impact and recommendations for change. *Cuba Transition Project*. Miami: University of Miami.

_____ (2007). Social Policy and Social Welfare. In Marifeli Pérez-Stable

(ed.), *Looking Forward: Comparative Perspectives on Cuba's Transition* (pp. 187-211. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Mesa-Lago, C., and Pérez-López, J. F. (2005). *Cuba's aborted reform : socioeconomic effects, international comparisons, and transition policies*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

_____ (2000b). The Resurrection of Cuban Statistics. *Cuban Studies*. 31: 139-150.

Michalowski, R. (1996). Ethnography and anxiety: field work and reflexivity in the vortex of U.S.-Cuban relations. *Qualitative Sociology,* 19(1), 59-81.

Michel, B. (2005). La historia de la ciudad. Es la de sus espacios públicos. *Arquitectura y Urbanismo*, 26(1), 7-15.

Mitchell, D. (2003). *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the fight for Public Space.* New York: Guilford Press.

Monreal, P. (1999). Las remesas familiars en la economía cubana, *Encuentro de la cultura cubana*, 14(fall): 49-62.

_____ (2008). Development as an unfinished affair: Cuba after the "great transformation" of the 1990s. In Philip Brenner, Marguerite Rose Jiménez, John Kirk, and William LeoGrande (eds.), *A Contemporary Cuba Reader* (pp. 17-27). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Mora, F.O. (1999). From fidelismo to raulismo: civilian control of the military in Cuba. *Problems of Post Communism*. 46, 25-38.

Moreno, J. (2004). From capitalist to socialist culture, and back to capitalist values? In Max Azicri and Elsie Deal, (eds.), *Cuban Socialism in a New Century: Adversity, Survival, and Renewal* (pp. 51-64). Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press.

Morris, A.E.J. (1994). *History of Urban Form Before the Industrial Revolution*. (3rd edition). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Muggleton, D. (2000). *Inside Subculture, the Postmodern Meaning of Style*. Oxford: Berg.

Mullins, P. (1991). Tourism urbanization. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 15, 326-42.

Murray, G. (1997). *Vietnam: Dawn of a New Market*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Navarro, J. C. (1998). *History of Cuba: The Challenges of the yoke and the star*.

La Habana: Cuba Si-Mar S.A.

Navarro, M. (2001). Giving hip-hop a cultural beat: Rappers visiting from Cuba find a welcoming audience. *New York Times*. (October 24, 2001).

Nevaer, L. (2008). Havana's Youth Tune Out the Revolution. *New America Media,* News Report, (posted March 12, 2008). http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=98b8f5a45a1c0f0e7976ca19628cc0dd (accessed August 02, 2008).

Nguyen, P. A. (2005). Youth and the state in contemporary socialist Vietnam. *Working Paper No. 16*, Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies. Lund University, Sweden.

Nolan, N. (2003). The ins and outs of skateboarding and transgression in public space in Newcastle, Australia. *Australian Geographer, 34*(3), 311-327.

Nuccio, R.A. (1999). Cuba: the current situation. *Cuba in Transition*, 9, 12-14.

Nuñez Fernández, R. and García Pleyán, C. (2000). Regeneration in old Havana and the role of value capture. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy Research Report.

Oficina Nacional de Estatistícas (ONE), (2007). *Anuario Estatistíco de Cuba.* http://www.one.cu/

Oldenburg, R. (1997). *The Great Good Place*. Pensacola: Marlowe and Company.

Oliveras, R. and Núñez, R. (2001). There will be reason to keep balance: urban segregation in Havana: policies, instruments and results. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Conference Paper: 1-23.

Oppenheimer, A. (1992). *Castro's Final Hour: The Secret Story Behind the Coming Downfall of Communist Cuba.* New York: Symon & Shuster.

Ortiz, F. (1978). *Contrapunteo Cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*. Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho.

Ortíz, F. (1993). Los factores humanos de la cubanidad. In *Etnia y Sociedad*, La Habana, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales.

Pacini Hernández, D. and Garofalo, R. (2000). Hip-hop in Havana: Rap. race, and national identity in contemporary Cuba. *Journal of Popular Music Studies,* 11/12, 18-47.

Patai, D. (1991). U.S. academics and third world women: Is ethical research possible? In

S. B. Gluck & D. Patai (eds.), *Women's words: The feminist practice of oral history*. New York: Routledge.

Peck, J., & Tickell, A. (2002). Neoliberalizing space. In N. Brenner & N. Theodore (eds.), *Spaces of neoliberalism: Urban restructuring in North America and Western Europe* (pp. 34– 57). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Pérez, Louis. (1995). *Cuba Between Reform and Revolution.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

_____ (1999). *On Becoming Cuban: Culture, Identity, and Politics*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

_____ (2005). *To Die in Cuba: suicide and society*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Pérez-Lopez, J. (1994). Islands of capitalism in an ocean of socialism: joint ventures in Cuba's development strategy. In J.F. Pérez-Lopez (ed.), *Cuba at a Crossroads*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Pérez-Stable, M. (1999). Caught in a contradiction- Cuban socialism between mobilization and normalization. *Comparative Politics*. October: 63-79.

_____ (2007). Looking Forward: Democracy in Cuba?, In Marifeli Pérez-Stable (ed.). *Looking Forward: Comparative Perspectives on Cuba's Transition* (pp. 17-46). Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Peters, P. (2000). *The Farmer's Market: Crossroads of Cuba's New Economy*. Arlington, VA: Lexington Institute.

_____ (2003). *Cutting Losses: Cuba Downsizes its Sugar Industry*. Lexington Institute.

_____ (2006). *Cuba's Small Entrepreneurs: Down But Not Out*. Lexington Institute.

 Peters, P. and Scarpaci, J. (1998). *Five Years of Small-Scale Capitalism in Cuba*. Arlington, VA: Alexis de Tocqueville Institute.

Pertierra, A. C. (2008). En casa: women and households in post-soviet Cuba. *Jounral of Latin American Studies*, 40, 743-767.

Pickles, J. (2008). The spirit of post-socialism: 'What is to be understood by it? In John Pickles (ed.), *State and Society in Post-Socialist Economies* (pp. 1-18). New York: Palgrave.

Pilkington, H. (1994). *Russia's Youth and its Culture: A nation's constructors and constructed*. London: Routledge.

Philo, C. (1992). The child in the city. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 8(2), 193-207.

Pollitt, B. (2004). Crisis and reform in Cuba's sugar economy. In Archibald R.M. Ritter (ed.), *The Cuban Economy* (pp. 69-105). Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Porter, A. (2008). Fleeting dreams and flowing goods: Citizenship and consumption in Havana, Cuba. *Political and Legal Anthropology*, 31(1), 134-149.

Power, K. (1999) *While Cuba Waits: Art From the Nineties*, Santa Monica, CA: Smart Art Press.

Premat, A. (2004). *Cuban Counterpoint of the Public and the Private*, Ph.D. Dissertation submitted to Anthropology Department: York University.

Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York: Touchstone Book.

Quiroga, J. (2005), *Cuban Palimpsests*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Roa, R. (1982). *El fuego de la semilla en el surco*. La Habana: Editorial Letras Cubanas.

Reid-Henry, S. (2003). Under the microscope. Fieldwork practice and Cuba's biotechnology industry: a reflexive affair? *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography,* 24(2), 184-197.

Reilly, M. (2001). *The Social Costs of Tourism Development: A View from the Streets*. M.A. Thesis submitted to Geography Department: University of Georgia, Athens.

Rey, G. (2007). Prefacio. In *Regulaciones Urbanísticas, Ciudad de La Habana: El Vedado: Municipio Plaza de la Revolución* (pp. 25-29). La Habana: Ediciones Boloña.

Ritter, A. R.M. and Rowe, N. (2002). Cuba: From "dollarization" to "euroization" or "peso reconsolidation"? *Latin American Politics and Society*, 44(2), 99-123.

Ritter, A. (2004). The Cuban economy in the twenty-first century. In Archibald Ritter (ed.), *The Cuban Economy* (pp. 3-24). Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Rodríguez, P. (1999). *Desafío de una Utopia:.Plan Maestro de La Habana Vieja*, Ciudad

4: Navarra.

Roig de Leuchsenring, E. (1963). *Historia de La Habana*, La Habana: Editorial del Consejo Nacional de Cultura.

Roschelle, A. and Torro-Moron, M. and Facio, E. (2005). Families in Cuba: From colonialism to revolution. In Bert N. Adams and Jan Trost (eds.), *Handbook of World Families* (pp. 414-439). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Rose Jiménez, M. (2008). The political economy of leisure. In Philip Brenner, Marguerite Rose Jiménez, John Kirk, and William LeoGrande (eds.), *A Contemporary Cuba Reader* (pp. 146-155). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Rose, T. (1994). *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*, Hanover: Wesleyan University Press.

Rosenthal, A. (2000). Spectacle, fear, and urban protest: a guide to the history of urban public space in Latin America. *Social Science History*, 24(1), 33-73.

Ruddick, S. (1996a). *Young and Homeless in Hollywood: Mapping Social Identities*. New York: Routledge.

_____ (1996b). Constructing Difference in Public Spaces: Race, Class, and Gender as Interlocking Systems. *Urban Geography*: 132-151.

_____ (1998). Modernism and Resistance. In Tracey Skelton and Gill Valentine (eds.) *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures* (pp. 343-360). New York: Routledge.

_____ (2003). The Politics of Aging: Globalization and the Restructuring of Youth and Childhood. *Antipode*, 334- 362.

Rutheiser, C. (2000). Capitalizing on Havana: The return of the repressed in a late socialist city. In Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (eds.), *A Companion to the City* (pp. 224-236). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Safa, H. (2007).Women and household change in the special period. In Francisco Scarano and Margarita Zamora (eds.), *Cuba: Contrapuntos de cultura, historia y Sociedad* (pp. 207-228). San Juan. PR: Ediciones Callejón.

Salas, Luis, (1979a). *Social Control and Deviance in Cuba*. New York: Praeger.

_____ (1979b). Juvenile Delinquency in Post-Revolutionary Cuba, *Cuban Studies*, 9(1), 43-59.

Sailer-Fliege, U. 1999. Characteristics of post-socialist urban transformation in East Central Europe. *GeoJournal*, 49, 7-16.

Scarpaci, J. (2000a). On transformation of socialist cities. *Urban Geography, 21*(8), 659-669.

_____ (2000b). Reshaping Habana Vieja: revitalization, historic preservation, and restructuring, in the socialist city. *Urban Geography*, 21, 24-44.

_____ (2002). Havana: The dynamics of local executive power. In David J. Myers and Henry A. Dietz (eds.), *Capital City Politics in Latin America* (pp. 163-192). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

_____ (2005). *Plazas and Barrios: Heritage Tourism and Globalization in the Latina American Centro Historico.* Tuscon: The University of Arizona.

Scarpaci, J., Segre, R., and Coyula, M. (2002). *Havana: Two Faces of the Antillean Metropolis*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Schumpeter, J. A. (1975). *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. New York: Harper.

Schwartz, G. (1978). Book review. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 84(3), 789-791.

Schwartz, R. (1997). *Pleasure Island: Tourism and Temptation in Cuba*. Lincoln : University of Nebraska Press.

Segre, R. (1990). *Arquitectura y urbanismo de la revolución cubana*. La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación.

_____ (2002b). Havana, from Tacón to Forestier. In Arturo Almandoz (ed.), *Planning Latin America's Capital Cities, 1850-1950* (pp. 193-214). London: Routledge.

Sennett, R. (1977). *The Fall of Public Man*, New York: Knopf.

Shlapentokh, V. (1989). *Public and Private Life of the Soviet People: Changing Values in Post-Stalin Russia*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sibley, D. (1991). Children's Geographies: Some Problems of Representation. *Area*, 23, 269-270.

_____ (1995). *Geographies of Exclusion*. New York: Routledge.

Silva, A. (2003). *Urban Imaginaries*. Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatjie Cantz.

Skaine, R. (2004). *The Cuban Family*, Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company Inc.

Skelton, T. (2000). Nothing to do, nowhere to go?: Teenage girls and 'public space' in the Rhondda Valleys, South Wales. In Sarah Holloway and Gill Valentine (eds.), *Children's Geographies: Playing, Living and learning* (pp. 80-99). London: Routledge.

Skelton, T. and Valentine, G. (eds.) (1998). *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures*. New York: Routledge.

Smith, A. (2007). Articulating neoliberalism: Diverse economies and everyday life in postsocialist cities. In Helga Leitner, Jamie Peck, and Eric Sheppard (eds.), *Contesting Neoliberalism: Urban Frontiers* (pp. 204-222). New York: Guilford Press.

Smith, F. (1998). Between east and west: sites of resistance in East German youth cultures. In Tracey Skelton & Gill Valentine (eds.), *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures* (pp. 289-304). London & NYC: Routlege.

Smith, L. and Padula, A. (1990). The Cuban family in the 1980s. In Sandor Halerbsky and John Kirk, (eds.), *Transformation and Struggle, Cuba Faces the 1990s* (pp. 175-188). New York: Praeger.

_____ (1996). *Sex and Revolution: Women in Socialist Cuba*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Smith, R. (1960). *The United States and Cuba*. New Haven, College and University Press.

Soja, E. W. (1989). *Postmodern Geographies: the Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. London; New York: Verso.

_____ (2000). *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions*, Malden: Blackwell Publishers.

Soria y Puig, A. (1999). *Cerdá: the Five Bases of the General Theory of Urbanization*. Madrid: Electa.

Stanilov, K. (2007). Democracy, markets, and public space in the transitional societies of Central and Eastern Europe. In Kiril Stanilov (ed.), *The Pos-Socialist City: Urban Form and Space Transformations in Central and Eastern Europe after Socialism* (pp. 269-284). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.

Staten, C. L . (2003). *The history of Cuba.* Westport, CT : Greenwood Press.

Stravrides, S. (2007). Heterotopias and the experience of porous urban space, In Karen Franck and Quentin Stevens (eds.), *Loose Space: Possibility and Diversity in Urban Life* (pp. 174-192). London: Routledge.

Stephens, S. (1995). Children and the politics of culture in 'late capitalism.' In Sharon Stephens (ed.), *Children and the Politics of Culture* (pp. 3-48). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1994). Grounded theory methodology: An overview. In N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 262-272). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Susman, P. (1987). Spatial equality and socialist transformation in Cuba, In Dean Forbes and Nigel Thrift (eds.), *The socialist Third World: urban development and territorial planning* (pp. 250-281). Oxford: Blackwell.

Szelenyi, I. (1983). *Urban Inequalities Under State Socialism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

_____ (1993). East European Socialist Cities: How Different are They?. In Greg Gouldin and Aidan Southall (eds.), *Urban Anthropology in China*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

_____ (1996). Cities Under Socialism and after. In G. Andruz, M. Harloe, and I. Szeleny (eds.). *Cities After Soicalism* (pp. 286-317). Oxford: Blackwell \ Publishers.

Thomas, H. (1998). *Cuba or the Pursuit of Freedom*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Thomas, M. (2001). Public spaces/public disgraces: crowds and the state in contemporary Vietnam. *SOJOURN*, 16(2), 306-30.

_____ (2002). Out of control: emergent cultural landscapes and political change in urban Vietnam. *Urban Studies*, 39(9), 1611-1624.

Tienda, M. and Wilson, W.J. (2002). Comparative Perspectives of urban youth: challenges for normative development, In Marta Tienda and Wililam Julius Wilson. (eds.). *Youth in Cities: A Cross-National Perspective* (pp. 3-20). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Tonkiss, F. (2005). *Space, the City and Social Theory: Social Relations and Urban Forms*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Torroella, G. (1963). *Estudio de La Juventud Cubana*. La Habana: Comision Nacional Cubana de la UNESCO.

Tranberg Hansen, K. (2008). Introduction: Youth in the city. In Karen Tranberg
Hansen (ed.), *Youth and the City in the Global South* (pp. 2-23). Bloomington, IN:
Indiana University Press.

Ubieta, E. (2008). Cuba y los desafíos culturales del siglo XXI. *Socialismo y sociedad de consumo*. Ponencia en el Congreso Internacional Marx y los desafíos del siglo XXI. La Habana en 2008.
http://www.cubainformacion.tv/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=7214
(accessed 11/16/08).

"Union of Young Communists celebrate 46th anniversary", (2008) *Granma International* (April 4, 2008). http://www.granma.cu/ingles/2008/nacional21-i.html. (accessed 8/15/08).

Uriarte-Gastón, M. (2002). Cuba Social Policy at the Crossroads: Maintaining priorities, Transforming Practice. Oxfam America Report. Boston: Oxfam.
http://www.oxfamamerica.org/newsandpublications/publications/research_reports/art3670.html/OA-Cuba_Social_Policy_at_Crossroads-en.pdf (accessed July 15, 2008).

_____ (2004). Social Policy Responses to Cuba's Economic Crisis of the 1990s. *Cuban Studies*, 35, 105-136.

Urry, J. (1990). *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. London: Sage Publications.

Valdés, N. (2008). What was forbidden then is promoted now, Cuba, the beatles and historical context. *Counter Punch*.
http://www.counterpunch.org/valdes03292008.html, (accessed on November 15, 2008).

Valentin, K. (2008). Politicized leisure in the wake of doi moi: A study of youth in Hanoi. In Karen Tranberg Hansen (ed.), *Youth and the City in the Global South* (pp. 74-97). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Valentine, G. (1996a). Children Should be Seen and Not Heard: The Production and Transgression of Adults' Public Space. *Urban Geography*, 17, 205-220.

_____ (1996b). Angels and Devils: Moral Landscapes of Childhood. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 14(5), 581-599.

_____ (2004), *Public Space and the Culture of Childhood*, Ashgate: Aldershot, UK.

Valentine, G., Skelton, T. and Chambers, D. (1998). Cool Places: an

introduction to youth and youth cultures. In Tracey Skelton & Gill Valentine (eds.), *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures* (pp. 1-35). London & NYC: Routledge.

Van Horn, J.L., Komlósi, A. Suchar, E. and Samelson, D.A. (2000). *Adolescent Development and Rapid Social Change*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Venegas Fornias, C. (1990). *La Urbanización de Las Murallas. Dependencia y Modernidad*. Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas.

Verdery, K. (1999) *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change*, Columbia University Press: New York.

Victoria Zardoya, M. (2007). Antecedentes históricos: La ley y el orden. In *Regulaciones Urbanísticas. Ciudad de La Habana: El Vedado: Municipio Plaza de la Revolución* (pp. 33-47). La Habana: Ediciones Boloña.

Watt, P. and Stenson, K. (1998) The street: 'It's a bit dodgy around there': Safety, danger, ethnicity and young people's use of public space. In T. Skelton and G. Valentine. (eds.) *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures* (pp. 249-265). New York: Routledge.

Weinmann, L. (2008). Getting Smart about Cuba. *Foreign Policy in Focus* http://www.fpif.org/fpiftxt/5045 (visited Oct. 15, 2008).

Weintraub, J. (1997). The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction." In Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar, (eds.). *Public and Private in Thought and Practice* (pp. 1-42).Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Weiss, J. (1979), *La Arquitectura Colonial Cubana*. La Habana: Editorial Letras Cubanas.

Wicke, P. (2006). Music, Dissidence, Revolution, and Commerce: Youth Culture between Mainstream and Subculture. In Alex Schildt and Detlef Siegfried (eds.) *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980* (pp. 109-126). New York: Berghahn Books.

White, R. (1990) *No Space of Their Own: Young People and Social Control in Australia*, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

_____ (1993a) Young people and the policing of community space, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 26(3), 207-18.

White, R. and Wyn, J. (2004). *Youth and Society: Exploring the Social Dimensions of Youth*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

283

Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to Labor, How Working Class Boys Get Working Class Jobs*, Farnborough: Saxon House.

_____ (1990). *Common Culture: Symbolic work at play in the everyday cultures of the young*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Wright, A. and Wolford, W. (2003). *To Inherit the Earth: the Landless Movement and the Struggle for a New Brazil*, Oakland, CA: Food First Books.

Wyn, J., and White, R. (1997). *Rethinking Youth*. London: Sage.

Wulff, H. (1995). Introduction: Introducing youth culture in its own right: the state of the art and new possibilities. In Vered Amit-Talai and Helena Wulff (eds.) *Youth Cultures: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (pp. 1-18). London: Routlegde.

Wunderlich, A. (2005). Hip Hop Pushes the Limits, In Lydia Chávez (ed.), *Capitalism, God, and a Good Cigar* (pp. 65-77). Durham: Duke University Press.

Xianglin, M. (2007) Cuban reform and economic opening: retrospective and assessment. *Latin American Perspectives,* 34, 93-105.

Zanetti, O. and García, A. (1998). *Sugar and Railroads: A Cuban History: 1837-1959*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Zukin, S. (1996). Space and symbols in an age of decline. In A. D. King (ed.), *Re-Presenting the City: Ethnicity, Capital and Culture in the 21st-Century Metropolis* (pp. 43-59). New York: New York University Press.

Appendix A

Interview Question Guide for Informal Interviews and Focus Groups

1.) When did you first hear about Calle G, and from who?

 ¿Cuando oyó hablar de la Calle G por primera vez, y de quien?

2.) For how many years have you been going there?

 ¿Por cuantos anos has acudido al lugar?

3.) How often do you go there?

 ¿Con cuanta frecuencia vas?

4.) What days and times do you go? Normally when do you leave?

 ¿Qué días y a que hora sueles visitar? Cuando sueles volver a casa?

5.) What do you normally do while you are there?

 ¿Qué sueles hacer cuando vas?

6.) Who do you normally go there with?

 ?Con quien sueles ir allí?

7.) Do your parents know that you go there?

 ¿Tus padres saben que vas?

8.) What other public spaces do you and your friends go to normally?

 ¿A qué otros espacio públicos sueles ir tu y/o tus amigos?

9.) What usually happens at Calle G, what do people do there?

 ¿Qué suele ocurrir en la Calle G, qué hace la gente allí?

10.) Who else, what other type of people, normally goes there?

 ¿Quien más, qué tipo de gente, suele ir allí?

11.) Do you know any of the history of that space? When did the youth begin meeting there?

    ¿Sabes algo de la historia del lugar? Cuando empezó la juventud a reunirse allí?

12.) How do you describe yourself? (i.e. are you a miqui, repas friqui, o rockero)

    ¿Como te describes (ej. Eres un miqui, repas friqui, o rockero)?

13.) How do you describe these other groups, what are their characteristics?

    ¿Como describirías a los otros grupos, cuales son sus características?

14.) Do you think Calle G is an important space for the youth? Why?

    ¿Crees que la calle G es un espacio importante para la juventud? Porqué?

15.) Why do you think there are so many youth there every weekend?

    ¿Porqué crees que hay tantos jóvenes allí cada fin de semana?

16.) Why do you think the government allows them to stay there?

    ¿Porque crees que el gobierno les permite quedar allí?

17.) Has Calle G changed at all since you first started going there? If so, how?

    ¿Desde de que empezaste a visitar el lugar, ha cambiado la calle G? Si es el caso, como?

18.) Do you see the police there frequently? Have you or your friends had any trouble with the police?

    ¿Ves a la policía allí con frecuencia? Has tenido (tu o tus amigos) culaquiere problem con la policía?

Appendix B

Questions used for Surveys

1.) Age?
    ¿Edad?

2.) Level of schooling?
    ¿Nivel Escolar?

4.) Occupation?
    ¿Ocupacíon?

5.) Where were you born?
    ¿Barrio de procedencía?

6.) For how long have you lived there?
    ¿Desde cúando vive ahí?

7.) What is the function of public space in the city?
    ¿Cuál es la function de los espacios públicos en la ciudad?

8.) What are the most popular public spaces in the city?
    ¿Cúales son los espacios públicos más populares en la ciudad? ¿Por qué?

9.) Who uses public space?
    ¿Quiénes utilizan los espacios públicos?

10.) What do people do in public space?
    ¿Qué hacen en los espacios públicos?

11.) What are your rights in public space?
    ¿Cúales son sus derechos en los espacios públicos?

12.) Usually, what do you do in public space
    ¿Usualmente, ¿qué hace usted en los espacios públicos?

13.) How have public spaces changed in the past 15 years?
    ¿Cómo han cambiado los espacios públicos en los últimos 15 años?

14.) What are the problems with public space in your neighborhood?
    ¿Cúales son los problemas en espacio públicos en su barrio?

15.) How can public space be improved in your neighborhood?

¿Cómo se pueden mejorar los espacios públicos en su barrio?

16.) Do you think that public space in important? Why?
    ¿Piensa usted que los espacios públicos son importantees? ¿Por qué?

17.) In your own words, What is public space?
    ¿Con sus palabras: ¿Qué es un espacio público?

18.) Who has rights in public space?
    ¿Quiénes tienen derechos a los espacios públicos?

19.) Who controls public space and in what way?
    ¿Quiénes controla los espacios públicos y de quémanera?