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The Social Construction of Tourism in Cuba: A Geographic Analysis of the Representations of Gender and Race during the Special Period 1995-1997

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Michael W. Cornebise entitled "The Social Construction of Tourism in Cuba: A Geographic Analysis of the Representations of Gender and Race during the Special Period 1995-1997." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Geography.

Lydia Mihelič Pulsipher, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Thomas Bell, Ronald Foresta, Todd Diakon

Accepted for the Council:

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Michael W. Cornebise entitled “The Social Construction of Tourism in Cuba: A Geographic Analysis of the Representations of Gender and Race during the Special Period.” I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Geography.

Lydia Mihelič Pulsipher, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
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(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

**The Social Construction of Tourism in Cuba: A Geographic Analysis of the
Representations of Gender and Race during the Special Period**

**A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

**Michael W. Cornebise
December 2003**

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Roxanne, and our son, Sammy, for all of their patience and support during the final stages of completion. They have inspired me to achieve my goals through their active encouragement.

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Without the help of many people, this project would not have been realized. I would like to thank my advisor, Lydia Pulsipher, for all of her time and effort in helping me formulate the project and encouraging me to stay on task. Her countless hours of reading and re-reading many stages of revisions are greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank the members of my dissertation committee, Ronald Foresta, Thomas Bell and Todd Diakon, for their contributions to this work and their willingness to accommodate my hectic schedule. I wish to especially thank Joseph Scarpaci who served as an advisory member to my committee. Joe contributed greatly to the final product and he was instrumental in helping me foster contacts in Cuba.

Although too numerous to acknowledge here, I would like to thank all of the kind souls in Cuba who helped me gather information and to overcome obstacles in the field. Each one of them contributed a valuable piece of the puzzle and several became good friends in the process.

I would like to thank my family for their never-ending support during this process. They provided me with the time and resources to complete this project.

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Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to critically examine race and gender as they intersect with tourism development in Cuba during the Special Period in a Time of Peace (Special Period), a government imposed austerity program that followed the loss of important Soviet subsidies in 1989.

I hypothesize that tourism development in Cuba during the Special Period betrays the Revolution in that it reconstitutes discriminatory practices along lines of race and gender and hence does not deliver benefits to average Cubans. Indeed, I argue that tourism as presently constructed may subvert the well being of ordinary Cubans.

I draw from Gramsci's theory of hegemony and the wider body of theory collectively referred to as the social construction of space to frame my analysis. I posit that Cuba functions as a de facto hegemonic power and thereby challenges the notion that hegemonies are necessarily associated with capitalist regimes. I demonstrate how socially constructed discourses emerged during the Revolution that support the Marxist notion that socialism eliminates discrimination and inequality.

Throughout the course of the Cuban Revolution, the Castro regime has maintained that inequalities of race and gender have been eliminated because the "conditions" for discrimination (i.e., the capitalist modes of production) have disappeared. My data suggest that racism and sexism continue to exist in Cuba and

have become more prevalent during the Special Period in a Time of Peace (1989-present).

I base the study on data derived from official and non-official sources along with field data conducted over the course of three excursions from 1995-1997. I also conduct a qualitative and quantitative analysis of Cuban tourism literature to examine representations of women and darker-skinned Cubans to test my hypothesis.

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CHAPTER ONE

Statement of the Research Problem

“Tourism is both a constructed and constructing phenomenon, it is a communicator and shaper of society’s ideology” (Hollingshead quoted in Morgan and Pritchard 1998, 17).

The main goal of this dissertation is to study how Cuba’s tourism-oriented development strategy intersects with race and gender, and the extent to which tourism benefits the average Cuban. I maintain that tourism development in Cuba during the Special Period in a Time of Peace (1989-present: *el Período Especial en el Tiempo de Paz*) betrays the Revolution in that it reconstitutes discriminatory practices along lines of race and gender and hence does not deliver benefits to average Cubans. Indeed tourism, as presently constructed may actually subvert the well being of ordinary Cubans, despite government claims to the contrary. As the opening quote suggests, tourism shapes and reflects a society, and consequently, the tourist landscape reveals much about the societal streams of power (see Duncan 1991, 3). With these points in mind, I have focused this analysis on the effectiveness of Cuba’s tourism development strategy and the government’s role in implementing tourism. First of all, given the Cuban decision to pursue a development strategy that combines tourism with limited market capitalism, I explore how well Cuban tourism addresses the “development for whom?” question. To do this I have posed the following questions to guide the analysis: Who benefits from Cuba’s current economic development strategy? Given that tourism is often a highly gendered and racialized field (a point established in Chapters Four, Five and Six), how does the industry affect the economic and social roles of Cuban women? How do the tourism

economy, and the resulting societal shifts of the Special Period, tangibly affect the lives of Afro-Cubans and *mulattos* (blacks and mixed race Cubans) as opposed to Hispanic-Cubans (whites)? Previous research in a wide range of countries has revealed that women and darker-skinned participants in the tourism industry are generally found in inferior and unskilled positions because those are often the only jobs available to them (Sinclair 1997, 1-12; Chant 1995, 96-100; Harrison 1995, 24-25; Shaw and Williams 1994, 150). This information serves as a point of departure for this study.

The second key focal point is the ways the Cuban government “represents” women and blacks in the Special Period and, more specifically, within the context of the country’s tourism sector. The second indicator is related to the first in that as an analysis of the power of representation, it should reveal how authentic has been the effort to see that ordinary Cubans are the beneficiaries of the tourism development strategy. I examine the representations of women and Afro-Cubans (which include tourism promotional images) in the context of Cuba’s historical continuum, and I investigate how representations have been addressed (or indeed manipulated) during the revolutionary period. The insights revealed by tourism images in particular aid in understanding the power relationships that underscore the current gender and racial roles in Cuba. Indeed as Morgan and Pritchard write, “We need to acknowledge that constructions reveal much about the dynamics of relationships between peoples, cultures, genders and states—constructions which dominate the currency of culture and ideology” (1998, 5). I will address this point further in Chapter Five.

In this study, I establish two main theoretical constructs to frame my analysis. I will demonstrate that by understanding how space is socially constructed and produced within the context of a Cuban economy dominated by the tourism industry, one can uncover the hidden realities that are often glossed over by government propaganda and official proclamations. As John Urry has observed, studying how space is used and perceived can reveal “just what is happening in the ‘normal society’” (Urry 2002, 2).

Secondly, I believe Cuba presents an interesting case study to test Gramsci’s theory of hegemony. I posit that the Cuban model for development challenges the notion that hegemonies are by nature the outgrowth of capitalist regimes. I demonstrate that Castro fostered discourses during the Revolution in support of the Marxist notion that socialism eliminates the “conditions” for discrimination and inequality. However, in Castro’s self-proclaimed socialist paradise, the regime functions as a de facto hegemonic power by controlling the means of production, limiting access to space, stifling private enterprise, and cracking down severely on dissent, all in the name of equality. As a result, the Cuban people resist government policy in a number of ways including the relatively benign (procuring goods on the black market in order to feed their families) to the increasingly dangerous (forming anti-government dissident groups).

A Brief Introduction to the Geography and Colonial History of Cuba¹

Cuba, the largest island in the Greater Antilles, is home to 11.2 million people. The island of Cuba is the largest in an archipelago comprising over 3,700 islands, islets and keys (*cayos*), the combined area of which totals 114,524 square kilometers (Scarpaci, Segre and Coyula 2002, 3). Cuba is strategically located astride three important narrows: the Yucatan Channel, the Straits of Florida and the Windward Passage (West and Augelli 1989, 129). The island is only 150 kilometers south of the Florida Keys and 210 kilometers east of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula (ICGC 1978, 22-23).

Researchers believe Cuba, along with the other islands that make up the Greater Antilles (Old Antillia), was formed 100 million years ago during the Cretaceous era. Topographically, plains dominate the landscape of Cuba, but three main mountain chains punctuate the island: the Sierra Maestra in the southeast, the Escambray Mountains in south central Cuba, and the Sierra de los Organos in the west (ICGC 1978, 22-23). The Sierra Maestra are the most rugged of the mountain chains and today are revered for the isolation they afforded Fidel Castro and his compatriots when they returned from exile in December 1956. Castro used the Sierra Maestra as a base to build support against the Batista regime. The highest point in

¹ This section serves as a brief introduction to Cuba to set the context of the study. More detailed analyses of Cuba's geographic and historical patterns are included in relevant chapters.

Cuba is Pico Turquino that rises to 1,972 meters in the Sierra Maestra (ICGC 1978, 22-23).

Historically, Cuba's physical attributes allowed it to become both a key agricultural producer, particularly in sugar and tobacco, and a major tourism hub, particularly in the 1950s. West and Augelli noted that Cuba's "favorable combination" of climate, relief and soils provides one of the highest ratios of cultivated land per person in the Middle American region (1978, 130). Cuba's average annual rainfall is between 65 inches in Pinar del Rio and 40 inches in Guantanamo and is concentrated during the May to October rainy season. In the early 20th century, tourists began to flock to Cuba to take advantage of its tropical climate, its wide array of beaches, and to enjoy its varied flora and fauna.

For much of the colonial period, Spain viewed Cuba as the "key to the New World" (West and Augelli 1989,129-130). Spain's initial colonial goal, from an economic standpoint, was to extract New World mineral wealth, a pursuit they accomplished using mainly indigenous labor sources. Unlike the northern European colonies, extensive agricultural production, particularly the cultivation of sugar, was not a key component of the early Spanish Main (Rudolph 1987, 10). Cuba's first role in the colonial network was to support the port city of Havana, the Caribbean hub, where Spanish ships loaded with loot would rendezvous, take on provisions, and form armadas in an attempt to protect themselves from pirates on their return trip to the continent. Furthermore, Spain disallowed trade between its colonies and other European countries, creating a disincentive for colonial cultivators who were dependent on a Spanish market that exhibited little demand for imported sugar (Watts

1987, 301). The Spaniards initially pursued agriculture to supply the needs of Havana in its role as the Spanish empire's regional service colony, although the island exported leather goods and tobacco products due to their demand in Spain (Thomas 1971, 27). I discuss the colonial period as it relates to race and gender in Chapter Four. Two main events occurred in the past century or so that have been significant to the evolution of modern Cuba. The first was the end result of the Second Cuban War for Independence (1895-1898) when United States effectively de-railed Cuba's bid for independence. On the cusp of an apparent Cuban victory over the Spanish colonial regime, the United States entered Cuba ostensibly to support the Cuban revolutionaries. In the end, however, the U.S. gained control of Cuba as part of the territorial gains realized when the U.S. defeated Spain in the Spanish-American War (1898-1902). Therefore, rather than achieving outright independence, Cuba was subsumed into an expanding U.S. empire through the maintenance of the Platt Amendment² (in place from 1902 to 1933), one component of which allowed the United States to intervene militarily when deemed necessary (Thomas 1971, 453-454). During this period, the United States dominated Cuba economically as its leading trading partner and source of foreign investment (this point is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three). The U.S. dominance was insured by Fulgencio Batista, who was the official ruler of Cuba from 1940-1944 and again from 1952-1959, and who was supported by the U.S. Government as well as by revenue from U.S. investors and tourists.

² The Platt Amendment is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

The second important event was Fidel Castro's rise to power that culminated in his January 1st, 1959 take-over of the country. Castro immediately instituted a program to nationalize Cuban industries thereby alienating American investors and the U.S. government in the process. Castro's attempts to transform Cuban society led to the emigration of an estimated 1 million people between 1959 and 1990, about 700,000 of whom settled in the United States (Gonzalez-Pando 1998, Appendix One). In 1961, Castro officially allied Cuba with the Soviet bloc, thus beginning an economic and political relationship that would last until 1989 when the Soviet Union collapsed. Others have observed that Cuba traded one dependent relationship (with the United States) for another. This point is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three. In the remainder of the chapter, I discuss many of the contradictions that have emerged as a result of Castro's policies.

The Cuban Contradiction

In 1998, a three-level shopping mall opened in the heart of Havana in Vedado near the famous Malecón waterfront. It was built near one of the city's major tourism zones between the imposing Spanish-operated five-star Hotel Sol Melía, symbol of the post-1989 tourism era, and the re-furbished 1950s era Hotel Riviera. What is significant about the mall is that the only currency accepted in its shops is the US dollar. While most Cubans earn their salaries not in dollars but in Cuban pesos, the majority of shoppers in the mall on opening day were not tourists, but the few privileged dollar-toting Cubans who could afford the wares on display. As a symbol,

the mall speaks volumes on the changes Cuba has experienced since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 left the country bereft of essential subsidies. Since that time, the country has reluctantly embraced both tourism and capitalism (much like China and Vietnam) in an effort to maintain a centrally planned political system supported by a hybrid economy based on a combination of socialist and capitalist principles.

The re-introduction of large-scale tourism coupled with the advent of various forms of capitalism has radically altered the Cuban landscape. The changes wrought from tourism development span the virtual “Cancunization” of beach tourism enclaves such as Varadero, to the presence of literally hundreds of small dollar-only roadside snack bars that have sprouted in recent years throughout rural Cuba. To the researcher, the evolving built environment serves as an important palimpsest that allows one to study the re-ordering of Cuba’s priorities and to search for clues about changing social patterns. This is made possible by the Castro regime’s extensive renovation and re-use of 1950s era hotels, restaurants and even activities that were once part of the pre-revolutionary period. For example, the government’s efforts to enthusiastically market the Tropicana show³, that once served a clientele of Americans during the Batista regime, is indicative of how far Cuba has strayed from early revolutionary precepts when such shows were disdained and denounced as symbolic of capitalist exploitation. In many ways, while the origins of the tourists and aspects of the physical landscape have largely changed, many of the resulting social

³ The Tropicana is a still-functioning Havana nightclub famed for a Las Vegas-style caberet act that features the ubiquitous “hot mulatta” dancers. Established in 1939, the club became a key attraction on the tourism circuit in the 1950s and was known for its costly and flamboyant acts (Baker 2000, 394). It is one of the few Batista-era attractions that has remained open over the entire course of the Revolution.

and geographic implications of the tourism industry are remarkably similar to those of the pre-revolutionary period. Indeed, to use a term favored by Cubanologists, Cuba has indeed gone “back to the future” by implementing tourism as a development strategy (see Scarpaci 1996, Eckstein 1994, et al).

In 1960, R. Hart Philips published a book entitled, Cuba, Island of Paradox, a work that detailed Castro’s rise to power in Cuba in 1959. For Philips, Cuba’s paradox stemmed from the goals and aspirations of the newly victorious rebel forces and their leader, Fidel Castro. She wrote, “Many people in Cuba believe that the Castro reform program is in the tradition of the communist pattern, but others believe that the parallel with communist procedure is coincidental. Ironically, Castro has outflanked [communist] appeals by instituting his own reforms” (Philips 1960, 417). She wondered aloud as to whether Cuba would move towards greater linkages with the Soviet Union. She didn’t have to wait long for her answer.

While the issues surrounding Cuba today differ greatly in many ways from those of the early revolutionary era, the title of her book remains apt. Cuba remains a paradox at many different levels and as such exhibits several key contradictions. . While Cuba is a country represented by pronounced racial and cultural diversity, expressions of individuality (or even sectoral consciousness) are anathema to a regime that demands unquestioned unity through state-directed expressions of nationalism (*la patria*). This is reflected in Castro’s famous proclamation that underlines the absolutist nature of Cuba’s political system: “everything within the revolution, nothing against” (see Dalton 1993, 14-15). In this statement, the Castro regime has alluded to the fact that there exist no avenues for dissent or legitimate

critique of the system and citizens are forced to either agree wholeheartedly with policies or risk jail, exile, or worse. This has led to what Marifeli Pérez-Stable refers to as *la doble moral*, or duplicity, whereby Cuban citizens espouse beliefs in the public sphere that may completely contradict beliefs held and discussed in private (1999, 208-209).

The tensions produced by *la doble moral* have arguably intensified over the course of the “Special Period in a Time of Peace” (referred to hereafter as the Special Period), which is Castro’s euphemism for a severe austerity program that accompanied the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 (The Special Period will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three). As a result of Cuba’s loss of generous Soviet subsidies, the Special Period has given rise to new social and economic patterns that led to a curtailment of government spending on Cuba’s vaunted and once generous social programs. The implementation of capitalist ventures such as tourism and mining operations was accomplished in part by diverting resources from social programs benefiting Cuban citizens to those that favored foreign investors and tourists. The resultant diffusion of investment capital, ideas and people from the capitalist world challenges the regime’s stranglehold on information and has at times threatened Castro’s control of power. What follows is a brief summation of Cuba’s most glaring contradictions as noted from the early 1990s to the present as a means of both introducing the complex nature of Cuban life in the Special Period and of setting the context for this study.

While Cuba remains ostensibly a socialist country, it is capitalism that is now guiding the island out of its economic doldrums. Although the Castro regime has

made every effort to limit the role of capitalism in the lives of ordinary Cubans by attempting to maintain social programs (continued free health care and education provided by the state) and by controlling food distribution via an extensive rationing program, there has been major slippage. During the Special Period residents have no longer been able to depend solely on rations or the socialist economy for many basic necessities and this has led to the creation of a booming black market and increasing reliance on the dollar-based economy. In 1993, at the nadir of the Special Period, the government reluctantly allowed average Cubans to possess and spend U.S. dollars. This was done, in part, to address government concern about the lack of options available in the peso economy. In order to provide legal outlets to Cuban shoppers, dollar-only stores were opened to serve Cuban citizens and they quickly developed into an essential source of goods during the Special Period (see Table 1). However, the government was also concerned with the increasing number of dollars floating around the black market that most Cubans were forced to utilize in order to satisfy basic needs before access to dollar stores was legalized (see Jatar-Hausmann 1999, 61-68 and Pérez-López 1995, 161-162 for more discussion on the black market).

Table 1: Estimated Total Sales in Cuba’s “Dollar Stores”

Year	Total Sales
1992	\$50 million
1999	\$1 billion

Market Exchange Rate 1999: \$1 US=26 Cuban pesos

Source: *The Economist*, Oct. 23, 1999: 37

Prior to the Special Period, dollar stores were synonymous with *diplo tiendas* (*diplos*), stores established for the exclusive use of foreign diplomats, *tecnotiendas*, stores for foreign technicians, and tourist stores for international tourists (Pérez-López 1995, 48-49)⁴. While all dollar-denominated stores were officially off limits to most Cuban citizens, many people were able to establish connections with diplomats and other foreigners who would purchase goods on their behalf (Humberto, personal communication 1997).

The black market continues to be driven largely by remittances sent to Cubans from émigrés, the majority of whom live in the United States. According to one estimate, Cuban-Americans send up to \$1 billion annually to the island (Pérez-Sarduy and Stubbs 2000, 34). The government, therefore, felt it necessary to legalize dollars for Cubans and provide dollar-denominated stores to capture excess remittance dollars that would have fed black market activities outside of Castro's direct control. The unequal distribution of remittances during the course of the Special Period has resulted in Cuba becoming a nation starkly divided into those who have ample access to dollars and livable incomes and those who depend mainly on their inadequate peso salaries to survive⁵.

Another contradiction is that tourism, an industry that was reformed and de-emphasized in the early Castro period, is currently Cuba's leading economic sector. This is especially significant when one considers the historical role of tourism in

⁴ While tourist arrivals have increased to nearly 2 million during the Special Period, Cuba welcomed 300,000 tourists on the eve of the Special Period in 1989. Canadians were, and continue to be the most numerous although tourists from the Soviet bloc were also well represented during the 1970s and 80s.

⁵ The Cuban economy and the role of remittances during the Special Period will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Three.

Cuba as well as the lingering collective memories of the industry as it was implemented in the 1950s. When Castro seized power of the country in 1959, he overthrew a Batista regime famous for importing American mafioso to “clean up” the corrupt gambling sector. A complex of tourism products that included prostitution, sex shows and gambling shaped the country in the 1950s. Castro himself continued to court tourists in the aftermath of his revolutionary victory despite nationalizing the industry, and thereby alienating the former owners, many of whom were based in the United States. But, he also closed the brothels and sex shows and began efforts to “re-educate” Cuba’s prostitutes⁶. Castro erroneously believed that visitors would continue to flock to his country despite the closure of gambling facilities and other “sinful” dens of vice (Perrottet and Biondi 1996, 70). In October of 1959, Castro attended the Havana convention of the American Society of Tourist Agents (ASTA) and outlined his ambition to convert the island into the “best place for vacations, and the best and most important tourist center in the world” (Castro quoted in Miller and Henthorne 1997, 6-7).

The Eisenhower administration’s embargo against Cuba in late 1960 forced Castro to de-emphasize the role of tourism in the Cuban economy as visitors from the U.S. dwindled to a trickle. In the face of decreasing tourism revenue in the early years of the Revolution, Castro declared that Cuba would never again depend on tourism as a primary economic strategy (Perrottet and Biondi 1996, 70). Ironically, Cuba’s mounting foreign debt forced Castro to negate this statement in the late 1970s. By 1982 Castro engineered the passage of Law Decree 50 authorizing foreign

⁶ See Chapter Five for a discussion on sex work in Castro’s Cuba.

investment through joint ventures (Simon 1995, 29). While not explicitly included in the language of the law, the regime targeted tourism as a development strategy. In support of the law, Castro declared in the early 1990s, “In the past we feared that tourism would defile us, but tourism is gold” (Castro cited in Perrottet and Biondi 1996, 70-71). During the Special Period tourism once again dominates Cuba economically; according to the World Tourism Organization, the island earned \$1.7 billion in tourism revenue in 2000 (World Tourism 2001). On January 21, 2003, in a speech delivered at the inauguration of the Playa Pesquero hotel in Holguin, Castro stated that Cuba welcomed over 1.6 million visitors in 2002 and gross revenues totaled \$2 billion. He also noted that he expects over 1.9 million visitors to arrive in 2003 (Castro 2003).

Cuba’s tourism employment structure is also contradictory . While many professionals in the developed world regard low-skilled jobs in the tourism industry as undesirable, in Cuba doctors, lawyers, engineers, and other well-trained employees of the state clamor for normally low-end tourism jobs and other opportunities afforded by in-coming visitors in order to increase their chances of earning hard currency meeting tourists. I once met an engineer who was overjoyed with his job as a groundskeeper in a tourist compound in Varadero for it paid him more than his former employment as an engineer for the state. One source documented the situation of an ex-doctor who quit his job to rent rooms to tourists. He earned enough money to buy a beach house for \$18,000, a sum that would have taken him 165 years to accumulate as a typical peso wage earner (Enterprise? Tax it! 1997, 32). The Central Committee of the Communist Party noted this rush of professionals to find jobs in

tourism. In March 1996 the Committee worried about the potential destabilizing effects of Cubans leaving highly-skilled, but low paying jobs in the public sector and accepting jobs in tourism (Schwartz 1997, 211). Indeed, while data detailing the demographic backgrounds of Cuban tourism workers are lacking, workers in Cuba generally are more highly educated (at least formally) than those in comparable locations due to Cuba's enviable high average education levels and the lucrative status of tourism jobs in the country (see Human Development Report 2002, Table 10).

National income from tourism now follows closely income from remittances sent from abroad, mainly from the United States, and indeed the country receives an estimated \$1 billion in remittances annually⁷ (Pérez-Sarduy and Stubbs 2000, 34). Furthermore, investment from foreign partners fueled much of the growth in tourism revenue, especially by companies based in Spain, Canada and Mexico, as well as by tourist dollars spent by Canadians and western Europeans. In other words, many of the former enemies of the Soviet bloc are now the island's leading trading partners, guests and remittance providers.

United States citizens also tour and spend money in Cuba, despite a continued embargo by the U.S. government prohibiting unauthorized travel (Cuba Update 2002). According to Granma, the official organ of the Cuban government, an estimated 180,000 Americans visit Cuba each year, while untold others traveled there without the consent of the U.S. government (Guyallard 2003) Cubalinda, a tour company based in Havana, maintains a website (cubalinda.com) that books travel

⁷ Espino (2000, 369) estimates that Cuba's import component for tourism is 37 percent meaning that only 63 percent of tourism earnings remain in Cuba (see also Scarpaci, Segre and Coyula 2002, 292).

arrangements for U.S. citizens from “gateway” cities such as Toronto, Montreal and Cancun. The company instructs travelers to book their own flight to the gateway city while Cubalinda prepares the additional travel arrangements. The company includes a link that supplies information instructing visitors how to avoid prosecution by the U.S. Government.

Cuba’s improving economic situation in the late 1990s produced another contradiction, namely the assertion by many Cubans that there is no longer an effective embargo against their country. This is ironic because the Cuban government vilifies the embargo maintained by the United States since the Kennedy administration as the leading cause of Cuba’s current economic predicament. In the public sphere, Cubans have often rallied to Castro’s call to denounce the embargo (referred to by the Castro regime as the *bloqueo* or blockade) as a genocidal act on the part of the United States government working in tandem with Cuban-American exiles. When the controversial Helms-Burton Amendment tightened the embargo in 1996, Castro engineered a public relations campaign denouncing the act. The Helms-Burton addendum to the original language of the embargo allows for the prosecution (in United States Courts) of any foreign company that invests in Cuba using property (such as hotels, land, intellectual property, and trademarked material) claimed by US citizens and companies who lost their property rights without reparations during the Castro regime’s efforts to nationalize private industry in Cuba (Jatar-Hausmann 1999, 134-135). It must be noted that the Helms-Burton amendment is denounced not only by Cuba but also by the island’s key trading partners such as Spain, Mexico and Canada who object to its extraterritorial stance. Indeed, the Canadian government

enacted counter-legislation in reaction to Helms-Burton to protect its interests on the island (Baker 2000, 56-57). Further, the Helms-Burton Act remains controversial in the United States as well, and the Clinton administration did not implement the act in its entirety. A recent statement by Otto Reich, assistant Secretary of State for the Bush administration, verified the government's continued support for keeping the embargo in place although, in fact, looser implementation of the Helms-Burton Act as implemented by Clinton remains unchanged (Burns 2002).

While the Castro regime continues to blame its economic ills on the U.S. embargo and Helms-Burton, evidence suggests that Cubans do not believe this to be the case. Several Cubans who then worked directly in the private sector or in tourism asserted to me in 1997 that the U.S. embargo was being effectively circumvented, although many conceded that it remained a stumbling block in some areas such as in the continued inability of the island to provide enough medicines to its citizens (Fiona, Roberto, José, personal communication, 1997). Additionally, U.S. produced food ranging from grains to fruit are now traded directly with Cuba in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitchell that devastated Cuba's agricultural sector in November 2001. In 2000, U.S. agricultural concerns obtained temporary exemptions to sell their goods to Cuba. Castro at first declined to trade with U.S producers, but the havoc wrought by Hurricane Mitchell forced him to deal with American sellers. Between December 2001 and July 2002, Cuba agreed to purchase 650,000 tons of U.S. agricultural products worth \$105 million (Alonso 2002). As of this writing, Cuba continues to buy U.S. agricultural products.

The assertion that the embargo has less of an impact on the Cuban economy than is otherwise claimed by the Castro regime was underscored recently by a report from the United States International Trade Commission (ITC) that examined the impacts of the embargo on both sides of the Florida Straits. On the one hand, the ITC estimates that 1 million U.S. tourists would visit Cuba each year if the sanctions were lifted and the freedom to travel to the island was restored. On the other hand, despite claims on both sides of the Florida Straits that the embargo is responsible for suppressing a potentially lucrative trade relationship that would benefit both sides, the ITC reports that U.S. companies stand to gain only \$652 million to \$990 million per year in revenue from exports to Cuba, while Cuban exports to the United States would be worth only \$84 to \$167 million per year. The report noted that the U.S. exports about four times the amounts listed to the Dominican Republic alone. If the report is correct, the embargo's main force lies in its symbolic meaning. One observer quoted in the article stated his belief that profits realized in the event of a repealed embargo would be minimal because the Castro regime considers potential political angles associated with proposed business ventures on the island. Therefore, he believes, Castro, even if given the chance, would likely establish few meaningful economic ties with American companies (Federal Trade 2001).

Observers report that Castro has been effective in rallying support at home and abroad against the embargo (Baker 2000, 56; Jatar-Hausmann 1999, 136). Yet according to a survey conducted by the Cooperative of Independent Journalists in September 2002, three out of four Cubans disagreed with the government's stance that the embargo was the root cause of the economic crisis. According to the survey

results, 49 percent cited the inefficiency of the socialist system, 10 percent said the world crisis caused Cuba's ills, and 18 percent declined to answer; only 23 percent agreed with the government's position (González 2002). Since 1993, the nadir of the Special Period, and despite the continued embargo, Cuba has recorded sustained economic growth based mainly on the strength of the tourist economy. This calls into question the efficacy of the prohibition of trade. While sources vary as to Cuba's true economic growth rates, most believe growth to have averaged between 3.7 and four percent yearly between 1993 and 2000 (Human Development Index 2002, Table 12: Economic Performance; San Martin 2001, 1).

Indications are that the increasing role of tourism and the particular ways it is organized are more responsible for perceived hardship in Cuban than the embargo. A 28-year-old Cuban I interviewed in 1997 said, "*En Cuba, hay. Para nosotros, no, pero hay!*" (In Cuba, there is enough, but it is not for us [rather, it is for the tourists, the party elite and those who have ample dollars]). This statement effectively illustrates two main concerns voiced by many Cubans during the Special Period. First, many decry the growth of "apartheid tourism," which is the prohibition of average Cubans from visiting tourist locales such as beaches, hotels and restaurants⁸. Secondly, stung by a perception that they are effectively "second class citizens" in their own country, Cubans further cite the lack of opportunities to earn dollars legally. Ironically, Cuba's increasing prosperity could signify that the key rallying cry used by Castro, namely the need for the Cuban nation to resist the "genocidal" trade embargo, may be losing its symbolic significance and its power to unify Cubans

⁸ See Chapter Five for a complete discussion of apartheid tourism.

against a common enemy. While the regime continues to marshal large groups of protesters for specific events such as the Elián González campaign, many Cubans point to the compulsory nature of Cuban rallies in general. Several Cubans I interviewed at a Havana rally in the summer of 1996 confirmed that they were required to attend the event (although some were pleased to be released from work!).

The emergence of economic and social inequalities during the Special Period is contradictory on two counts. First of all, many believe that the establishment of economic parity was one of the greatest triumphs of the revolution, an assertion borne out by economic data (see Díaz-Briquets and Pérez-López 2000, Pérez-Stable 1995, Zimbalist 1989, et al.). However, although the post-Soviet crisis has abated somewhat, Cuba now has a permanent rift in incomes on a scale unknown since the revolution began in 1959 before the legalization of the dollar in 1993. (The ratio between the highest and lowest salary was said to be five to one). By 1995, some Cubans earned (sometimes legally) incomes several hundred times higher than many other islanders (Mala vista 1999, 37). Furthermore, this figure does not take into account the difficult to calculate income differences generated by black market dealings, nor income from remittances sent from abroad.

A brief market opening in the early 1980s produced, in Castro's words, "too many millionaires," and he and his officials quickly implemented the far-reaching Rectification Process (RP) to curtail income inequities associated mainly with the farmers and artisans markets⁹. Ironically, this crackdown may have led to greater inequalities in Cuban incomes in that some of the formerly legal transactions were

⁹ See Chapter Three for discussion of the RP.

diverted to the black market, leaving them beyond direct state control. Although the actual economic value of goods and services transacted in the black market are impossible to calculate, Jorge Pérez-López, who has studied Cuba's "second economy" extensively, notes that it began to mushroom in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s while at the same time the centrally planned socialist (or first) economy "faltered" (Pérez-López 1995, 1-2).

Many Cubans continue to subsist on official peso salaries that average ten to fifteen dollars per month (200-250 pesos) but it is important to note that the living standards of Cubans are not adequately reflected through the simple comparison of the market value of the peso and the US dollar (which as of March 2003 stood at 27 pesos to one US dollar). The government provides basic needs free of charge (health care, education, basic food rations) or heavily subsidizes them (housing rents, public transportation and the cost of utilities). Jatar-Hausmann (1999, 114-115) notes that most Cuban salaries, while often too low to fully satisfy the needs of the average family, are worth considerably more than is indicated by the result of simply dividing the pesos earned to the market rate for dollars. For example, she believes that the first 160 pesos earned each month are worth roughly the equivalent of \$160 since this sum is used to pay rent, utilities, transportation and basic food costs. Beyond the procurement of the basics, however -- Jatar-Hausmann's 160-peso cut-off -- the worth of the peso dwindles to the market rate because Cubans must resort to the black market, legal private markets, and dollar stores to procure any but the most basic foodstuffs, as well as all clothing, personal products (soap, shampoo, toothpaste, etc.) and maintenance for old and/or shoddy consumer goods such as appliances, bicycles,

automobiles, etc. among other things. Several studies demonstrate that rationed food meets nutritional requirements for only 10 days per month, a situation that has led to the establishment of state-sponsored “family restaurants,” the equivalent of soup kitchens (Mala vista 1999, 37).

Those who procure dollars *legally* generally earn them in one of several ways: 1) through tip-generating employment associated with the tourist sector that includes such positions as taxi drivers, bartenders and waiters; 2) through remittances sent from abroad (this point is discussed later in this chapter); and 3) through the often legal and semi-legal forms of self-employment such as running a private restaurant (referred to as a *paladar*) or renting rooms to tourists¹⁰. Item number one requires explanation. Cubans working in tourism jobs for foreign-owned and operated companies do not automatically earn their salaries in hard currency; the companies pay the salaries of the workers to the state in dollars and the state remits the workers the equivalent in pesos, but at the official one-to-one rate! This monetary sleight of hand thus discourages Cuban tourism workers with no access to dollar tips. Indeed, until 1993, even the tip-generating workers were required to remit all tips to the state to be exchanged one to one for pesos (Avella and Mills 1996, 58). While this practice was eventually ended, tip-generating workers currently must give 10 percent of their tips to the state and 30 percent to contributing workers such as cooks and other “behind the scenes” personnel (Avella and Mills 1996, 58) The Cuban government, realizing that the quality of service might suffer from the presence of wide-spread discontent among tourism workers, has since implemented a policy to partially

¹⁰ See Chapter Three for discussion of *paladares* and self-employment.

reimburse tourism workers with “convertible” pesos, government scrip that is equal in value to dollars on the island (Horizontes Hoteles Representative, personal communication, 1997).

Cubans unable to earn dollars in the aforementioned manner resort to selling on the black market, and to engaging in acts of *jineterismo*, a Cuban slang term for the Spanish “jockey” or “horse rider,” which refers to activities designed to earn dollars through illegal dealings with tourists (for an excellent discussion of *jineterismo*, see Rundle 2001)¹¹. This includes the gamut of activities ranging from sex work, to driving illegal taxis, to renting out private rooms without authorization, and selling often stolen and/or counterfeit goods (cigars, rum, family heirlooms, drugs) to tourists. The Cuban government’s Marxist interpretation of “prostitution” includes all activities that lead to illicit personal enrichment. For example, the government’s condemnation of sex work focuses not only on selling access to one’s body for money, but also engaging in illegal capitalist-driven gain. The moral emphasis lies not with the Victorian-era view that engaging in sex work is an act of moral turpitude (on the supply side, not necessarily on the demand side), but rather with the act of making money outside the supervised realm of socialist society. Diregarded is the ample evidence that the party elite benefits from the *jinetera*’s dealings with foreign tourists in the form of increasing tourism revenues. It is possible to engage in *jineterismo* outside the realms of tourism; as Fernández has noted, even professors who tailor their work in order to gain invitations to

¹¹ The practice of *jineterismo* is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

conferences and workshops abroad are said to be *jineteando* (i.e., they benefit materially from their association with foreigners) (1999, 85).

This last point leads to yet another in the long line of contradictions in Cuba's Special Period. The Castro regime soon recognized the potential of marketing the country as a tropical paradise and destination for sex tourists, predicated upon the availability of educated, "clean" Cuban women who could service the needs of dollar-toting tourists. In a now-famous speech delivered in August of 1992, the Cuban leader remarked that at the very least, Cuba's prostitutes were "highly educated and quite healthy," a seemingly off-color and misplaced reference to Cuba's achievement of high levels of health care and education during the revolution (Bunck 1994, 119; Rundle 2001). This apparent endorsement on the part of the government of the ability of sex workers to attract tourists stood for awhile, but appeared to be contradicted in 1996, the government instituted the first of several severe crackdowns on activities deemed acts of *jineterismo* in the broadest sense of rapacious capitalism. However, as will be discussed in Chapter Five, the clampdown on illegal activity achieved uneven results: on the one hand, the success of the measures in limiting *jineterismo* in the Varadero resort was almost total, whereas Havana continued to boast spaces where illegal activities were either apparently condoned, or were impossible to completely eradicate. Recent reports suggest that sex work is widespread although less visible than early in the Special Period. I will discuss this point further in Chapter Five.

The growing "dollar divide" frequently falls along gender and racial lines. There are several reasons for this (see Chapters Three and Four for in-depth

discussion). To begin, most of the lucrative jobs in tourism go to those who, ostensibly, exhibit the highest “revolutionary” credentials, and therefore gain employment based upon their socialist background. In reality, most workers gain jobs through the system of “*sociolismo*” or the Cuban “buddy system,” a well-entrenched network of family, friends and acquaintances who are tapped to satisfy particular needs and, in some cases, to secure employment.¹² In practice, jobs go in many cases to the friends and family of well-placed party officials. The fact remains that even in a self-proclaimed racially integrated and “colorblind” society (a point that will be examined in Chapter Four in more detail), most party officials are both male and white, and therefore, not surprisingly, white males obtain the best tourism jobs. The Castro regime prefers to place the blame for this occurrence on the preferences of the foreign tourism companies who, it claims, prefer to hire light-skinned Cubans in high-profile tourism jobs. Available evidence does suggest that racial discrimination by foreign bosses exists, but regardless of the origin of the discrimination, my data indicate that top tourism jobs are the domain of mainly white Cuban citizens, with the very best jobs reserved for white Cuban males.¹³

The unequal distribution of overseas remittances sent by Cuban exiles contributes to the growing economic and social division in Cuba. The majority of Cubans who migrated since Castro’s victory are white, although this state of affairs began to change during and after the Mariel boatlift in 1980. An estimated 125,000 Cubans emigrated during that year, equaling the numbers that left after the initial

¹² This point is echoed by Foster (1960,4) who noted the importance of “*personalismo*,” an effective working relationship with the right people to accomplish specific ends, in Latin American society.

¹³ See Perez-Sarduy and Stubbs (2000) and Howell (2001) for more discussion on racial discrimination in the tourism sector.

revolutionary victory in 1959 (González-Pando 1998, 165). Mariel remains noteworthy in the post-revolutionary history of immigration mainly because Afro-Cubans and *mulattos* fled to the United States in greater numbers. Nonetheless, they continue to be far less numerous than Hispanic-Cubans (whites). Indeed, Pérez-Sarduy claims that 95 percent of the Cubans living abroad are Hispanic-Cubans, suggesting that the Cubans who most benefit from remittances tend to be white Cubans (Pérez-Sarduy 1995).¹⁴ This double blow of under-representation in the tourism industry, and the lack of access to remittances helps explain the increasing poverty among Afro-Cubans and *mulattos* (mixed race Cubans).

The new tourist economy aggravates gender divisions as well. While women are well represented in the tourism sector, they often obtain the lower paying and less prestigious jobs. For example, over the course of six months of intensive study in Cuba in the summer months of 1995-1997, I failed to encounter a female taxi driver, hotel manager or tourism administrator (all high-prestige jobs). These findings compliment the more recent work of others who have noted the dearth of women in administrative and managerial positions in tourism (see Howell 2001, Fernández 1999, et al). Further, as my data show, many positions among the general tourism staff are also highly gendered. To cite one example, my sampling of the staff in selected Varadero hotels indicated an overwhelming bias towards female maids whereas males dominated as bartenders and waiters. One source notes that maids in Cuba's international hotels vie for tips, as well, by leaving personalized notes to

¹⁴ Migration rates and remittances are topics discussed in further detail in Chapter Five.

guests and creating “towel sculptures” to endear themselves to visitors (Diacon, personal communication, April 2003).

In order to underscore the importance of tourism employment to Cuban citizens, I draw from Scarpaci who noted that access to tip generating jobs (such as bartender and waiter) translates into a substantial increase in individual buying power. According to his data, the average tourist taxi driver (who has access to tips) would be required to spend about one percent of his wages to buy a pound of pork whereas the average worker earning a salary in pesos would have to forgo nearly half a month’s wage for the same item. He writes, “A taxi driver, or any other Cuban formally or informally affiliated with the tourist trade, has access to a wide array of basic foods and household products. A physician or college professor would have to sacrifice much to buy those items” (Scarpaci 1995, 81).

For the reasons listed above, the segments of the population least represented in the “legal” tourist economy are Afro-Cuban females and mulattas (mixed race females). However, to identify another apparent contradiction, Afro-Cuban women and mulattas are often highly sought after by European and North American sex tourists who travel to Cuba in search of the exotic “Other” Indeed, Trumbull believes Cuban women of color outnumber white sex workers (Trumbull 2001, 361). This has proved a mixed blessing for mulattas and Afro-Cuban women. On the one hand, it gives them the potential to capitalize on their status among tourists. On the other hand, it makes them the frequent targets of police repression, and evidence shows that they make up a disproportionate share of jailed *jineteras* (De la Fuente 1998, 4-5). Despite the fact that many Cubans encourage young women and men to engage in sex

work, since it translates into a ready source of income for many families, in nearly all societies people condemn sex workers (Hubbard 1999, 1-2). As Hubbard notes, debates on sex work frequently divide observers into those who regard it as a form of sexual slavery, and those who believe sex work to be the ultimate emancipatory gesture by women in a patriarchal society (Hubbard 1999, 1-2).

Indeed, one must consider not only the social stigma, but also the very real physical dangers sex workers encounter in Cuba (or in any other country). The possibility of contracting STDs, and in particular HIV/AIDS, couples with the potential of encountering violent clients. All of these factors must be weighed against the opportunity to realize significant financial gains.¹⁵ While the number of people diagnosed with HIV/AIDS is reportedly less than one percent of the adult population in Cuba as of 2001, studies suggest that the acceptance of multiple sex partners coupled with low rates of condom use may produce a rising incidence in the future (Bauza and Collie 2001).

In the chapters that follow, I elaborate on the contradictions presented above as based on fieldwork conducted in Cuba over the course of three consecutive summers stretching from 1995-1997. This study is centered on a concentrated study of spatial patterns and social constructions of space in the two most important tourism zones in the country: Havana and Varadero. I collected data using multiple techniques (the multi-method approach) including participant observation, directed and open interviews, an extensive search of the primary and secondary literature, and a quantitative and qualitative analysis of both Cuban and Canadian produced tourism

¹⁵ The side-effects of sex work will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

literature. The following chapter explains the research methodology and then discusses the theoretical bases of the study.

Research Outline¹⁶

Chapter One discussed the study problem and establishes the theoretical constructs of the study. After a brief introduction to Cuba's geographic setting and colonial history, I set the context of the study by establishing important contradictions related to Cuban tourism and the exigencies of the Special Period. Several researchers have advanced the idea that Cuba is a paradox (beginning with Philips in 1960 and including Jatar-Hausmann during the Special Period). While I concur with these scholars, I prefer to use the term "contradiction" because I believe it more firmly establishes apparent disconnections between government pronouncements and the policies they implement. As a point of departure from earlier studies, I focus more extensively on Cuba's *spatial* and *representational* contradictions in the remainder of this study.

Chapter Two identifies the research methodology I employ in the study and discusses the theoretical parameters in greater depth. I draw from a series of data that range from observation (including participant observation), to directed and open interviews. I also include a survey of the tourist literature to examine representations of women and Afro-Cubans involving the tourism economy.

¹⁶ It must be noted that the nature of the study precludes the inclusion of a single chapter devoted to a general literature review. Rather, literature relevant to the dominant theme of each chapter is reviewed within the chapter itself (see Rankin 1998, A64). I will discuss this point in more detail in Chapter Two.

The theoretical basis for the study will also be explored in this chapter. I define the ideas of social construction and social production of space and place them in the context of previous studies. Social constructionism is a tool used to contextualize the research findings through the lens of (sometimes hidden) power relationships between the government, the tourist industry and the Cuban population at large. I discuss the Gramscian concept of hegemony and explain how I have applied it conceptually to the study.

Chapter Three begins with an in-depth discussion of the Rectification Process (RP) that set the stage for many of the policies pursued in the Special Period. The remainder of the chapter discusses the economic exigencies of the Special Period and then highlights its impact on the lives of the Cuban people during the period of austerity. This is followed by a discussion of the black market and a definition and discussion of *jineterismo*, the illegal, yet sometimes sanctioned, act of entering into financial relationships with tourists.

Chapter Four is divided into two distinct sections dealing with the issues of race and gender in Cuba. The first section examines the rise of the “creolization” concept (*Cubanizarlo* in the vernacular), an elaborate formation of multiculturalism among the Cuban working classes, from the colonial period to the mid-20th century. This section also discusses the changing status of Afro-Cubans and the issue of racism. The second section presents changing representations of gender from the pre-Revolutionary period to Special Period-era Cuba. In this part of the study I argue that both tourism and the shifting geographic realities of the Special Period produced profound racial and gender differences, and in some cases, growing inequality. I

hypothesize that the social relations re-ordered by the tourism industry unmask the deep structural culture patterns that have remained unexamined during the Castro regime due to the premise that the Cuban revolution has resulted in undisputed equality.¹⁷

Chapter Five discusses the dominant discourses surrounding tourism during the Special Period. I begin with a brief history of the Cuban tourism industry to contextualize the structural changes noted resulted during the Special Period. Chapter Five also explores the highly gendered realm of the prostitution economy. While recent studies on prostitution in Cuba are mostly descriptive in their approach, this chapter considers the *spatial* implications of sex work *jineterismo* in Cuba, both at the local level and at the wider regional level. By examining shifts in the spatial allocation of prostitution and *jineterismo*, a clearer understanding is gained of how hegemony and resistance have been exercised during the Special Period.

Chapter Six covers representations of race and gender in Cuba through a quantitative and qualitative analyses of Cuban, North American and European-produced tourism literature. This chapter draws from recent studies on images and representation in tourism by Morgan and Pritchard 1998, Bhattacharyya 1997, Dann 1996, and Selwyn 1996, et al and is included because the material provides yet another set of insights on how race and gender are socially constructed in Cuba.

The study concludes with an analysis of possible future directions for Cuba based on the experiences of the past forty-three years of the revolution. In particular,

¹⁷ To question issues of equality within Cuba can lead to harsh punishment ranging from censure to imprisonment and even death in extreme cases.

I discuss the future role of tourism as a development strategy. I finish with a final analysis of Castro's hegemonic rule in Cuba.

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology and Theoretical Focus of the Study

Methodology

Due to the scope of this project and the need to verify data gathered in the field from both “official” and non-official Cuban sources, I have implemented what is referred to as the “multi-method” approach to research and data interpretation. There are several reasons why I utilize varying approaches in this study. First and foremost, the complexity of the subject matter precludes the utilization of a single specific theoretical or methodological approach. Secondly, I incorporate multi-method approaches because they are useful in gathering and assessing data that address issues of power, ideology and subjective meaning (Bailey et al 1999, 170). Qualitative data gathered from knowledgeable informants are useful in helping the researcher understand the context and meaning of phenomenon being studied, a practice referred to as “critical ethnography” (Wainwright 1997). One main goal of qualitative research is to use evidence produced by the subjects of the study in order to obtain a holistic portrayal of the situation (Walle 1997, 529-530). Inductive, rather than deductive reasoning is often employed in qualitative research to order the multiple realities as they are discovered and a flexible research design accommodates emerging realities that cannot be predicted *a priori* (Riley and Love 2000, 168). Of special importance to this research design is the role of the investigator, because only a human “instrument” can fully grasp the interactions of context and multiple realities

as they emerge from the fieldwork data and the application of theory (Riley and Love 2000, 168).

Susan Hanson notes that the effort to minimize power inequalities between the researcher and the interview subject (or the “research associate”) enhances the creation of knowledge through fieldwork ” (Hanson 1997, 126). Indeed, by acknowledging and embracing the idea that interview subjects are active partners in the creation of knowledge in the field, researchers can hopefully minimize perceptual gaps and increase the depth of knowledge that “associates” are willing to share. Hanson also advocates the multi-method approach to research because by involving multiple viewpoints and voices, the possibility of “being surprised” by field-derived data is maximized (Hanson 1997, 126). It is through the discovery of surprising data that the researcher is able to formulate new practical and theoretical approaches to the subject at hand.

My first step was an extensive reading of primary and secondary sources on Cuba and on tourism. I then employed qualitative research mainly in an effort to gain a deeper understanding of local context. In order to perform a complete rendering of my subject matter, I used many “tools” to address my study questions. To begin, the primary data for my study come from three main sources. First, the study draws from my ethnographic research I conducted in Cuba over the course of three summers spanning 1995 to 1997. I collected these data through structured and unstructured interviews with Cuban tourism officials as well as with Cuban citizens engaged in acts of *jinetismo*.

Additional data were derived through active participant observation based on the model of the “field tourist” as demonstrated by Boniface and Fowler (1993) who note the desirability and efficacy of sustained personal contact with research subjects in both formal and informal situations. In an effort to increase my understanding of everyday life, I rented rooms in the homes of Cuban families, and participated in typical events such as birthday parties and family gatherings as well as day-to-day events such as shopping expeditions and excursions to local recreational.

A quantitative and qualitative content analysis of Cuban tourism literature also informs this study by revealing how Cubans are depicted to tourists. Using methodologies developed by Morgan and Pritchard (1998), Dann (1996), Laffey (1995), Cooper (1995) and Britton (1974), I examined tourism literature for the ways in which government officials and others represent Cuban gender and ethnicity (this will be discussed at length in Chapter Six).

The multi-method approach lessens concerns about the validity of data collected in the field, a concern voiced by researchers (Pope, personal communication, 2002). Indeed, because of the “fear factor” in Cuban society, the researcher must carefully consider the accuracy of ethnographically derived data. In other words, many Cubans (including tourism officials and academics) dare not speak openly with researchers for fear of censure by the government. While the validity of this assertion cannot be proven, it is partially supported by a rumor that a tourism worker was terminated from his employment because he cooperated with a German research team. Finally, the data derived from an analysis of tourism literature adds a level of confidence to my findings and subsequent discussion, and it does not expose

Cubans to potential governmental retribution for their cooperation in dealing with “sensitive” issues.

As stated in the introduction, I have included the relevant literature reviews in the chapters where I discuss each topic in turn. I specifically designed the study to focus more deeply on situational context and to reduce the tendency to compartmentalize data. Because one of my goals in this study was to develop a means to more logically order my discussion, I have taken to heart Rankin’s question, “What can we do to make literature reviews more engaging and purposeful?” (Rankin 1998, A64). She notes that the review of literature does “double duty,” both establishing the theoretical framework, and indicating the perspective from which the study is written.

I think it is both appropriate and more meaningful to include “positional” statements that explain my role as the researcher and the roles and backgrounds of my field research associates. This is important because it lends the work a more immediate quality and helps the reader understand the process and context behind my key assertions. I found that many of the connections I make in this study were not self-evident from a simple analysis of the data, but rather emerged during the writing process.

A Note on the Representational Narratives and Interview Data

Susan Hanson, while thinking about how to best incorporate the multiple voices that inform the research enterprise, advocates the use of narrative (1997, 119-

127). Taking her lead, I include several narratives (referred to as vignettes or personal profiles), drawn from discussions with Cubans, to represent more clearly the voices of those involved in this project. Additionally, I believe that these narratives supplement nicely the field data because they allow subjects to represent themselves by telling their own stories. Many of the narratives are from Cubans active in the black market and *jineterismo*. (Due to the nature of their activities, the identities of interview sources have been altered to protect subjects).

The study of *jineterismo* and indeed associations with Cuban *jineteros* is a sensitive issue in a country where a citizen can be harassed and jailed on the pretext that he or she represents a “danger to society” (i.e., they engage in “social dangerousness”), a euphemism that can include almost any act deemed “counterrevolutionary” or found objectionable by the government. As Katz has noted, “there is danger in making the practices of the oppressed visible to those who dominate” (1994, 71). In practice, the examination of activities deemed acts of *jineterismo* are not as problematic as I had assumed prior to gathering field data. Given that these activities are illegal by nature (although the question of legality is ambiguous in the case of sex work as well as other activities such as maintaining “illegal” private restaurants, etc.), witnessing and discussing them might appear difficult. In fact, most Cubans are quick to acknowledge that all citizens engage in acts of *jineterismo* merely to survive during the Special Period. Because of this fact, many Cubans seem willing to discuss more or less freely their black market dealings, often accentuating the need to engage in such activities with the ubiquitous Special Period statement: “no es fácil” (translation: “it’s not easy” or “life is hard”). In spite

of their willingness to discuss these issues, however, I have altered identities to protect my sources.

Setting the Theoretical Context: Social Constructions of Space and Gramsci's Theory of Hegemony

Social constructionism, a widely adopted body of theory in the social sciences, is predicated on the idea that knowledge is relative to particular historical and cultural circumstances and is determined by its social context of inquiry. Under this definition, knowledge is value-laden, and hence must be viewed in reference to the conditions in which it developed (Bailey et al 1999, 173). This distinction goes to the heart of on-going philosophical debates on ontology (the nature of reality and being) and epistemologies (ways of knowing) that are adopted to define, as well as to understand and make sense of, everyday life. Social constructionists follow the path of the idealists who assert that knowledge is the certainty that phenomena are real and that they possess specific characteristics. Phenomena, however, do not possess universal meaning. For example, in the case of this study, tourism is a real and omnipresent phenomenon in Cuba today. However, Cuban tourism and government officials, foreign investors, average Cuban citizens and international tourists, conceptualize, construct, represent and “live” tourism differently. . This section first defines and situates the theory of social constructionism. Then, it demonstrates how space and place are socially constructed and explains how the theories of social construction and social production of space apply in this study.

In the second section, I draw from traditional theories of hegemony to establish the theoretical link between capitalism and cultural, economic and political domination. I will challenge Gramsci's assertion that hegemonic relationships are exclusively associated with capitalist expansionism and imperialism by applying his theory of hegemony to Castro's Cuba.

The Social Construction of Space

Theorists associated with the Chicago School of Sociology developed social constructionism, a well-established sub-field in the social sciences, in the 1960s. . Researchers such as Berger and Luckman (1966) and Schutz (1967) first applied the idea that social objects are not found "in the world" but are rather understood by virtue of the processes that created them. Berger and Luckman were unequivocal on this matter, "Reality is socially constructed and the sociology of knowledge must analyze the processes in which this occurs (1966, 1). They theorized humans as agents who actively construct their world, rather than as passive organisms that simply process information (Sarbin and Kitsuse 1994, 2). For this reason, social constructions reflect the ability of humans to make sense of their world through contextual clues.

Various actors and human agents construct space, as it is applied conceptually to this project. Both space and place are the products of power and as such represent the prevailing social order. According to one source, space is where issues of "power, identity, meaning and behavior are constructed, negotiated and renegotiated

according to socio-cultural dynamics” (Pritchard and Morgan 2000, 885). Space, as a geographic construct, serves as the wider arena wherein social relations occur. Place, by contrast, is a portion of geographic space and represents the tangible, bounded result of spatial practices (Duncan 2000, 582-583). In other words, place is a product of spatial construction. Significantly, place boundaries are porous and hence the character of place is in flux continually as a result of local linkages with wider, even global, forces (Massey 1993, 144).

In order to understand how space functions, the researcher must realize that space is a *process* that is continually being altered, both cognitively and materially, rather than being a value-neutral static stage on which social activities occur (see Lefebvre 1991). This is because all who come into contact with a particular place participate in spatializing the place. By spatialize, I follow Low who writes, “to spatialize culture [means] to physically and conceptually locate social relations and social practice in space” (2000, 126). In this study, place refers to the material and symbolic landscape of tourism in Cuba, and space embodies the forces at work that lend particular tourism places their unique characteristics.

Current practitioners of ethnographic methodologies recognize the need to characterize social actors in terms of their experience of theorized phenomenon (Low 2000, 127). A growing number of social science scholars draw from and advance the theory of social constructionism as it relates to spatial issues. Urban anthropologist Setha Low conducted a long-term study of the social construction of urban plazas in Costa Rica (Low 1996, 1997 and 2000). In her work she develops a refined definition of social constructionism that points to its utility to researchers of spatial

issues. She writes, “The social construction of space is the actual transformation of space, through people’s social exchanges, memories, images and daily use of the material setting, into scenes and actions that convey meaning” (2000, 128). Social constructions of space, therefore, deal with the organization of the world into its present spatial configurations, at all scales from personal to global. In this context social change refers to the (re) allocation of space and the power that accompanies access to space, in other words the power to “make space” (Perry 1995, 223). Social constructions of space likewise depend, and indeed are based on, local conditions and are for that reason inherently relativist, thereby underlining the impossibility of separating the social from the spatial (Barnes 2000, 748).

Low distinguishes between social *productions* of space and social *constructions* of space, and rightly points out that scholars often use the terms interchangeably. The social production of space refers to all of those factors—social, economic, ideological and technological—that create the physical or material setting. As she writes, “the materialist emphasis of the term social production is useful in defining the historical emergence and political and economic formation of ...space” (1997, 861). Social constructions of space, on the other hand, address the *symbolic meaning* of the setting. Taken one step further, space actually can be defined in these symbolic terms. She writes, “the ritual aspects of allocating space become the rituals of society and the rules of property control” (Low 1997, 861).

At the heart of social *productions* of space is the reproduction of political and economic power visible on the material landscape. Duncan (1991), a cultural geographer who studies the historical landscape of Kandy, Sri Lanka, seeks to

“illuminate the way in which a landscape, understood as a cultural production, may be integral to both the reproduction and contestation of political power.” He continues, “Questions (within cultural geography) of how landscapes are used to advance or retard the attainment of social and political goals are virtually never asked” (1991, 3). Indeed, he asserts that the designed environment works like a communication system, or a text encoded with information by which symbols of order and social relationships can be determined. He then notes that the underlying or evident authority of the place can be deciphered through these texts. Duncan draws from Foucault in noting that discursive fields evident in the landscape inscribe power relations. He writes, “each discourse has attendant landscape models...that are reflections of the culture within which they were built” (1991, 11).

As previously developed, social constructions of space are based on relationships of power implying that space is under a continual process of contestation. Peter Jackson, a cultural geographer, believes that patterns of cultural dominance and subordination reflect the power relations of space. He writes that dominant institutions that “exert a subtle and pervasive influence” on peoples lives and “establish a preferred reading of local and national circumstances” shape the nexus of power within cultures (Jackson 1989, 3). These dominant views are most effective, Jackson argues, when they become “naturalized” to become part of the “everyday common sense” of that particular culture (1989, 3). Lefebvre echoes Jackson and notes that while a given power may control space, challenges exist that lead to the impossibility of complete control of space. He writes that space, as a

production by a central power or hegemony (discussed below), is a “means of control, and hence domination, of power (Lefebvre 1991, 26).

The Gramscian Notion of Hegemony

Hegemony is the distinct expression of power that flows from dominance. The term refers to the capacity of a dominant group to exercise control that leads members of subordinate groups to accept social, cultural, economic and political institutions that are inherently unequal (Ley 2000, 332). Hegemony incorporates more than the ideology and beliefs that the dominant elite disseminates, it is rather “a lived system of meanings and values” that makes up the “everyday common sense” described by Jackson in the above paragraph (Ley 2000, 333).

Marxists see hegemony as a feature of the world-system whereby capitalist societies exploit their own workers and those of other countries to maintain their hold on global power (Pahre 1999, 3-4). Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist who was imprisoned during the fascist rule of Mussolini, believed that hegemony, and its attendant problems such as the domination of the working class by a wealthy elite, is rooted in the ascendancy of European-style capitalist development (the Western tradition)¹⁸ (Gramsci 1971, 416-418). Gramsci’s formulation of hegemony has been applied to geopolitical studies to explain the succession of dominant global powers

¹⁸ Gramsci reformulated his theory on hegemony to better account for the rise in what he termed “Americanism” (or Fordism) in the post World War I era (1971, 279-318). In Gramsci’s view, while the American hegemon was rooted in the Western tradition of capitalism, America was free of the “parasitic residues” (feudal roots) of older modes of production.

(e.g., Britain in the 19th century and the United States in the 20th century) that “define and enforce the rules of the game” (Ley 2000, 333).

Gramsci broke from orthodox Marxist thinking and proposed a less mechanistic and materialistic view of socialism. He placed greater emphasis on cultural capital than Marx did and he focused more on the roles of intellectuals charged with establishing and articulating the moral constructs of society (Gramsci 1971, 5-7; 12). Gramsci argued that hegemonic powers could gain control only through the “spontaneous consent” of the subordinate classes (Gramsci 1971, 12). Marx, by contrast, believed that capitalist hegemony gained and maintained power through force and coercion, but Gramsci demonstrated that consent to the ruling party can be “voluntary” and thus seemingly moral and ethical in character (1971, 80). Indeed, in Gramsci’s view, class struggle can only be successful if fought and won on the cultural front.

One observer believes the maintenance of hegemony is facilitated by, and concentrated in, civil society (Cammett 1967, 204-205). In his view, civil society refers to the institutions that diffuse “one concept of reality” to all strata of society thereby maintaining the hegemony and allowing the elites to remain in power¹⁹. The development of hegemony, therefore, depends on the “level of homogeneity, self-consciousness, and organization” reached by a ruling class. As Cammett notes, mere awareness of economic interests is not sufficient to establish hegemony, rather the ruling class must convince repressed groups that the interests of the dominant group coincide with their interests, as well (Cammett 1967, 204). From this perspective, the

¹⁹ Civil society, in this context, should not be confused with the capitalist notion of private entities that operate outside the purview of the sphere of production and the state (see Johnston 2000, 84).

concept of Gramscian hegemony serves as a useful construct to ground political, economic and cultural development during Cuba's revolutionary period. Indeed, Cammett expanded on the Gramscian notion that problems of hegemony "become particularly important in periods that follow a phase of revolutionary activity" and therefore class struggle becomes a "war of position" on the cultural front (Cammett 1967, 206). In this study, I will demonstrate that Castro fights a continual "war of position" on the cultural front in an effort to claim the moral high ground in his attempts to maintain hegemonic rule in the country.

Jackson believes that the real innovation of Gramsci's work was the realization that in capitalist societies, hegemony is never fully achieved due to the continual *plurality* of cultures in any given society. This is due to an imbalance of power between a ruling elite and subordinate classes who continually challenge or contest the dominance of those in power. "Resistance may not always be active and open; often it will be latent and largely symbolic" (Jackson 1989, 53). Jackson's point is echoed by Lefebvre who notes that states seek, but fail, to wield their power completely (Lefebvre 1991, 26). In this sense, those who wield unequal power in a specific society and culture continually contest the utilization, symbolism, and production of space. This contested space becomes visible through signs and other symbolic imagery constructed by the subordinate people of the given society. Jackson draws from Parkin's theory of social closure to explain how power is wielded at the societal level. Parkin notes that the ability to control the downward flow of power enables dominant groups to maintain exclusionary practices. By contrast, subordinate groups attempt to gain power in an upward direction by such actions as

strikes and riots (Jackson 1989, 54-55). Where the dominant social groups can marshal the full resources of the state, as in Cuba, resistance in the form of organized dissent is often severely repressed and often takes on symbolic form. I concur with Jackson and Parkin, although I hold that the plurality of cultures exists, though perhaps less obviously, in authoritarian regimes such as Castro's Cuba. By plurality of cultures, I mean the growth of better defined social classes during the Special Period that fall along lines of race, gender and wider socio-economic privilege conferred to those who have access to dollars.

In many ways, the questions raised in feminist theory deal explicitly with manifestations of power and many researchers center their studies on social constructionist models as evidenced by the work of Pritchard and Morgan (2000), Kitzinger (1994) and Massey (1994) among others. Indeed, gender analysis as proposed by feminist scholars can be an appropriate tool for uncovering the results of power differentials, since gender itself is a social construction. According to Swain, gender is a "system of culturally constructed identities, expressed in ideologies of masculinity and femininity, interacting with socially structured relationships in divisions of labor and leisure, sexuality and power between men and women" (1995, 258). Daphne Spain notes that our understanding of gender inequalities, for example, can be improved by considering both the architectural and geographic contexts within which they occur (1992, 3). Massey describes how local constructions of space in the modern world are not based solely on indigenous conditions, but rather are influenced by global patterns. In this context the spatial can be seen as constructed out of the wide range of social relations across all scales, from the global, which implies the

reach of multi-national corporations and hegemonic systems, to local relations at the city-wide, household and even personal levels (Massey 1994, 2-3). The local space is often where the power of globalizing institutions comes into contact with local particularisms, a collision that often leads to re-formulations of local space. The study of social constructions at the personal level—in everyday life—can also reveal the actual utilization of space as lived space by local inhabitants. In short, by expanding the scale of analysis, local particularisms become more pronounced allowing researchers an enhanced ability to better conduct cross-cultural and cross-spatial analyses.

In sum, I explore the gendered and racialized construction of Cuba's tourism space in this study. Since women and darker-skinned Cubans have historically been granted little power to produce space, understanding how they socially construct their space will aid in understanding how the spaces created for tourism are lived and perceived by all involved. The built environment expresses spatial divisions within Cuban society, and verifies anecdotal evidence of emerging social divisions within Cuban society resulting from the implementation of tourism as a development strategy. This point will be explored in greater detail in Chapters Four, Five and Six.

CHAPTER THREE

Setting the Stage: The Rectification Process and the Special Period in a Time of Peace

The program of austerity known as the “Special Period in an Time of Peace” (referred to hereafter as the Special Period) best defines Cuba over the course of the past decade. Announced in 1990 after the demise of the Soviet Union effectively severed the economic lifeline that Cuba depended upon for almost thirty years, the subsequent loss of subsidies led to a precipitous contraction of the Cuban economy that shrank an estimated 35 to 40 percent between 1990 and 1993 (Roque and Sánchez 1998, 9, Pérez-López 1995, 1). It was not until 1994 that the economy finally began to post gains when the GDP grew by a reported 0.7 percent (Roque and Sánchez 1998, 10). Despite an average growth rate of 3.8 percent per year since 1995, Cuba’s economy is still functioning at 84.5 percent of pre-1989 levels (San Martin 2001). According to a recent report, Cuba’s GDP increased 1.1 percent in 2002 (Gómez Balado 2003).

The Soviet demise so devastated Cuba’s economy because of Cuba’s almost complete reliance on Soviet subsidies further extended a long pattern of dependency on foreign “benefactors.” Under the Soviet plan, Cuba supplied sugar, other tropical produce such as citrus, and nickel ore to the USSR and the rest of the Soviet bloc at prices as high as three times the world market rate. The Eastern bloc countries (Committee for Mutual Economic Assistance: CMEA members) absorbed 90 percent

of Cuba's sugar, citrus and nickel exports at those highly subsidized rates (Binns 1996, 45). Cuba, on the other hand, depended on the CMEA for close to 100 percent of its imported food needs, including condensed milk, butter, cheese and flour as well as the precious oil allotments that fueled the island's agricultural sector and attempts at industrialization (Binns 1996, 45). Cuba further benefited from the trade arrangement insofar as the Soviets allowed Cuba to sell unused oil on the global market in order to raise hard currency.

This chapter examines the social and economic ramifications of the Special Period austerity program. In order to understand the political and economic bases of the Special Period, I consider policies established during the Rectification Process announced in 1986. The chapter begins with a discussion of reasons for the Rectification Process, and how Rectification policies reverberate on the economic landscape in Cuba today. In an effort to contextualize the island's current dependence on international tourism and foreign investment, I also discuss Cuba's historical dependence on outside regimes. In order to complete a full assessment of Cuba during the Special Period, it is useful to compare Cuba's development data with those of comparable countries. The chapter concludes with a discussion of ways Cubans adapted to Special Period policies by participating in the burgeoning black market (which includes engaging in acts of *jineterismo*) and through legal forms of self-employment.

The Rectification Process

In the mid-1980s, it became clear to Castro that Cuba's beneficial relationship with the Soviet Union was not sustainable in the long run. In response to market openings in the Soviet bloc, Castro announced the Rectification Process (hereafter the RP) in 1986 in part to distance Cuba from Soviet policy deemed unacceptable by the Cuban political leadership, but also to foster a national economic model better suited to the needs of Cuba (see Everleny 1998, Eckstein 1994, and Mesa-Lago 1994). Castro effectively shunned Soviet Premier Gorbachev's reform-minded policies by restricting economic privatization while concurrently reviving the nationalistic and anti-American rhetoric of the early revolutionary period. During the RP, Cuba's involvement with Soviet-supported military and civilian internationalism waned as Castro focused on the promotion of Cuban nationalism.²⁰ Rabkin sums up Castro's retrenchment in the mid 1980s thusly:

“The regime's preoccupation with questions of political unity and loyalty, long a feature of Cuban communism, grew more intense, just as the reverse process of political pluralization and liberalization developed in Eastern Europe” (Rabkin 1991, 179).

Officially, Castro implemented the RP to “correct mistakes” in policy that had given rise to myriad problems considered anathema to the regime, such as growing inequalities in earnings, increased dependence on material rewards, multi-level corruption and inefficient use of labor, particularly labor associated with the

²⁰ See Eckstein (1994, 171-203) for more discussion on Cuba's role in the Soviet plan of internationalism.

construction and agricultural sectors. In the 1980s, Castro believed (or at least preached) that a general corrosion of “*conciencia*” or decline in revolutionary zeal that affected the whole of the country caused these problems (Eckstein 1994, 61-62). Yet, Cuba was also in the midst of growing economic difficulties, a point that was often lost in the ideological focus of public pronouncements during the RP.

Marifeli Pérez-Stable believes the RP represented an important crossroads in the revolutionary period: the country could have either embraced broader and more meaningful market openings, or pursued a policy of retrenchment, a return to the “tenets of revolution” (1999, 154-155). The Castro regime decided to pursue the latter course, a move that in retrospect allowed Castro himself to remain in power long after his contemporaries, such as Gorbachev, were swept from office when their countries embraced further reform. Many RP policies shaped the subsequent Special Period actions, and Castro invoked this ideological retrenchment over the course of several economic crackdowns in the 1990s. I argue that a series of government crackdowns on private initiative and *jineterismo* dating from 1996 to the present constitute a latter day RP.

At one level, the RP reined in and in some cases reversed economic reforms introduced in 1977 under the System of Economic Management and Planning (*Sistema de Dirección y Planificación de la Economía*: SDPE). As part of an overall effort to decentralize the Cuban economy, the SDPE was designed to 1) make enterprises accountable; 2) introduce a system of material incentives designed to reward enterprise profitability; 3) promote economic efficiency; and 4) widen self-employment (Zimbalist 1994, 221). In the main, the engineers of the SDPE hoped to

improve economic sector efficiency by empowering managerial personnel to perform a wider array of micro level decisions. Decentralized decision-making allowed managers more leeway in the use of material incentives to encourage workers, as well as a freer hand in the procurement and management of supplies. Managers were also instructed to abide by greater measures of accountability in an effort to stem corruption (del Aguila 1994, 99).

The SDPE aped reforms originally implemented in the Soviet Union in 1965 and it signaled a Cuban attempt to follow more closely the state socialist model instituted by the Soviet bloc countries (Zimbalist 1994, 221). In fact, Cuba adopted the SDPE reforms largely to appease the Soviet Union, which was reportedly not happy with the use of their financial assistance in Cuba (del Aguila 1994, 99-100). Del Aguila estimates that Soviet assistance to Cuba during the 1970s totaled nearly \$12.5 billion, including both balance-of-payments assistance and the aforementioned agricultural and trade subsidies (del Aguila 1994, 99-100). Despite Cuba's adoption of Soviet-approved reforms, Castro never really warmed to the new policies, and in fact initially suppressed his hostility towards what he saw as capitalist tenets of management (del Aguila 1994, 99-100). For this reason, Castro's swift re-alignment of policy to conform to early revolutionary reforms and his back tracking on SDPE initiatives during the RP came as no surprise to observers.

The regime's commitment to decentralization and market reform had deepened in 1980 when it established free farmers markets in a bid to supplement the rationed and non-rationed food supply and additionally to improve the quality and variety of the foods available to average Cubans (Benjamin et al 1986, 58). The

Cuban government also felt the need to reinforce its connection with the Cuban people in the aftermath of the Mariel boatlift when 125,000 Cubans left the island in 1980 (Pérez-Stable 1999, 150). The government gave private farmers the right to sell their excess produce (after providing the state with 50 percent of their harvest) in special markets where prices floated with demand. Despite the fact that the availability of food, and more importantly, fresh produce and meats, improved as a result of the markets, both residents and the government complained of growing abuses by farmers and distributors. Castro complained that the markets produced “too many millionaires,” a reference to reports of some farmers and distributors who listed annual incomes in excess of 50,000 pesos (the average Cuban legally earned around 190 pesos per month) (Zimbalist 1994, 224). These systemic abuses led to reforms in 1982 to deal specifically with problems of exorbitant prices, excessive profits by middlemen and resource diversion from the state sector.²¹ However, despite incorporating a tax system for private farmers and distributors and expanding the state-controlled parallel market to compete with the farmer’s markets, the government blamed continuing abuses as the reason for the eventual closing of the markets with the advent of the RP (Zimbalist 1994, 224). The experience of the farmer’s markets led to the amendment of the penal code in 1988 to include hoarding, speculation, deception of consumers and damage to economic plans as crimes against the state (Dalton 1993, 49).²²

²¹ Castro believed that truckers and sellers were withholding the best produce to sell for their private gain (Eckstein 1994, 74).

²² This amendment has been cited frequently during the Special Period in instances when the regime has attempted to control self-employed workers and the farmer’s markets that were re-introduced in 1992.

Castro began a campaign to address what he believed were SDPE-inspired lapses in proper revolutionary ideology. As part of its appeal to the Cuban populace, the government “resurrected” for their promotional use the writings of Ernesto Che Guevara, the Argentine communist and doctor who played a large role in the revolutionary victory and wrote extensively on the moral bases of communism. Guevara, following the teachings of Marx, insisted on replacing the money-based economy with a system of equitable exchange (Pérez-Stable 1999, 69). In Guevara’s view, the government should play the role of the benevolent distributor of necessary goods and services, and citizens, should work for non-material rewards, i.e., the greater good of the revolution (Pérez-Stable 1999,72). For these reasons, Castro quickly trotted out Guevara’s revolutionary credentials in an effort to stir up latent Cuban nationalism. This was easy to do, for Che was a Castro confidante in the early years of the revolution and he participated in the initial training of exiled Castro supporters in Mexico in the mid 1950s. He was present on the leaky yacht “Granma” that carried the rebels back to Cuba in 1957 to begin the revolution in earnest. Guevara served both as a physician to the rebel elite as well as a column leader during the so-called westward push that led to the eventual rebel victory in 1958 (Pérez-Stable 1999, 69). In a speech delivered in October 1987, Castro paraphrased Che by stating:

“The new man [sic], driven by *conciencia* and guided by education, was to build socialism and communism with the appropriate tools (output plan, voluntary work, moral rewards), while rejecting the pernicious mechanisms of capitalist economics (markets, prices, monetary incentives) (Roca 1993, 95).

He continues to cite Guevara's writings in the Special Period in an effort to combat perceptions of lingering materialism on the part of many Cubans (see Castro 2002).

As mentioned earlier, Castro's move to "rectify" the perceived problems of the revolution went beyond a simple statement of the ideological shortcomings of the part of the Cuban population. The RP also emerged to control a profound fiscal crisis brought on by falling sugar prices that led to a rapid rise in the national debt. Indeed, while the RP was influenced by perceived internal rot and lack of ideological discipline on the part of the Cuban people, the program was more importantly addressed external economic exigencies (Eckstein 1994, 71-72). By 1986, Cuba confronted a growing fiscal crisis due, in part, to forces beyond its immediate control. A fall in world sugar and oil prices exposed the island's monocultural dependence on sugar. Indeed, by the mid-1980s, Cuba rapidly accumulated foreign debt, especially to its Western trading partners, as imports surpassed export revenue (Roque and Sanchez 1998, 12). Despite a heavy dependence on the Soviet bloc for trade, Cuba relied on the capitalist world for 10-15 percent of its imports, mainly technology and other inputs not available from the socialist bloc countries (del Aguila 1994, 103).

Between 1985 and 1986, Cuba's debt to Western lenders jumped from 3.6 billion pesos to 5 billion pesos, and Castro's inability to secure new funding for interest payments led to Cuba's default on Western loans. This led to a significant contraction in hard currency earnings from trade with the West (Eckstein 1994, 72). Eckstein sums up this point thusly, "the real spur for the rectification drive probably lay less in any sudden realization that the 'profit-spirit' had invaded the Cuban working class than in Cuba's position vis-à-vis the international economy" (1994,

74). Paradoxically, Cuba's high degree of economic dependency on the Soviet bloc thus became more entrenched at the same time the two sides began to differ on issues of reform policies. Cuba's declining economic relationship with the Western world in the late 1980s thus exacerbated the severity of economic contractions experienced during the Special Period. .

The reforms of the RP effectively spelled the end of what Ana Jatar-Hausmann referred to as Cuba's "golden 80s," a period marked by the highest average spending power experienced since the revolution began (1999, 27). Lee Lockwood affirms the "golden 80s" moniker and writes:

"The parallel market was at its zenith and the prevailing mood in Havana was euphoric. Many people now owned stereo sets and even videotape recorders. For the first time in years, people could invite a friend to dinner in their homes knowing that there would be enough food. Once again you heard lively chatter and people smiled at you as they passed you in the street" (1990, 364).

Indeed, an interview with a Cuban who has lived through the entire course of the revolution confirmed the widely held belief that the early 1980s represented an era when "there was ample food on the shelves and in the private markets. We didn't worry about food then as we do now" (Marlo, personal communication, 1997).

Today, many Cubans, especially those without access to dollars, frequently reminisce about the early 1980s as the period when market reforms greatly improved life for Cubans (Jatar-Hausmann 1999, 29).

The dramatic political and economic shifts that Cubans witnessed during the RP contextualize the severe economic and social problems associated with the Special Period. Furthermore, as mentioned, the government struggled to maintain the

ideological precepts of the RP during the Special Period including continued exhortations that trumpet the superiority of moral over material rewards. Despite the re-opening of private farmer's markets and the expansion of self-employment, the regime continues to insist that the private sector is to be closely regulated and will play only a "complementary" role to that of the state-managed economy (Peters and Scarpaci 1998, 2). In short, the regime maintained as closely as possible the Cuban economic model pursued during the RP: "centralist, personalist [i.e., related to the dominate role of Fidel Castro], anti-market, and anti-incentive, with heavy emphasis on ideological and political values" (Roca 1993, 91).

The Rectification Process and the Changing Status of Women

Many observers overlook the impact of the RP on women in the labor force. The RP addressed a problem of excess employment that had become progressively worse throughout the course of the 1980s and indeed remained a problem at the outset of the Special Period. Castro denounced "overemployment" in the administrative and managerial sectors where the number of personnel had risen from 90,000 in 1973 to over 250,000 by 1984 (Bengelsdorf 1994, 151). However, he also advocated deep employment cuts in such sectors as public health and textiles that historically employed greater numbers of women than men (Bunck 1994, 114). The "reorganization" of employment structures, therefore, often targeted women at a greater rate than men, due in part to lingering attitudes regarding sex roles in the labor

force (Bunck 1994, 114).²³ For example, the government reduced support for a program designed to accommodate working mothers, known as “buffer hiring,” whereby employers hired extra women to cover maternity and child-care-related absences of others (Smith and Padula 1996, 118). The subsequent reduction in job slots as well as loss of aid to working mothers represented major setbacks, since despite an increase in the number of day-care centers (known as *círculos*) built nationwide over the course of the revolutionary period, child-care options were often extremely limited for working mothers. In fact, by 1980, the *círculos* only accommodated a reported eight percent of Cuba’s children under the age of six (Bunck 1994, 113). Smith and Padula underscore this point with the following example:

“In December 1987, (it was found that) women workers (in an industrial parts factory) could not arrange for child care during two of their three hour shifts. The solution, according to the union representative, was to replace female workers with men” (1996, 119).

The issue of women’s work and childcare also emerged when the government shifted surplus labor into voluntary micro-brigades that focused on housing construction (by 1989 33,000 Cubans worked as volunteers). However, only six percent of the volunteers in that year were women, a state of affairs that Smith and Padula attribute to continuing problems with day-care and the belief by many Cuban men that women were not suited to that type of work (Smith and Padula 1996, 119). Women would become the victims of disproportionate job loss in the Special Period, as well. This

²³ See Chapter Four for discussion.

point will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four along with a deeper analysis of women and the labor force.

A History of Dependency

Castro's regime consistently expressed concern over Soviet reform efforts while it pushed, via the RP, a policy of political and economic retrenchment. Nevertheless, the quite sudden demise of the Soviet Union in 1989 and the insistence by the new Russian state that Cuba settle its reported 15.5 billion-ruble debt in hard currency took Castro by surprise (Pérez-Stable 1999, 89). The dismantling of the USSR led immediately to the suspension of most Soviet subsidies to Cuba, including a majority of the oil that the island had scheduled to power sugar planting and harvesting equipment pending debt re-payments. Trade between Russia and Cuba would no longer consist of the preferential arrangements offered by the previous regime. The end of the Cuba-Soviet relationship, however, did not signify the end of dependency for the Cuban economy. Instead, it forced Cuba to seek out trade with, and investment by, the "enemies" of the revolution, namely the Western capitalist nations. The Special Period, therefore, signaled a new form of dependency.

In one respect, the fall of the Soviet bloc meant that for the first time in its history as a state, Cuba was freed of domination by a single foreign power. After the defeat of Spain in 1898 in the so-called "Spanish-American War," a conflict known on the island as the Second Cuban War for Independence, the United States dominated the former Spanish colony economically and politically. This de-facto

American colonialism was initially instituted by the controversial Platt Amendment which allowed the United States to intervene militarily whenever deemed necessary, and indeed the U.S. government invoked the Platt Amendment in 1905 and again in 1912 when US Marines occupied Cuba during periods of political unrest (Thomas 1971, 478-479). The United States also established a base on Cuban soil at Guantanamo Bay, a sliver of Cuba that remains in US possession. Although the Platt Amendment was abrogated in 1934, U.S. business interests were by then well entrenched in Cuba and the island depended greatly upon US investment capital and the American market, particularly for production and sale of agricultural products. Cuba also depended on American tourists to support the growing tourism industry. By the end of the 1950s, tourism revenue in Cuba topped 60 million dollars annually (Villalba 1993, 107).²⁴

Table 2 demonstrates that when the Castro regime overthrew Fulgencio Batista's government in 1959 and adopted Soviet-style socialism in 1961, Cuba effectively traded its dependent relationship with the U.S. for one with the Soviet Union. In 1959, the agricultural sector dominated the island's export economy, with sugar accounting for the lion's share of revenue. At that time, the United States purchased the majority of Cuba's sugar (accounting for almost 55% of total sugar exports) and American companies controlled many internal industries such as sugar refining, mining, transportation links, power companies, and tourist hotels and restaurants, to name a few of the most important (Pérez-Stable 1999, 24-26 & 88-89).

²⁴ See Chapter Five for more discussion on the history of tourism in Cuba.

Table 2: A History of Dependence and Monoculture

Decade	1950s	1980s
Sugar exports as a percent of total exports	83.0	76.6
Percent total trade with the United States	68.2	
Percent total trade with the USSR		66.2
United States: Percent share of total sugar exports	54.8	
USSR: Percent share of total sugar exports		56.3
Decade trade surplus/deficit per capita in pesos	+61.2	-1300

Source: Pérez-Stable 1999, 88

In 1961, the Castro regime tied the island to the Soviet economic and political bloc and despite efforts to the contrary, Cuba remained as dependent on Soviet aid and markets as it had been on the US under the “American” period of 1902-1959.

Furthermore, Soviet demand for sugar actually increased Cuba’s dependence on that single commodity due to the preferential conditions of trade granted by the USSR.

It is ironic, therefore, in light of the severe economic contractions of the Special Period that the post-Soviet era ushered in a measure of political independence from external domination that the island never before experienced, despite revolutionary rhetoric to the contrary. Nonetheless, the economic realities of the Special Period limit Cuba’s ability to function independently of the global capitalist system, forcing the country into a new dependent relationship. This time, the dependency results from foreign joint-venture capitalists and dollar-toting tourists who receive preferential treatment in Cuba’s dollar-driven economy. So many Spaniards have visited and invested in Cuba in the last ten years that Cubans sometimes refer to this era as the “*reconquista*,” or the “reconquering” of Cuba by

Spanish “colonists” (Elizade and Pulido 1996). Indeed, in 1998, Cuba confirmed that Spain had become the island’s biggest trading partner in that bilateral trade equaled over \$700 million, although the balance of trade was heavily in Spain’s favor (Fletcher 1999). By the end of 2001, Spanish companies accounted for over almost 25 percent of the joint venture and investment deals signed with the Cuban government (Spadoni 2002, 163).

The Economic and Social Side Effects of the Special Period

Economic shocks administered during the Special Period continue to reverberate in Cuba today. Beginning in the early 1990s, conditions considered anathema to the Castro regime have become commonplace, and many fear that gains realized over the course of Castro’s rule have been jeopardized. For example, the regime has justifiably prided itself in the ability to provide basic necessities to Cuban citizens including free or highly subsidized education, health care and housing. Indeed, Cuba now ranks among the best of the developed countries on indicators relating to human well-being and the country compares favorably to the United States and the developed world countries based on important development statistics (see Table 3). While its Maternity Death Rate is higher than many developed countries including the United States, it is still considerably lower than comparable countries such as Costa Rica (29/100,000) and Venezuela (60/100,000) (Human Development 2002). The data from Costa Rica and Venezuela are presented here because Cuba scored roughly equidistant between the two in the overall UNHDI rankings. Out of

Table 3: Comparative Statistics: 2002

Country/Region	Infant mortality rate	Life Ex.	Adult Lit.	Maternity Death Rate	UN HDI
Cuba	6	76	97	33	55
United States	6	77	99	12	6
Costa Rica	10	76	96	29	43
Venezuela	20	72	93	60	69

Infant Mortality Rate is expressed as number per 1,000 of live births; Life Expectancy is the average life span of a cohort born in a certain year; Adult Literacy Rate is expressed as a percent of the population over the age of 15; Maternity Death Rate is expressed as number per 100,000 live births; UNHDI (United Nations Human Development Index) is based on ranking system of countries developed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

Source: Human Development Report: United Nations Development Program 2002.

173 total countries, Costa Rica ranked 43rd, Cuba ranked 55th and Venezuela ranked 69th (Human Development 2002). The UNHDI takes economic and political indices into account, as well as social indicators (such as health, education and gender).

The “Human Poverty Index” (HPI), compiled and published by the UNDP, ranks Cuba fourth out of 88 developing-world countries based on their effort to eliminate poverty in the population (Human Development 2002). The HPI rankings take several variables into account including average lifespan, basic educational opportunities, access to public and private resources and employment opportunities. Once again, Cuba scored favorably compared to comparable nations. Costa Rica was second out of 88 and Venezuela was ninth.

While Cuba ranks at the top of the HPI list at the regional level (alongside such countries as Chile and Costa Rica), compilers admit to shortcomings in the study that would have had an adverse effect on Cuba’s ranking should they have been included. For example, the study claims that “constraints in data” meant the

exclusion of some dimensions of human poverty, such as political freedom. It is difficult to quantify degrees of political freedom: the ability to participate in decision-making, personal security, the ability to participate in the life of a community, and the absence of threats to the overall sustainability of the system are all considered (Human Development 2002). These are all areas that Cuba has been roundly criticized for by members of the international community. In fact, UN general assemblies repeatedly condemn Cuba for continued human rights violations. In a motion filed by Uruguay in April of 2002, the U.N. Human Rights Commission voted to censure Cuba for its refusal to grant its citizens individual liberties or to allow a human rights monitor to visit the island (San Martin 2002). Critics complain that Castro's famous proclamation: "Everything within the Revolution, nothing against," leads to the maintenance of strong instruments of social control such as the harassment, imprisonment and even the death of outspoken political opponents (Dalton 1993, 14-15). In short, Cuba exhibits a low tolerance for any behavior deemed "counter-revolutionary" by the regime, including criticism of Castro and his policies, and this has led ultimately to a captive press and a weak and disorganized civil society in Cuba.

The Special Period severely tested Cuba's ability to provide the well-advertised basic provisions for the welfare of the population as a whole. Recent reports from Cuba document the decreasing quality of health care in the country. Shortcomings, such as the lack of suitable medicines and health care equipment, limit Cuba's ability to keep dangerous diseases at bay. Recent reports note that poor sanitation and lack of medical supplies have worsened hepatitis outbreaks in central

and western Cuba (Arroyo 2001). Furthermore, Lastres (2001) believes that the true extent of health problems in Cuba is vastly underreported since many Cuban doctors are punished for publicly reporting outbreaks of hepatitis and dysentery, diseases that Lastres believes will increase in severity due to Cuba's declining health care system.

One recent article states that problems in the health care system increasingly stem from health services being increasingly diverted to foreign patients as Cuba expands its health tourism offerings (Cosano-Alén 2001). This state of affairs means marked differences in the provision of health care for Cubans and the care received by foreigners paying in dollars. The following excerpt from the above article underlines this assertion:

“The x-ray department [in a polyclinic for use by Cubans] has been out of service for almost a year and the technician was transferred to another clinic. The ekg equipment is now working, but was out of commission for six months. Nurses, technicians and specialists are often in short supply. [However], in Santa Maria del Mar [in Havana, a nearby health tourism facility for the exclusive use of foreigners], all the necessary equipment exists to provide excellent care. The facility even has an ambulance [a “luxury” that many Cuban facilities currently lack]” (Cosano-Alén 2001).

In addition to health care difficulties, the inability to provide adequate food rations became a key problem during the Special Period. The government re-introduced basic foodstuff rationing at the onset of the Special Period in an effort to ensure a level of equality among the population. Although rationing has played an important role in Cuban life since the beginning of the revolution, the practice intensified during the Special Period. Cubans consistently complain that rations do not meet the needs of their families (see especially McGeary and Booth 1993, and Jatar-Hausmann 1999, 19-23). The availability of rationed goods has reportedly

deteriorated during the Special Period to the point where many assert that state-provided food and other supplies are frequently sufficient for only ten days per month (Mala vista 1999, 37). In order to feed themselves, Cubans must either pay the relatively high prices at dollar stores or depend on the black market to meet their needs. A newspaper account (Fornaris 2001) dated 3/31/2001, reported that the following products were available for residents under the monthly quota:

1. rice (6 pounds per person),
2. sugar (3 pounds white and 3 pounds brown per person),
3. red beans (20 ounces per person),
4. the first installment of 10 containers (of 24 for the month) of evaporated milk for children with medically-prescribed diets.

The report also stipulated that in the Havana municipality of Regla, one pound of chicken would be available (per ration book for the month of April) and in the El Cerro municipality one half pound of beef would be available for each family in the neighborhood. The report stated that these particular products were available two or three times a year. Clearly, the amount rationed does not meet the dietary needs of the citizens (Fornaris 2001. Also see Scarpaci, Segre and Coyula 2002, 251-253).

However, a report published in the Houston Chronicle in 2001 argues that the caloric intake of the average Cuban stabilized over the course of the Special Period and improved since 1993, the oft-considered low point of the post-Soviet era. According to the source, the average Cuban today consumes a reported 2,585 calories and 68 grams of protein daily, compared with 1,940 calories and 48 grams of protein in 1993 (Snow 2001). For comparison, the World Health Organization recommends a

minimum daily intake of 2,700 calories and 20-30 grams of protein depending on the body weight of the consumer (Snow 2001).

Two factors produced the improvement in the average Cuban diet: on the one hand, the legalization of dollars in 1993 allowed Cubans to hold legally and spend U.S. currency, which meant that Cubans could shop in the dollar stores for the first time, giving those with ample greenbacks access to a wider variety of non-rationed food. Perhaps more importantly, the government re-introduced private markets (oft demonized during the early 1980s and the RP) known as “*agropecuarios*” in which Cuban farmers legally sell a portion of their produce. This return to market capitalism, which the government still monitors with a wary eye and at times criticizes, is perhaps the greatest contributor in helping to stabilize Cuban food availability. Of course, the black market continues to function as an important source of food and is also a key factor that enables Cubans to feed themselves during the Special Period.

Despite these gains, most Cubans struggle to provide basic necessities for themselves and their families on a daily basis, and have responded to the privations of the Special Period in myriad ways. At the extreme end of the spectrum, some have left the country using any means necessary, from meeting and marrying foreign tourists, to lashing together rafts of questionable seaworthiness in order to attempt the 90-mile journey to Florida through shark-infested waters. Reports of human trafficking also increased, and one source claims that Cubans pay up to \$8,000 US per person for the illegal passage by speed boat to the United States (Fineman 2001). Recently, two Cuban youths perished after positioning themselves in the

undercarriage of a London-bound aircraft, succumbing to a lack of oxygen and extreme temperatures en route. Interviews with a third youth who was unable to climb under the plane in time revealed that the doomed pair believed the jet was bound for Miami (Cuba identifies 2001).

Self employment and *Jineterismo* during the Special Period

While some Cubans left the country, others risked fines and even imprisonment by turning to the black market (what Pérez-López refers to as the “second economy”) for sustenance. A viable and relatively large black market has been a reality in Cuba since Castro took control in 1959. Indeed, the government has often turned a blind eye to the petty offenses of minor dabblers, reasoning that the black market serves as a vital safety valve for an economy ill-equipped to provide certain difficult-to-obtain consumer items. One observer noted the importance of the second economy to Cuba’s present and possibly its future, as well:

“The second economy is, after all, the segment of the Cuban economy that most directly responds to market signals and operates most efficiently. It is a logical reservoir for entrepreneurial talent that could be constructively used in a market-economy setting. Under a free market system, second economy activities could form the backbone of a private sector composed of small businesses engaged in the production and sale of goods and services” (Pérez-López 1995, 2).

Cuba’s changing employment structure also influenced the growing role of the black market during the Special Period. Belt-tightening at the onset of the Special Period resulted in a rapidly rising rate of unemployment in the state sector mainly due to the loss of Soviet subsidies and the need to increase productivity. According to

one source, employment in the state sector dropped from 95 percent of the population in 1989, to around 75 percent in 1995 (Pérez-López 1995, 56-60). The increasing jobs in tourism, the private sector and self-employment only partially mitigated the sweeping loss of public sector jobs and forced Cubans to operate in the black market.

While job creation in the tourism sector alleviated some of the employment pressures, the Castro regime has been slow to legalize employment opportunities in the private sector, most importantly in the realm of self-employment. According to Peters and Scarpaci, self-employment has had little impact on Cuba's total economic production. It encompasses only three percent of the labor force, and "does not rank with 'strategic' economic initiatives such as foreign investment or agricultural reform" (1998, 2). The government legalized self-employment for over 100 occupations in September 1993 (there are currently over 150 legal occupations) with the passage of Decree Law 141. The sector peaked in 1996 with 209,000 licensed workers and since then declined (to a reported 165,000 in 1998) mainly due to the passage of a strict tax law in 1996 and the vigorous enforcement of stringent regulations (Peters and Scarpaci 1998, 4). Indeed, most of the legalized jobs were in niches not easily filled by the Cuban government, including various positions that specialized in the repair of scarce and/or expensive goods such as shoes, bicycle tires and umbrellas. The growth of popular private restaurants known as *paladares* is one notable exception to this rule (Peters and Scarpaci 1998, 4). Additionally, many who toil legally in the private sector report near constant harassment by the authorities quick to charge fines and revoke licenses at the discovery of seemingly trivial infractions (Goering 2001; Bauza 2001b). Therefore, many Cubans resorted to the

black market in order to earn an income when confronted by the slow pace of job creation in legal private sectors coupled with shrinking public sector employment and an actual decrease in the number of the legally self-employed.

The influx of foreign tourists into Cuba fueled a large and growing black market. Most visitors to the island encounter hustlers willing to sell them anything from cut-rate cigars (most cigars purchased on the street are counterfeit) to family heirlooms (I was once offered a family's prized stamp collection). In short, many commit acts of *jineterismo* to make ends meet in today's Cuba. The government's stance on *jineterismo* reached back to the revolutionary shift in 1961, when Castro closed Cuba's brothels by condemning sex work as a by-product of Spanish and "Yankee" imperialism. The government sent an estimated 40,000 Cuban sex workers to special schools to receive "re-education" and training and then gave them employment opportunities (Padula and Smith 1985, 80-81). The regime then sent those who continued to ply their trade to jail or into exile and labeled them counter-revolutionaries. While some researchers have primarily focused on the term in reference to acts of prostitution or hustling (see especially Rundle 2001, Fernández 1999 and Fusco 1998), most Cubans, if pressed, will admit to resorting to *jineterismo* as part of *la lucha* (the struggle) to make ends meet during the Special Period. As Rundle notes, the term *jinete* has existed throughout the revolutionary period to indicate a person who used his or her connections to obtain goods or services in short supply (Rundle 2001). However, the term shifted focus over the course of the revolutionary period to include a larger range of activities than before the Special Period and the advent of tourism (see Table I below).

In sum, understanding the growth of *jineterismo* requires understanding the context of Special Period austerity measures and their roots in RP policies of retrenchment. While Cuba continues to rank high among developing countries education and access to health care, the Special Period placed a strain on many previously taken-for-granted institutions such as the food ration program. The lack of options in legal fields of self-employment coupled with the inadequacy of salaries paid in pesos pushed many to perform activities deemed acts of *jineterismo* by the government (see Figure 1 for a list selected illegal acts). Chapter Four will continue discussion on the effects of Special Period policies through a deeper examination of issues related to race and gender.

1. Sex Work (includes all involved in sex work provision, i.e., sex workers, procurers, etc.)
2. Unauthorized Private Room Rentals to Tourists for Dollars or other Compensation
3. Unauthorized Operation of Private Taxis
4. Unauthorized Operation of *Paladares* (includes practice of “steering” visitors)²⁵
5. Other Unauthorized Dealings with Tourists:
 - Selling Black Market Cigars, Rum, Drugs, etc.
 - Selling Family Heirlooms or Items Stolen from the State
 - Selling Services as a Guide

Figure 1: Selected Acts Deemed as “*Jineterismo*”

²⁵ Some paladar owners employ people (touts) to actively seek out tourists and direct them to their particular restaurant. Others have formed alliances with taxi drivers and others with access to tourists to recommend their establishment. Generally, those who engage in steering are offered free meals and beverages by paladar operators (Rosa, personal communication, 1996).

CHAPTER FOUR

The Construction of Race, Racism and Gender in Revolutionary Cuba

During the Special Period, representations of race and gender were transformed. Changes in the national policy, connected primarily to efforts to earn more national income from tourism, altered the lives and livelihoods of women, Afro-Cubans and *mulattos*. In this chapter, I argue that the severe economic strain of the Special Period coupled with the polarization of economic power on the island, produced this transformation. This first contextualizes the issue of racism in Cuba by tracing its historical origins from the colonial period to the present. Then, I examine the issue of race in the Special Period. Racism is an old and entrenched problem in Cuba that, contrary to popular revolutionary rhetoric, did not disappear from the island during the “war” on class-based inequalities, but rather remained a neglected issue that resurfaced during the tension-filled Special Period. Although Cuban scholars do examine the race issue, they often overlook the many instances of overt and subtle forms of racism. As will be shown, discriminatory behaviors and reduced opportunities appear increasingly in the important tourism sector. These factors result in shrinking economic power for darker skinned Cubans during the progression of the Special Period. The second part of the chapter addresses issues of gender during the Special Period and the role of women in the changing Cuban economy. As with the issue of race, I examine Cuba’s gendered society in historical context -- in particular the context of the revolutionary period. Fidel Castro promised to fight the “revolution within the revolution,” by which he meant the struggle for gender equality (Eckstein

1994, 48). While Cuban women gained much during the Castro era, little changed in the traditional setting for women, the house (*la casa*), and women remain under-represented in key political positions and in high prestige jobs. Furthermore, the advent of the Special Period forced many women to work even longer double days as material shortages require more time spent on acquiring provisions for the family.²⁶ In this section, I will show how Castro's changing discourse on race and gender corresponds with the need periodically to institutionalize the moral and ethical precepts of the Revolution. I suggest that, in so doing, the aims of government do not serve the best interests of women and darker skinned Cubans.

Racial Constructions from the Colonial Period to the Revolution

“[In Cuba], there is a denial of racism, often embedded in the current of thinking that there is no such thing as race...on the grounds that focusing in on race is divisive and everyone is simply Cuban” (Pérez-Sarduy and Stubbs 2000, xii).

The complex issue of race in Cuba must be viewed in its complete historical context in order to understand the modern manifestations of racism on the island. In typical Marxist fashion, the Castro regime maintains that racism is simply a by-product of classism that is embedded in colonial attitudes and more importantly within the structure of capitalism, a point disputed by many observers (see Fernández 1999, Moore 1995, Taylor 1988, et al). In fact, notions of race have developed and shifted since the arrival of the Spanish over four hundred years ago. Taylor (1988)

²⁶ Double day is a term used to highlight the pattern of women who work two full-time jobs: one at the workplace and the other in the home where they are responsible for running the household with little assistance from male partners and family members.

traces the roots of racism in Cuba to Spanish notions of racial purity present long before the original conquistadors set foot in the New World. He writes, “Iberians had long subscribed to Western Christian color symbolism wherein white is associated with purity, virtue and beauty, ... and black with malignance, repugnance, corruption, sin and death” (Taylor 1988, 20). They carried these notions with them to the New World and transposed this symbolism into attitudes of race that served to justify first the exploitation of the indigenous populations, and later the trade and use of African slaves in the Spanish colonies. As such, racist beliefs in many ways served as an important impetus for the explosive growth in sugar production that would propel the Cuban economy for two and a half centuries.

Indeed, from the mid eighteenth century onward, the issues of race and sugar dominate Cuban history. Cuba (along with Puerto Rico), ironically, was actually one of the last islands in the Caribbean to embark on the large-scale cultivation of sugar, and this meant that the widespread importation of slaves occurred later than it had on comparable islands such as Jamaica and Hispaniola (Rudolph 1987, 10). Sugar development in Havana’s hinterland and particularly the eastern sections of Cuba was limited until the British occupation of the island in 1762-63, when sugar production was jump-started. The invaders were quick to recognize Cuba’s agricultural potential and the British rapidly introduced 10,000 slaves and sugar technicians from Jamaica in an effort to take advantage of virgin sugar-growing areas (Watts 1987, 303). In the process, they greatly extended the acreage under cane, although they focused development on the immediate region surrounding Havana, leaving the east largely devoid of large-scale sugar landholdings (Ibid.). The Spanish regained control of the

island in February 1763, as a result of the Treaty of Paris²⁷. Once in control, they eased some of their restrictions on trade and the sugar sector quickly responded with spectacular growth. Indeed, sugar exports, that had totaled a mere 490 tons when the British invaded in 1762, rose to 5,200 tons in 1765 and 8,200 tons in 1771 (Ibid.)²⁸ Sugar production and exports jumped again around the end of the 18th century when an estimated 300,000 French sugar planters and their entourage fled the Haitian slave revolts that began in 1791 and ended in 1804 (Rudolph 1987, 10-11).

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Cuba became the leading foreign sugar provider to the United States (Watts 1987, 304). Cuba's comparative advantage of expansive areas with relatively under-exploited soils, at least compared to other Caribbean locations, trumped many of these locations, including Haiti, which suffered declines in sugar production as a result of worn-out soils and decreasing capital investment. Cuban sugar plantations expanded from the traditional core in the west located in the Havana hinterland, to more central and eastern locations in an effort to take advantage of declining output elsewhere in the region (Watts 1987, 305). Sugar production in the East rose in the late 18th and early 19th centuries due to the collapse of the French colony of St. Domingue (Haiti) in 1791 and the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 that sent French planters and their slaves to Cuba. The colonial government actively encouraged the land ownership by foreigners in an effort to bolster the island's population (Scarpaci, Segre & Coyula 2002, 25). An explosion in

²⁷ The Treaty of Paris granted Britain the Spanish holdings southeast of the Mississippi River in North America (Treaty of Paris 1997, articles XIX, XX).

²⁸ As a point of reference, Cuba eventually produced over 8 million tons of sugar during the course of their 10 million ton drive leading up to 1970. Despite massive investment, the goal of 10 million was never accomplished.

the demand for slave labor paralleled production increases, so that over one half of all slave imports took place in the 19th century (Pérez 1995, 86).

This dramatic increase in dependence on imported slave labor occurred at the same time white fears of a potential Haitian-style slave revolt were running high. According to one source, the white Cuban planter society was “at its most racist” in the first half of the nineteenth century precisely because the sugar boom resulted in a rapidly expanding black population (Pérez-Sarduy and Stubbs 1993, 8-9). According to Thomas, Cuba imported over 100,000 slaves between the years 1816-20, more than were imported in the whole period before 1790 (1971, 95). By the middle part of the nineteenth century, blacks and *mulattos* comprised nearly 50 percent of Cuba’s population. According to a comprehensive census conducted in 1862 the island was then home to over 600,000 “blacks” (i.e., slaves and “free coloreds”) out of a total population of 1.3 million people (Pérez 1995, 86-89).

In 1886, Cuba became the last country in Middle America to outlaw slavery.²⁹ The perceived need for slave labor during a period of expansion in the sugar industry explains the late date of abolition. Advocates for slavery wavered, however, when profits by Cuban sugar growers and processors waned in the 1880s due to competition from rapidly expanding European beet sugar production.³⁰ Additionally, many Cuban planters suffered extensive damage to their fields and equipment as a result of the Ten Year’s War (a.k.a., the First Cuban War of Independence, 1868-1878). A reduction in the amount of credit made available to planters in the aftermath

²⁹ In 1888, Brazil became the last country in the western hemisphere to formally outlaw slavery.

³⁰ In 1848, less than one-fifth of the world’s sugar came from sugar beets; in 1884 sugar from beets accounted for just over one-half of world production (Thomas 1971, 272).

of the war exacerbates this state of affairs (Ibid.). Therefore, the decline in sugar output in the 1880s served as the major impetus for the eventual abolition of slavery in Cuba, although ideological arguments espoused by abolitionists played a role, as well.

While the abolition of slavery came late to Cuba, racial attitudes in the country, as in many other Latin America countries, underwent a transformation beginning in the early years of the nineteenth century. At one level, societal shifts in Latin America evolved as a result of increasing racial mixing (alternately referred to as *mestizaje* or miscegenation) among people of European, African and Native American descent (Fernández 1996, 101).³¹ In Cuba, the low post-Colombian survival rate of Native Americans led to a greater mulatto population (those with European and African blood) rather than the European-Native American *mestizos* common in much of Central and South America.³² Despite this distinction, Cuban *mulattos* are at times referred to as *mestizos* to indicate their mixed race status.

Despite growing numbers of mixed race people, *mulattos*, black slaves and later Afro-Cubans were (and continue to be) relegated to the lower classes of society by “whites,” a racial category that included native-born Spaniards (*peninsulares*) and Creoles (*criollos*). In the case of Cuba, the term Creole (*criollo*) is generally used in two main contexts. First, it refers to the children of European-born parents who were born in the Spanish colonies (usually only those in the Americas). However, it is also

³¹ The term *mestizaje* is utilized in Cuba as it is elsewhere in Latin America regardless of the fact that what actually occurred in Cuba would more accurately be referred to as *mulattoization*.

³²By the 1770s, Native Americans in Cuba had dwindled to a few thousand isolated peasants or had been absorbed into Spanish families. While the actual population of Native Americans in Cuba is uncertain, they likely numbered no greater than 60,000 people at the time of the Spanish conquest (Thomas 1971,21).

used to describe those descended from the original European settlers or those who appear phenotypically “white” or Hispanic. The term Creole, then, has both biological and cultural overtones. In the colonial period, race was correlated with social and economic standing in society and lighter skin tones were generally associated with higher status (Martínez-Alier 1989, 4-5). In the aftermath of the Haitian revolt and the subsequent fear of an uprising in other countries of the Caribbean, the colonial government essentially recognized two ethnic categories, Spanish (White) and African, although this dichotomy became less pronounced in official circles over the course of the nineteenth century (Martínez-Alier 1989, 4-5).

According to Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, *mestizaje* has always been more accepted by those in the lower classes, despite the fact that mixing was often the result of sugar planters engaging in sexual relations (often through force) with their black slaves³³ (Ortiz as cited in Fernández 1996, 107). Fernández, in her study of race in modern Special Period-era Cuba, notes that the working class contains the highest percentage of interracial couples thereby supporting Ortiz’ observation (Fernández 1996, 107). Meanwhile, among the upper classes attitudes remained strong that the “races” should not mix because those of African or Native American derivation were inferior. Thomas attributes some of the blame for continued racial tensions in the early twentieth century to the rapid increase in immigrants from Spain who maintained the traditional Iberian (read European) attitudes towards darker skinned peoples. The resident white or Creole population, in contrast to the incoming Spaniards, was reportedly much more tolerant of both

³³ Illegitimate mulattos born of these unions were almost never acknowledged by their fathers and most were not granted higher social status among the elites in spite of their lighter skin tones.

mulattos and Afro-Cubans meaning that class (and color) was not the only key determinant of racial views (Thomas 1971, 280).

Despite the historical truism that skin tone determines one's position in society, racism in Cuba was (and remains) difficult to assess because the island, like many Caribbean and Latin American countries, exhibits much more fluid and ambiguous racial categories, unlike the commonly clear-cut black/white divisions espoused in North America. Cubans, like many Caribbean people, employ descriptive (and sometimes derogatory) vocabulary to classify individuals along a scale of phenotypes to include skin color, hair type and lip thickness, demonstrating the acceptance of a fluid racial spectrum rather than a strict black/white dichotomy (Benoit 1999, 34-35).

Afro-Cubans, and particularly *mulattos*, often attempt to *blanquear* (whiten) themselves through their choices of employment, their social associations and even their marriage partners. General Fulgencio Batista, Cuba's mulatto "strongman" leader for two distinct periods during the 1930s and early 1940s and again from 1952 to 1959, was a fair skinned mulatto who at times claimed to be white although his mother was Afro-Cuban. By virtue of his position in Cuban society, people referred to him as a *mulatto avanzado* (advanced mulatto) or one who was able to pass for white in most situations³⁴ (Moore 1988, 5). Likewise, certain activities can "darken" one, as well. For example, sex workers during the Special Period are often assumed to be mulatto or Afro-Cuban as Fusco has demonstrated: "To engage in sex work [in

³⁴ The "white" Cuban elite never fully accepted Batista and chided him for his "inferior" racial background (Moore 1988, 5).

Cuba] practically means to assume mulatta identity by association” (1998, 155).³⁵ However, the apparent fluidity of race in Cuba does not mask the entrenched racial divide that exists in the country as Fernández has noted, “While the plasticity of the categories and the range of terminology used to describe phenotypical variation attest to the tradition of *mestizaje*, they do not eliminate the basic structural hierarchy of race” (1996, 101).

A significant aspect of Iberian culture that was transplanted into the new colonies was the Catholic Church whose mission was to convert natives to Christianity. The great influence of the Catholic Church led to a strong class system in which each social group was assigned a particular social and economic function to fulfill (Foster 1960, 3). While the rigid caste-like system of the colonial period has given way to greater social and racial interaction and cross-pollination in the modern era, racist beliefs have tended to remain stronger among the elites in society. It is also important to note that Cubans in the post-colonial period viewed the Church with suspicion since Church leaders largely sided with the Spanish loyalists during the independent movements. Afro-Cubans have also been leery of the Catholic Church since it maintained a general policy of repressing Afro-Cuban religions (Eckstein 1994, 4). Therefore, the Catholic Church and its policies have played a less significant role in Cuba during the twentieth century than is true in other Latin American countries.

Vera Kutzinski, in her book Sugar’s Secrets, elaborates on a particular discourse that developed out of the growth in “*mestizaje*” whereby Latin Americans

³⁵ The constructions of race and gender in the realm of sex work will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Five.

came to focus on the unique forms of multiculturalism and diversity that developed in their countries (1993, 5). For Kutzinski, *mestizaje* (as a multicultural discourse) celebrates racial diversity and effectively downplays divisive social realities (1993,5). She holds that multiculturalism wrought from racial mixing is a key signifier of Cuba's national identity since leaders drew extensively from it in an effort to fan Cuban nationalism as frustrations with colonial policies began to grow in the late 19th century (1993, 5). Martínez-Alier concurs with Kutzinski and believes that in nineteenth century Cuba, the racial question and the national question were one in the same. The prevailing attitude among Cubans of all races and backgrounds was that Cuba's national identity, and independence, could only be achieved through full racial integration (Martínez-Alier 1989, 5). Cuban leaders from General Antonio Maceo (an Afro-Cuban born into slavery) to José Martí³⁶, the Cuban political essayist and nationalist hero, seized on this point and preached that only a united Cuba devoid of internal division could successfully overthrow the Spanish colonial rulers. Martí referred to "blacks' generosity, their virtues, their love for sensible freedom, their gratefulness, and their prudence" while crafting his pro-independence tracts (de la Fuente 1998, 44). The patronizing tone of Martí's phrase illustrates the point that the Cuban elite, while making an effort to develop more generous attitudes toward Afro-Cubans, continued to subscribe to racist notions and to use the racial issue as a means to achieve their own ends which in the late nineteenth century included the formation of an independent state.

³⁶ Martí wrote extensively in favor of Cuban independence and he played a significant role leading up to Cuba's Second Revolution in 1895-98. The Castro regime considers Martí to be among Cuba's pantheon of national heroes.

Robin Moore's study of the connection between Afro-Cuban culture and the rise of nationalist sentiment in the 1920s and 30s reveals that little had changed from a racial perspective in the early post-colonial years. While racial mixing continued apace, Cuba (like most Latin American countries) exhibited what Moore refers to as the "double dynamic" whereby the African components of Latin culture are celebrated while persistent racial bias and discrimination occurred (Moore 1997, 15). Moore's study reveals the acceptance of Afro-Cuban musical traditions into the Cuban mainstream during the 1920s and 30s and posits that this corresponded to growing nationalist sentiment in the face of the economic and political turmoil associated with the Great Depression. It should also be noted that tourists from the United States arrived in greater numbers in Cuba throughout the course of the 1920s, and the rapid social changes that accompanied international tourism development may have spurred nationalist sentiment, as well.³⁷ The growth in Afro-Cuban music represented another instance in which nationalist aspirations aligned with Afro-Cuban culture. Unfortunately for Cubans of color, this did not translate directly into tangible benefits for the population segment as a whole.

De la Fuente, in his study of race in Cuban society, underscores this point: "The 'myth of racial equality' was an ideological construction of the elite that masked the objective structural subordination of Afro-Cubans in society" (1998, 45). In the end, the multicultural discourse (and myth of racial equality) as seized on by intellectuals and other elites such as Martí, achieved much the same ends as Castro aimed for when he stifled debate on race by declaring such activity "counter-

³⁷ The development of tourism in Cuba during the 1920s will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Five.

revolutionary” or illegal (see Kutzinski 1993, 6). Indeed, both Martí and Castro define Cubanness (meaning in this case a distinct Cuban national character) in part as an absence of racial strife, and each in turn made every effort to downplay strong racial identities. The tendency to de-emphasize racial exceptionalism in Cuba was underscored by mulatto leader Gualberto Gomez who said, “We are Cuban, nothing more” (Gomez quoted in de la Fuente 1998, 45). Of course, the reality was that race continued to be a source of strife and social discord in the post-colonial period as was witnessed by the race riots of 1912, an event that reportedly led to the deaths of over 3,000 Afro-Cubans (Thomas 1971, 523). Racist beliefs among the wealthy during the 1950s led them to deny General Fulgencio Batista membership into the exclusive Havana Yacht Club (- Scarpaci, Segre and Coyula 2002, 111). While Batista’s successor, Fidel Castro, made significant progress on many race-related issues including the official abolition of color bars, as the following discussion shows, racism in other forms remains a problem in Cuba to this day.

Race and Revolution

“The issue of race in Cuba has not been resolved under the revolution; and it is hinted that blackness correlates with lower status, and that cultural attitudes about race remain obdurate” (Baloyra and Morris 1993, 10).

When Castro took power in 1959 he inherited a Cuba in which racism remained institutionalized and in many cases overt. Castro moved quickly to level standards of living and to provide economic benefits to all members of society, efforts that earned him the respect and loyalty of many of Cuba’s traditionally

disadvantaged. On March 23, 1959, Castro issued what became known as the Declaration against Discrimination during a Havana Labor Rally by stating: “We should not have to pass a law to establish a right that should belong to every human being and member of society. Virtue, personal merit, heroism, generosity, should be the measure of men, not skin color” (Castro1959). In the same forum in which Castro denounced racial discrimination, he also linked discrimination and prejudice as being “anti-nation” (Castro 1959). Thus, he equated racial harmony with larger national and revolutionary goals emphasizing the hegemony of government policy.

Castro’s revolution fed on Cuban nationalism, and not solely socialism, and he folded race into his wider nationalist goal.³⁸ Bengelsdorf demonstrates the importance of nationalism to the Cuban revolutionary leadership when she notes, “In Castro’s mind, unity was the indispensable element in forging a new Cuba able to withstand the enormous internal and external threats” facing the country (1994, 73). The push for a unified Cuban populace who would stand together against “*yanqui*” (yankee) aggression effectively stifled a national discussion of race as a major issue. As a result, race remains to this day an issue clouded in revolutionary rhetoric. After declaring the socialist nature of the revolution, the government “targeted” class-based rather than race-based disparities in the belief that correcting the former would address the latter concern (Pérez-Sarduy and Stubbs 2000, 5).

Scholars often refer to Afro-Cubans and *mulattos* as Castro’s “secret weapon” in that they are believed to form a body of staunch supporters of the revolution

³⁸ As has been well documented, the move towards communism and the eventual linkages with the Soviet bloc were concretized in 1961 fully two years after Castro rose to power, indicating that Cuba’s revolution was born of nationalist goals rather than out of an urge to promote of a socialist revolution per se (see Bengelsdorf 1994, 73-74 and Pérez-Stable 1999, et al for more discussion on this point).

because of past government efforts to improve their overall situation (see de la Fuente 1998). More so than any other group, observers regard them as perhaps the greatest recipients of the Cuban revolution due to a great improvement in their access to education, health care, and employment opportunities. From the outset of the revolution, Castro reportedly commanded the support of over 80 percent of Cuban blacks, while only 67 percent of whites favored his regime (Caute 1974, 36).

Despite their apparent gains, many Afro-Cubans and *mulattos* are frustrated with their position in Cuban society today. Many feel that the revolution, while initially improving their social and economic position in Cuba, ultimately left them without the possibility of earning a living or even complaining about their lack of economic and political options. Fernández touches on reasons why the issue of race commands marginal attention in Cuba today:

“The total picture of race in Cuba has been left half-painted by neglecting the crucial realm of lived, subjective, quotidian experience that in the literature on race relations in Cuba, has been pushed into the margins” (1996, 101).

Interestingly, the lack of a meaningful discourse on issues of race during the revolutionary period mirrors in many ways a similar situation blacks encountered during the first years of Cuban “independence” from Spain in the early years of the twentieth century. Due to the late date of abolition in Cuba, many Cubans had experienced the institution of slavery first-hand when the island first won its independence from Spain in 1902. Unfortunately, the experience of Cuba’s former slaves was similar to that of others throughout the region and the deeply seated experiences of racism that accompanied the slave era were not easily overcome by

Afro-Cubans, even after years of independence. In these early post-colonial years, as later, in the aftermath of the Castro-led revolutionary period, patriotism and nationalism ran at a fever pitch leading blacks to expect that the end of colonialism would mean an improvement in their lives. They would become full-fledged Cubans, thereby leaving behind their status as second-class citizens of the Spanish empire. However, the actual circumstances of racial segregation and inequality remained so severe that it sparked a major race riot in 1912, as noted above. Further, as de la Fuente has noted about the early 20th century,

“No opportunity seemed to be open for blacks to be *Afro* and *Cuban* at the same time. Any possibility for blacks to voice their specific grievances and discontent was explicitly rejected as un-Cuban and un-patriotic” (1998, 44-45).

This opportunity is still lacking today as blacks are taught that voicing their grievances and discontent is not merely un-Cuban and un-patriotic, it is “counter-revolutionary” and therefore against the law of the state.

The issue of racism in Cuba is as thorny as in most countries, although for arguably different reasons. To begin, as mentioned above, race remains a “hidden” issue in Cuba. As one source notes, “[During the revolutionary period] race itself disappeared from public political discourse, mentioned only in regard to developments in other countries” (de la Fuente 1998, 2). Widespread claims of racism in Cuba would call into question the moral underpinnings of the revolution (which, after all, stands for equality) and the regime does not tolerate criticism at that level. In the summer of 1965 in an interview with American journalist Lee Lockwood, Castro noted, “Discrimination (in Cuba) disappeared when class

privileges disappeared, and it has not cost the revolution much effort to resolve that problem” (Lockwood 1990, 114). Castro further asserts that the capitalist class system creates racial discrimination, thus: “in Cuba, the exploitation of man by man has disappeared, and racial discrimination has disappeared, too” (1990, 216). Taylor underscores this sentiment by noting that in the Second Declaration of Havana (February 4, 1962) Cuba was “solemnly recorded as having suppressed discrimination due to race” (1988, 20).

The choice of wording in the sentence just quoted merits emphasis. I argue here that while revolutionary leaders duly acknowledged racial discrimination as a serious historical problem in Cuba, and addressed it as such, in reality it was the *issue* of race that the government suppressed, as opposed to racism itself. After all, the official party line reinforces the idea that race is ultimately of little significance in a proper socialist system: all Cubans are “100 percent *Cubano*” or, in effect, all the same³⁹. To support this assertion, the Castro regime often invokes the writings of José Martí, the thinker who effectively dismissed race as a major issue by declaring that Cuba “was more than white, more than brown, and more than black.” (Taylor 1988, 20-21). After the Revolution, former Foreign Minister Raul Roa, crowed that “The Cuban Revolution has complied fully with José Martí’s legacy” (Ibid.)

While the government denounced racism as counter-revolutionary, and denied its existence, Carlos Moore, an Afro-Cuban currently living in the United States, believes that Castro made every effort to conceal from Cubans the actual racial make-up of the island (1988, 359). Cuba’s racial profile is said to have changed greatly

³⁹ “100 percent Cubano” is a reference to a campaign in the late 1990s designed to express and bolster solidarity among Cubans (Fernandez 1999, 83-84).

during the Castro era due mainly to the widespread emigration of white Cubans. Following Castro's 1959 victory, the government placed a total ban on gathering and reporting demographic data on race due to its supposedly "subversive" nature (Ibid.). While officials reversed this stance for the 1981 census,⁴⁰ the actual number of non-whites in Cuba (including Afro-Cubans, *mulattos* and others such as people of Chinese descent) has been widely disputed. Estimates of the actual number of Afro-Cubans and *mulattos* vary greatly: according to the 1981 census, 33.9 of the population is "non-white," but most agree that over 50 percent of the population falls under this category (see Moore 1988, 15 and del Aguila 1994, 6), while some believe the figure could be as high as 70 percent (Pérez-Sarduy and Stubbs 2000, 7). According to the World Factbook, 2002, Cuba's ethnic composition is as follows: Mulatto: 51 percent, White: 37 percent, Black: 11 percent, Chinese: 1 percent, meaning that 63 percent of the population is non-white (Cuba "People" table).

Moore (1988, 359) asserts that Castro continues a pro-white policy that has been followed historically in Cuba. Castro does so to conceal the fact that Afro-Cubans and *mulattos* make up the majority in the country for fear of white disaffection, particularly among the working class and peasantry that Moore regards as traditionally prejudiced. In 1934, an Afro-Cuban observer wrote, "In Cuba a pro-white policy is enacted in every field of national life and one of the methods of such a policy is to classify mulattoes as white in the census" (Urrutia as quoted in Moore 1988, 357). In 1966, Fidel Castro reportedly told foreign journalists that "African

⁴⁰ The 1981 census is the latest one to be released by the government (Howell 2001). A more recent census was taken in September 2002 and the results have not been released as of this writing.

blood flows through the veins of half of Cuba's population," a point that was not reported in the Cuban press (Urrutia as quoted in Moore 1988, 357).

Despite his efforts to downplay the role of race in revolutionary Cuban society, it would be wrong to assume that Castro attempted to entirely squelch Afro-Cuban identity with his rhetoric on racism in the revolution. On the contrary, while the regime consistently denies people of color the opportunity to voice their racial concerns openly, the government has allowed for various expressions of Afro-Cuban cultural traditions, including, eventually, the right to openly practice santería (after initially suppressing it). Also, the government established an African Study Center that focuses on African contributions to Cuban society (Eckstein 1994, 25).

Santería (meaning saint worship) draws from Roman Catholicism and traditional African religions, primarily the Lucumí religion of the African Yoruba tribes (Baker 2000, 111). The popular conception is that all Cubans are superstitious and as such are true believers in santería. The Castro regime views the promotion of Afro-Cuban culture as a mark of nationality, and thus as entirely consistent with efforts to promote Cuban nationalism.⁴¹ However, as Eckstein has noted, santería worship often functioned as a form of cultural resistance in Cuban history, dating back to the period of slavery (1994, 16). In the early years of the revolution, Castro, aware of the wider implications of its symbolism, actively drew from santería to attract supporters. Indeed, rebel leaders asked *santeros* (priests) who supported the rebellion to place protections on the rebel army. Eckstein parallels the rise in santería

⁴¹ The Castro regime is also keen to tap into the "heritage tourism" market segment and therefore santería and Afro-Cuban art and music are promoted to tourists seeking an "authentic" experience with an exotic Cuban "other."

in the Special Period with a growing resistance movement; in this case, however, the target of resistance is the Castro regime, itself (Ibid.). The increasing prevalence of *santería* coincides with rising attendance at both Catholic and Protestant services, supporting the notion that people seek solace in engrained belief systems during periods of stress (see Scarpaci, Segre and Coyula 2002, 308 for more discussion on the rise of religion during the Special Period).

Race has returned as a focal point of popular culture, particularly in the arena of arts and music. In recent years, Cuban hip-hop, rap and traditional music such as *son*, *trova* and *danzon* has replaced the socialist folk music (*Nueva Trova*) of luminaries such as Silvio Rodríguez and Pablo Milanes, artists whose music dates to the 1960s. The success of the movie and soundtrack Buena Vista Social Club, conceptualized and produced by American musician Ry Cooder, led to a revival of traditional Afro-Cuban music at home and abroad. According to Joseph Scarpaci, music from the soundtrack is supplanting the ubiquitous Cuban folk song “Guantanamera” as the standard tourist fare performed by Cuban musicians (Scarpaci, personal communication, April 2003). According to *Granma*, the official organ of the Revolution, the success of Buena Vista Social Club may lead to the survival of Cuban *son* (Castañeda 2001). Indeed, Cooder was responsible for reviving the careers of Cuban musicians such as 90-year-old vocalist Compay Segundo and 76-year-old Ibriham Ferrer (Buena Vista 2003). The irony of the elderly musicians’ popularity is noteworthy since it is precisely the global mass media that brought them to the world stage. This is significant in a country whose political leadership has railed against market-driven global change.

On the other end of the age spectrum, Cuban young people reportedly favor African-American-style hip-hop and rap over more traditional Cuban music. Young Afro-Cuban artists draw from pirated hip-hop and rap recordings from the U.S. to create a distinctively Cuban form of the music that incorporates Latin rhythms. According to Krinsky (2001), hip-hop is strongest in the more marginalized sectors of Cuban society, and rappers are predominantly of African descent. In common with hip-hop movements all over the world, Cuban rap is devoted to exposing the difficulties the rappers encounter in their daily lives, particularly economic hardships and racial prejudice, thus illustrating that racial issues have found a forum among young Afro-Cubans. It is noteworthy that while the music is by nature political and is not always in line with official government policies, hip-hop and rap artists perform regularly at government sponsored concerts, a clear indication that the government has resorted to cooptation to maintain hegemonic control (Krinsky 2001).

To date, only one Cuban rap group, the Orishas, have signed with a major record label (EMI) and, although the group visits Cuba regularly, they live and record in Paris (Orishas online, 2003). The few Cuban rappers that do get a chance to record are forced to put their music onto cassettes in home studios and, because it costs more to create original instrumentals, usually record their lyrics on top of pre-recorded hip hop beats from the U.S. The sampler, the principal instrument of hip-hop musicians, is not used by the vast majority of Cuban rappers because so few are available in Cuba (Krinsky 2001).⁴² While race is discussed in some venues during the Special Period as demonstrated above, many issues surrounding day-to-day race relations in

⁴² Krinsky (2001) notes that in 2001, there were only 2 sampling machines on the whole island.

Cuba often remains below ground. However, the Castro regime sometimes plays the race card to its advantage. For example, Raul Castro (Fidel's brother and the leader of the Armed Forces, FAR), in justification for Cuba's military involvement in Africa, and particularly in Angola, stated that "As Latin Africans we Cubans had an historical debt to Africa, one of the vital roots of our nationality" (Eckstein 1994, 187). In regard to the intervention in Africa, Castro quickly grabbed the moral high ground by ascribing Cuban forays into internationalism as racial solidarity: "At Girón (the Bay of Pigs), African blood was shed, that of the selfless descendants of people who were slaves before they became workers. Angola (where Cuban blood was shed) represents an African Girón" (Castro quoted in Eckstein 1994, 186-187)⁴³.

Furthermore, Castro's embrace of Cuba's African component may signal his awareness of growing discontent on the part of Cuba's Afro-Cuban and mulatto population and his effort to indirectly address perceived racial discord on the island.

Race and the Special Period

"Something strange is happening during the Special Period. There is a revival of racism" (Anonymous Afro-Cuban woman quoted in de la Fuente 1998, 9).

Despite early efforts on the part of the revolutionary government to eradicate it, racism has never really disappeared in the hearts and minds of the people or in the workplace. In fact, policies of the Special Period along with the stress of the austerity

⁴³ Castro's stance must be viewed in the context of Cuba's active role in the promotion of communist internationalism, a role that Cuba pursued extensively during the late 1960s and early 1970s in many African hotspots including Angola.

program have led arguably to increasing incidences of racial discrimination (see Howell 2001). In her study of interracial couples in Cuba, Fernández finds that racism still reigns in intimate contexts. Her studies present a Cuban population comfortable with the maintenance of friendships and business dealings with members of different races, but but uncomfortable with interracial marriages and affective relationships. Significantly, she notes that white parents often react negatively to such relationships at a greater rate than black parents, but, black parents, as well, sometimes view interracial relationships as a form of “denying one’s roots” (Fernández 1996, 106).

Several occasions demonstrated to me that racism remains an issue in Cuba.

On numerous occasions I have heard variations of the following:

“We Cubans are not racist, but you have to watch out for the blacks (often, another more divisive term was used.) They are dishonest, thieving hustlers”.

Many were quick to note that they had black friends, thereby proving that they themselves are not racist. Many whites characterize Afro-Cubans as lazy and shiftless and those who practice santería are looked on with suspicion by whites, many of whom continue to regard the syncretic African-based religion as “uncivilized” despite its apparent acceptance by the Castro regime and, indeed, its promotion as a significant tourism draw. Indeed, many whites seemingly conflate santería with Afro-Cuban culture in general. During a tour of the Varadero Community Museum in 1997, the tour guide (a mulatta woman in her early 20s) confided in me that she greatly disliked santería and would have preferred that the museum remove all of its santería displays. Some white Cuban acquaintances

expressed surprise and revulsion when an American colleague studying santería explained her research to them. On the other hand, some whites have accepted santería as a valuable part of Cuban culture and have actively discussed aspects of the religion with me.

Interestingly, non-black Cubans employ a form of sign language to refer to Afro-Cubans in a discreet manner. The sign, composed of rubbing two forefingers over the opposite arm, indicates “*los prietos*” or those with darker skin color, a sign I have witnessed numerous times in many different contexts. Indeed, according to Scarpaci, the sign is also a signal Cubans use to request soap from tourists (Scarpaci, personal communication, April 2003). While sign language is commonly used in Cuba in quite mundane circumstances, I believe the use of sign language in Cuba is borne out of the need to communicate potentially divisive (and oft-times illegal) information in a society that tolerates very little political dissent. For example, Cubans refer silently to Fidel Castro, the so-called maximum leader, by stroking an imaginary goatee⁴⁴. The leadership class of the country is often indicated by the touching of the shoulder with two forefingers, a sign for military stripes. Sign language, therefore, has become a powerful symbol of self-expression on the part of the Cuban people and illustrates one application of the Cuban *doble moral*, the idea that people, due to fears of oppression by government agents, express views in public that they then completely disavow in private (i.e., it serves as a form of passive resistance to control). In other words, while in public, Cubans must resort to sign language and other devices in order to express their true feelings. Sign language is

⁴⁴ Castro is also referred to in conversation as *El Caballo*, (the Horse), a former term of endearment that I heard Cubans now use in a negative way.

also evidently an effective tool used by many whites to keep alive racist attitudes during a period when outright racist behavior is not tolerated by the regime.

Perhaps due to the repressive nature of the Castro regime, Cuba is home to citizens gifted in subversive discourse. In addition to sign language, Cubans employ double entendres and turns of phrase to communicate potentially dangerous criticisms of government policy and officials as well as to describe activities outside the legal parameters of the revolution. This language includes racist rhetoric. On a side note, a part-time *jinetero* in Varadero named Carlos explained that he and his friends used hand signals and a specialized vocabulary to communicate with one another when they feared the police might be monitoring their activities.

Many a well-meaning white Cuban acquaintance has issued a warning to beware the “hustlers” in the streets, almost invariably using the above-mentioned sign to indicate danger associated with darker skinned Cubans. In one instance, I was taken aback when Elena, a woman I would describe as a darker skinned mulatta, warned me to avoid *prietos* on the street by employing the same sign used by whites. It is worth noting that her husband is a white artist who owns a studio in Havana Vieja and who frequently deals with tourists. This incident may signal that Elena considers herself “whiter” (i.e., a *mulatta avanzada*) through her association with her husband (in other words she “advanced” herself via marriage to a white partner.)

Another interpretation could be that the sign has become part of the national discourse and is used synonymously with delinquent behavior that many whites, but also non-whites, believe is more prevalent among Afro-Cubans and *mulattos*. Indeed, the association of the sign with darker skin means that many Cubans view hustling as

an activity pursued by *los prietos* thereby conveniently forgetting (or failing to admit) that most Cubans regard themselves as *jineteros* in some fashion due to the demands of daily survival in the Special Period. Additionally, white Cubans frequently use dark skinned Cubans as scapegoats for many of the country's myriad problems, including a rising crime rate. This attitude has carried over into police dealings with Afro-Cubans and *mulattos* vis-à-vis the tourism industry. As Howell has noted,

“Race and tourism also intersect uncomfortably on the streets of Havana these days where police often question dark-complexioned young Cubans on the assumption that they are hustlers looking to make a dollar from tourists” (2001).

In direct contrast to interviews conducted with white Cubans where racism was often revealed through attitude and sign language, the several interviews I conducted with Afro-Cubans and *mulattos* failed to expose perceptions of problematic race relations in Cuba. In fact, a series of discussions carried out with a group of young blacks in their early 20s who lived in the Vedado neighborhood of Havana revealed a belief that racism was a greater problem in the United States than in Cuba. When pressed on this point, participants admitted that the state-run media had greatly influenced their opinions on the matter. Overall, however, the group of young Afro-Cubans believed racism to be a largely benign problem in Cuba today. It should be noted here that the interview data may have been affected by the racial position of the interviewer. In other words, since the interviewer (me) was a white American and older than the others in the group, it is possible that the interviewees were not comfortable discussing intimate issues of racism in an uninhibited manner. While I met with this particular group on several occasions including attending a

“rap” concert with them, the age and ethnic distance between us may have been a factor.

In order to explain these findings, it is useful to consider that the acceptance or denial of racism by Afro-Cubans and *mulattos* is often linked with their political beliefs. According to one source, those with a favorable impression of the socialist regime tend to underemphasize their encounters with racism while those critical of the regime will be more forthcoming or will exaggerate the existence of racism on the island (Díaz Alaya cited in Moore 1997, xi). Interestingly, the fact that the youth I interviewed live in Vedado may explain why they downplayed or denied the existence of widespread racism in their country and in their own experience. For instance, despite attempts to level living standards and promote integration, Afro-Cubans and *mulattos* continue to suffer the greatest from the increasing housing shortage on the island and they continue to be over-represented in poorer neighborhoods (de la Fuente 1998, 4). By contrast, the youth I interviewed lived among the financially better off white population of Vedado in Havana, a historically white suburb. Although they represented a minority in the neighborhood, it appeared from their interactions with white neighbors that they were generally accepted in Vedado. At least one member of the group was dating a white person who was well acquainted with the group members and who lived nearby. From my perspective, this dating arrangement seemed to meet with acceptance by the larger group of friends, although I did not conduct further study to discover the attitudes of the families of the two young people involved or to test Fernández’ findings that interracial couples are not easily accepted in Cuban society (1996, 99-117).

Castro and others have argued that in a future Castro-less Cuba, returning Cuban-Americans would attempt to re-implement racist policies. De la Fuente disputes this notion by stating that most Afro-Cubans and *mulattos* must deal with racism on a daily basis and therefore are not concerned with potential future eventualities. Further, he notes that a CID-Gallup survey conducted in Havana in 1994 revealed that only 18 percent of young Afro-Cubans believed that the white exiles would “bring racism back to the island” (de la Fuente 1998, 11). The following vignette is based on a series of semi-structured discussions with Mani, a young mulatto male in Vedado, Havana.

Personal Profile: Race and the Revolution

Mani was a long-term interview subject who identified himself as mulatto (he was lighter skinned than most in this category) and he proved to be very forthcoming in relating his lived experience in Cuba prior to and during the Special Period. In many ways, he was exceptional in that he was an ardent supporter of the revolution and a self-proclaimed active member in the local Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR), an organization that functions as both facilitator of revolutionary principles and watchdog at the neighborhood level. Interestingly, unlike most Cubans who are apt to vent their frustrations in private, Mani never uttered a word critical of the revolution. Mani is a male in his mid-20s (in 1996) and was born in the western province of Pinar del Rio but grew up in the Vedado (Havana) neighborhood where he still lives with his parents. Mani’s parents are also great supporters of the

revolution mainly, he believes, because it alleviated the poverty they experienced growing up in rural Cuba and it offered them new opportunities. His father is a retired member of the Communist Party and served in several key local positions. Mani offered two explanations for his support of the revolution. First of all, he suffered from many health problems throughout his life and was thankful for the free health care and medicines that allowed him respite from his afflictions (he was not specific about his illnesses.) Secondly, he had the chance to study electronics and to travel in the Soviet Union, an opportunity he feels would not have been available to him in the “old” Cuba. Mani felt that racism was a “minor” problem in Cuba and he was quick to note that his sister had recently been hired as a flight attendant with Cubana airlines, a highly sought-after job in the Special Period. In all, he credited the Castro regime with improving race relations in Cuba.

(Based on my conversations with Mani, June 1996).

Mani’s endorsement of Castro’s Cuba apparently stems from the direct benefits he and his family have realized as a result of opportunities made available to them by the triumph of the revolution. He regards his sister’s job with Cubana Airlines as proof that his mulatto family enjoys access to employment opportunities that might not have been available to them otherwise. Although he did not state it explicitly, Mani, like many Cubans, undoubtedly understands the potential monetary rewards he and his family might reap as a result of his sister’s job. He fails to recognize, or chooses to ignore, the deeper meaning behind his sister’s direct

involvement in the tourism industry. By all accounts, she is representative of the attractive mulatta that the Castro regime is said to be marketing to attract international tourists, many of whom are traveling to Cuba in search of sexual opportunities with women of color (see Chapter Six for more discussion on this point.)

There exist, however, much evidence that runs counter to my interview findings with people like Mani. Taylor and others have argued that, despite official rhetoric proclaiming absolute desegregation along the lines of race, Cuba's "menial" jobs continue to be the domain of black and brown Cubans. He writes, "a disproportionately large number of blacks still (perform) menial jobs as domestics, street cleaners and ditch-diggers" while "there (exists) a visible absence of blacks in supervisory positions" (Taylor 1988, 24). Indeed, in 1965 there were only 9 black or brown appointees to the 100-member Central Committee of the Communist Party, a figure that compares to the 9.3 percent of people of color voted into the Cuban Senate twenty years earlier (Taylor 1988, 24). The situation has not changed appreciably in recent years and indeed Castro himself recognized the overall lack of women and blacks in leadership positions in the country at the onset of the rectification campaign during the Third Party Congress in 1986, one of the few times he has acknowledged a problem with race or gender during the revolutionary period (Fernández 1996, 108). In a recent speech, Castro acknowledged that racial discrimination persists in Cuba, despite the island's "radical social revolution in which people were able to attain full and complete legal equality and a revolutionary level of education that cast out the subjective component of discrimination" (Castro 2003b).

There are several important economic and social indices on access to education and health care that indicate the revolution has been successful in achieving racial equality, a fact also cited by Mani. Indeed, Castro eliminated prohibitive color bars in restaurants and beaches, and discrimination based on race and gender in the workplace and theoretically allowed for comprehensive desegregation and social mobility for Cuba's Afro-Cubans and *mulattos*. According to many different criteria, the Castro regime has realized great strides in eliminating racial inequality in many sectors of society including education and health care. However, the counterpoint to this is that racial inequalities persist in other areas (including employment in tourism and in upper level administration jobs) and that a "racist mentality" continues to permeate Cuban society (see de la Fuente 1998, and Fernández 1996 for more discussion on this point). Racist practices and unequal social constructions of race remain institutionalized, a fact evident in the use of language (including the sign language mentioned above) and labels. One observer noted the case of two white psychologists who declared that Cuba was devoid of racism, but then employed the use of what Afro-Cubans regard as insensitive terms in describing Afro-Cuban features (*pasas*, meaning nappy hair, and *bemba*, meaning thick lips) (Herrera 2000, 122).

Observers have also noted an overall lack of black representation in the Cuban media that has remained consistent throughout the revolutionary period. Taylor commented that a 1967 issue of *Mujeres* (a Cuban women's magazine) sported forty-eight pages of fashion photographs and not a single one portrayed a black woman (1988, 26). This lack of representation was echoed by Clytus, an African-American

who visited the island in the late 1960s and who wrote “In the streets, I looked at magazine covers and saw whites; I looked at newspapers and books and saw whites” (1970, 24). Fernández notes that Cuban television, long recognized by Castro as an important medium for interfacing with (some would say controlling) the population remains largely un-integrated:

“TV images don’t correspond with the achievements of the revolution. Blacks are not represented on TV. This doesn’t reflect the level of education achieved by blacks, their acting talent, etc. Recently, the Cuban comic Alexis Valdes made a joke saying that when TV was first developed it was in black and white. Then technology kept advancing and produced TV in color, but now here in Cuba we have TV in white only because we don’t see blacks anywhere” (1996, 110).

Knight, an Afro-Cuban actor, echoes this sentiment: “There are no black TV directors, no black presenters, there’s no collective of black actors in current programming, and so Cuban TV is white” (2000, 111).

Contrary to my interview findings, there is evidence of a growing desire to acknowledge race-based problems on the part of many *mulattos* and Afro-Cubans. Pérez-Sarduy and Stubbs have attempted to establish a debate on racial issues by publishing interviews with prominent Afro-Cubans that deal explicitly with the theme of race. Pedro Pérez-Sarduy is an Afro-Cuban writer and journalist currently living London and Jean Stubbs is a white British social historian who lives in the United States. Both maintain strong ties with the island and they have published two books on race (1993, 2000) that have been widely read in Cuba and abroad. Their goal for each book has been to provide a forum for Afro-Cubans living on the island. In their book, Afro-Cuban Voices (2000), they identified three broad contemporary race-

based points of contention that they believe should be acknowledged and corrected by the Castro regime.

First, they note a growing tendency of white Cubans to “blame the victim” as more and more blacks are out-of-work and are forced into illegal activities (such as *jineterismo*). Afro-Cuban and mulatta sex workers are in high demand by Canadian and European travelers who seek the “exotic other,” a state of affairs that upsets many white Cubans⁴⁵. Taylor believes that some whites project their racism through the lens of revolutionary mores when they criticize blacks who they believe fail to live up to revolutionary expectations. He writes,

“White Cubans can get very excited—really wild—about black counter-revolutionary (activity). Where black individuals in Cuba become immersed in antisocial activity, it appears to merely (give) white racists an opportunity to massage their sentiments” (1988, 27).

The tendency by whites to severely criticize blacks when they voice dissent is partially rooted in the idea that Afro-Cubans and *mulattos* have no right to criticize the regime since they are thought to have benefited most from Castro’s policies. The growing significance of the black market during the Special Period has also fueled the disparaging perceptions of darker-skinned Cubans in that they are increasingly identified as delinquents and black market operators (Fernández 1996, 113). This trend is reflected in reports that people of color make up proportionally higher numbers of Cuba’s citizens jailed for petty offenses (Pérez-Sarduy and Stubbs 2000, 7). Furthermore, non-whites are reported to represent over 78 percent of all individuals who are labeled “counter-revolutionary” and hence socially dangerous; de

⁴⁵ This point will be discussed in Chapter Five.

la Fuente calculated that blacks were declared to be socially dangerous 7.6 times more than whites and 3.4 times more than *mulattos* (de la Fuente 1998, 5).

The second point of contention according to Pérez-Sarduy and Stubbs is the appropriation of Afro-Cuban culture by the Castro regime. While Afro-Cubans are increasingly stigmatized as criminals, the predominantly white leadership draws extensively from Afro-Cuban culture and legitimizes its actions in the name of *mestizaje* (2000, 7). Indeed, the appropriation of Afro-Cuban symbols and culture ranges from producing and selling artwork with Afro-Cuban themes to the marketing of santería in an effort to promote “cultural” or heritage tourism. Cuba has also been quick to market Afro-Cuban music, such as Salsa, to international audiences. The authors believe that the marketing of Afro-Cuban culture is exploitive of Cuban people of color since they tend not to share in the proceeds of profits realized from the appropriation of their culture (Ibid.). The government’s appropriation of Afro-Cuban culture for profit further supports the Gramscian assertion that hegemony is maintained by recruiting the support through manipulation, rather than by forceful action.

The third, though contentious, point noted by Pérez-Sarduy and Stubbs is the lack of an outlet for Afro-Cubans to “articulate a black perspective,” one that would allow for increasing discussion and analysis of particular race-based themes (2000, 8). In other words, they support removing the veil of silence imposed by the Castro regime on those desiring to openly discuss racial matters. They believe this issue is all the more important because Cuba’s racial problems during the Special Period are directly linked to historical and demographic patterns. On the one hand, despite a

reported 63 percent non-white population, the top leadership positions in Cuba continue to be held by white Cuban males as was discussed earlier. Furthermore, non-white Cubans complain that they lack the ability to earn dollars legally since they have limited access to the remittances from relatives abroad that many white Cubans enjoy and they are under-represented in the legal tourism sector.

Remittances entering the island from Cuban émigrés fall mostly into the hands of white Cubans since only 10 percent of the total Cuban diaspora is reported to be black or mulatto (Page 2002). Since 1995, when United States President Clinton permitted Cubans living in the United States to send remittances, Cubans have received up to \$1 billion. The value of remittances to the island, therefore, is one reason why Cuba has become polarized along the lines of people who have relations abroad, and those who do not. In accordance with the demographic profile of the Cubans living abroad, the beneficiaries are overwhelmingly white.

Another indication of discrimination is that Afro-Cubans lack representation in the tourist industry. The Cuban government is quick to blame foreign managers for the dearth of Afro-Cubans in tourism-related jobs (Howell 2001). However, my analysis of government-produced tourism-related literature points to a marked absence of Afro-Cubans in jobs of importance in the tourism industry. In fact, the two most frequent characterizations of Afro-Cubans in the tourist literature are as entertainers or tobacco rollers. Chapter Six examines this point through a quantitative and qualitative analysis of Cuban tourism literature that will substantiate these assertions and further contextualize representations of race during the Special Period.

In sum, there is as yet no substantial public discourse on race and race-related issues in Cuba and it is likely to remain so for the fore-seeable future. Yet, race is, in fact, a complex issue in Cuba and while one can point to many ways that Afro-Cubans and *mulattos* have benefited under Castro's Revolution, nonetheless, the strains of the Special Period have given rise to growing racial faultlines. As will be discussed below, both gender and race are issues that have not been fully addressed under Castro's rule. When they have been addressed, gender equity policies, as well as policies aimed at racial equity, have garnered mixed results.

Gendered Spaces: Women in Revolutionary Cuba

“The Revolution has brought women out of the home and into the ‘streets’ of the political and economic life of the nation. It has offered new and abundant goals, values and rewards for Cuban women and has given them a new sense of dignity and worth” (Padula and Smith 1985, 79).

“Women can be free only to the extent that they commit themselves first and foremost to the revolution” (Fidel Castro, 1977)⁴⁶

Following Castro's victory in 1959, Cuba, in an effort to gain support for the revolution, embarked on a multi-faceted program that purported to support the advancement of women as part of a greater effort to institutionalize the revolution. Referred to by Castro as the “revolution within the revolution,” the regime pursued policies that actively encouraged women to participate fully in revolutionary institutions. To achieve this end, the regime preached that in order to achieve

⁴⁶ Quoted in Bunck 1994, 89.

equality at the home and workplace, it was necessary for women to become active in institutional bodies such as the Federation of Cuban Women (*Federación de Mujeres Cubanas* or FMC) and the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR).⁴⁷ In fact, the FMC was given the key task of coordinating the institutionalization of socialist ideals among Cuban women (I discuss the FMC in greater detail below). However, the economic strains of the Special Period have led to shifts in the roles of women, a state of affairs made evident in changing employment patterns and also in the representations of women in the tourism literature (discussed in Chapters Five and Six).

The conflicting construction of gender in Cuba can be said to reside in Fidel Castro, himself. Castro symbolizes the state of gender relationships in the country in that he is concurrently the country's leading self-proclaimed "socialist feminist"⁴⁸ who claims to advocate gender equality at all levels, but he is also the bearded patriarch or *caudillo* who represents and encourages the "macho" attitudes of Cuban revolutionary culture (Smith and Padula 1988, 150). The *caudillo*, or strongman, is a key feature of leadership across Latin American societies. In this sense, Castro is simply the latest in a long line of military dictators in the region who have assumed the position at the forefront of a macho society.

Castro's desire to fight the "revolution within the revolution," a euphemism for a supposed quest for gender equality in socialist Cuba, might seem at odds with

⁴⁷ The CDR was established as a neighborhood level organization that primarily focused on surveillance but was also a means to disperse government directives in a quick and efficient manner. Local CDRs also organized neighborhood social activities.

⁴⁸ The term "socialist feminist" as used here is not to be confused with self-proclaimed socialists seeking to develop a political theory based on gender (see Dominguez 1987, 12-13).

his role as *caudillo*. While some would argue (as I will below) that true gender equality has evaded Cuban women, Castro realized that he required their support if he intended to remain in power. With that point in mind, the Castro government has crafted laws requiring men to aid gainfully employed women with housework through the Family Code of 1975 (Código de Familia, 1975). Additionally, the Constitution of 1976 was amended to officially guarantee women equal rights in terms of marriage, employment, earnings, education, and sex discrimination became punishable by imprisonment (Constitución de la Republica de Cuba 1976, artículos 42 & 43; Eckstein 1994, 43). The Castro government has undoubtedly improved the status of women in many regards: greater access to higher education, greater employment opportunities, and improved health and childcare options, just to list a few. At the same time, however, the government has been accused of thwarting the advancement of women in the workplace through limiting access into high status fields of employment. More recently, the Castro regime has been charged with cynically exploiting Cuba's young women as sex workers to draw tourism to the embattled country. As I will argue in the remainder of this chapter, the evidence points to a decidedly mixed record for gender relations in revolutionary Cuba.

Some have been critical of the regime's top-down approach to dealing with gender issues: "There [have been] many disappointments in Cuban women's struggle for equality. A central dilemma was the failure [of policy makers] to consider adequately the implications of women's domestic responsibilities" (Smith and Padula 1996, 185). Despite key female revolutionary figures such as Vilma Espín, Raul Castro's former wife and appointed leader of the FMC and Celia Sánchez, Castro's

key aide and confidant, the architects of Castroism were, and continue to be, overwhelmingly male. Women in top positions, like Espín who was admitted into the Pultiburo in the 1970s, generally have strong personal connections to Fidel Castro either as family members or trusted revolutionary compatriots. Most have found it difficult to gain entry into highly visible and lucrative jobs. Indeed, as Smith and Padula assert, “women were expected to be loyal implementers or grateful recipients of the male-determined revolutionary program. Women’s concerns were viewed as peripheral” despite governmental claims to the contrary (1996, 23). As with their male and Afro-Cuban counterparts, women who disagreed too strongly with the government-prescribed role for women were labeled counter-revolutionary and faced prison and exile for their beliefs.

In Cuba, ideas about gender, much like those surrounding race, are steeped in the Marxist tradition that capitalism and colonialism create the conditions for gender inequality. Once socialism is in place, Cuban officials have argued, gender equality will follow automatically. This idea follows the thinking of Marx and Gramsci who also asserted that hegemony was linked with capitalism. However, as was demonstrated with the issue of race in the discussion above, a simple pronouncement on the part of the government is insufficient to effect real change. Despite equalization efforts and strong government support to the contrary, gender equality continues to elude Cuban women, as it does in most every country around the world. Lingering gender-biased attitudes held by the Cuban leadership and the general populace, coupled with the economic realities of the Special Period, are among the chief causes. It is also important to understand, however, that unlike the issue of

racism, which the government treats at times as a non-issue because it was seen as already eliminated by socialism, the role of women has been subject to continual re-examination by the Castro regime. Alvarez, a student of Cuban film, believes the government's stance on race and gender finds expression in the Cuban film industry.

He writes,

“If it is true that the Cuban cinema of the Revolution has neglected to represent the participation of black figures in the process of social change, one cannot say the same about the representations of women and their contribution, integration, and dialogue with the Cuban Revolution” (Alvarez 2000, 115-116).

In fact, the passage of the Family Code in 1975 (discussed in more detail below) was a result of a major shift in policy by the regime and represented, in part, a belief that men needed legal “encouragement” to accept the government's view that the status of women had changed during the course of the revolution. Its passage also pointed to lingering problems surrounding the perception of revolutionary gender roles because some Cuban women as well as government officials worried about lagging female employment rates, climbing divorce rates and the side-effects, such as increasing rates of juvenile delinquency, associated with a supposed weakened family structure.

While the societal effects of the Family Code remain debatable, its passage into law speaks to a keen awareness of the importance of women's roles in Castro's revolution. In a more recent example, debate has swirled around the issue of young women engaging in sex work with tourists. However, as will be discussed in Chapter Five, much of the debate has been focused on sex work as a form of illegal capitalism, rather than as a phenomenon that exploits women, or as an immoral act, per se.

In this section, I examine Cuba's gender constructions as a part of the evolution of Castro's unique form of socialism. I focus particularly on women's shifting roles as well as the government's shifting perceptions of gender roles during the revolution. I argue that women in many ways have borne the brunt of austerity in the Special Period in that they have suffered greater job losses and exploitation, even as their duties to provide for families during a period of increasingly undependable state support increased. Indeed, the Special Period has signaled yet another shift in gender constructions and in the role of the family unit, as Cubans adjust to the diminishing ability of the state to meet basic demands.

Gender Relations in Pre-Revolutionary Cuba and the Rise of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC)

To set the context for this section, one must consider first the gender constructions associated with the pre-revolutionary period. Many have argued that women in pre-revolutionary Cuba, as a group, were among the more advanced of Latin America (see Smith and Padula 1996 and Pérez-Stable 1987). By the 1930s, Cuban women had been enfranchised, were guaranteed employment in certain sectors of the economy, and despite the opposition of the Catholic Church, were protected by advanced maternity and divorce laws⁴⁹ (Pérez-Stable 1987, 53). Some Cuban women also benefited from health care provisions that allowed Cuba to boast some of the best

⁴⁹ Between Cuban independence from Spain and the advent of Castro's revolution, the Catholic Church was considered weaker in Cuba than in other Latin American countries in part because of continuing animosity regarding its support of Spain during the drive for independence and also because of the moderating influence of Cuba's close neighbor, the United States.

health statistics in the Latin American region. This was true despite uneven distribution of services between urban and rural locales and between Hispanic and Afro-Cubans (Smith 1989, 170). Furthermore, according to the 1953 census, women were well represented in Cuban schools and prior to the revolution female literacy rates were higher than those for males (78.4 percent and 74.1 percent respectively) (Pérez-Stable 1987, 53).

Nonetheless, gender disparities remained, especially among rural (and particularly Afro-Cuban and mulatto) people, in that there was uneven distribution of resources and services leading to lower education rates and reduced or non-existent access to proper health care for women. Additionally, despite government job guarantees, women were over-represented in low status jobs (fully 25 percent of economically active women were employed as domestic servants) while few achieved positions in higher status business and government jobs (Pérez-Stable 1987, 53). As mentioned above, this continues to present a problem to the current administration where there are few women in positions of power in the country.

In traditional Iberian fashion, Cuba was divided along strict lines of gender whereby *la casa*, the home, was the domain of the women and *la calle*, or street was considered male-dominated space. Women who worked outside of the home were often stigmatized as lower class, since freedom from the economic need to work outside the home was viewed by society as proof of middle or upper class status. While Cuban women (and even men such as José Martí, the Cuban poet and revolutionary) had challenged this colonial mindset, it was not until independence was achieved from Spain that women's roles began to change substantially and more

women sought employment outside of the house. Smith and Padula believe that the impetus came from greater contact and exchange with the United States. Under U.S. governmental coaxing, education (for both genders) was guaranteed in the constitution of 1901 and Cuban teachers began to receive training in the United States. This investment in education paid off by increasing female literacy from 42 percent in 1899 to 61 percent in 1919 to 78.4 percent in 1953 (Smith and Padula 1996, 14-15). United States involvement in Cuba also led to the importation of typewriters and sewing machines and U.S.-owned companies were among the first to hire Cuban women as typists and sewing experts. Additionally, Cuban women found employment in Cuba's U.S.-controlled telephone and telegraph companies; by 1953, over nine thousand women had jobs in this sector alone (Smith and Padula 1996, 14-15).

Despite revolutionary rhetoric that spoke of the need to free women from the oppression of Cuba's pre-revolutionary capitalism system, Cuban women were generally more advanced than their Latin American colleagues. Further, the country was home to several women's organizations, such as the *Club Feminino* formed in 1917 that helped provide the political clout to eventually bring Cuban women the vote and to push for other improvements for women (Stoner 1991, 57-60). However, when Castro took control in 1959, he could point to some glaring problems that women continued to face. On the eve of the revolution in 1959, women constituted only seventeen percent of the labor force while over 60 percent of the small number of women in professional jobs were employed as nurses and teachers (Bunck 1994, 91-92). Additionally, Afro-Cuban women faced strong discrimination and most were

not allowed to obtain front-office jobs such as bank tellers and sales counter representatives (Smith and Padula 1996, 20).

In an effort to bring women “into the revolutionary fold,” and ostensibly address many of the above concerns, Castro established the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) in 1960 to institutionalize the gender revolution. The key reason for the establishment of the FMC was to mobilize female support for the revolution and recruiters were sent house-to-house to convince or otherwise “cajol” women into joining the FMC and other revolutionary organizations. While membership has waxed and waned throughout the revolution (reportedly peaking in 1977 with a membership of over 80 percent of Cuban women over the age of thirteen), more than half of Cuban women are purported to belong to the organization today (Pérez-Sarduy and Stubbs 2000, 11). One observer notes that in the early 1990s the FMC publications, *Muchachas* and *Mujeres*, had been suspended and there was talk of disbanding the organization (Padula 1996, 228). Nevertheless, the FMC continues to maintain a headquarters and to remain a functioning revolutionary organization.

Nonetheless, it must be explicitly noted that issues of discrimination were clearly a secondary concern to the leadership. In fact, FMC Director Vilma Espín openly asked, “Why do we have to have a women’s organization? I had never been discriminated against [under the Castro regime]. I had my career as a chemical engineer. I never suffered. I never had difficulty” (Espín as quoted in Smith and Padula 1996, 36). The FMC under Espín focused not on discrimination per se but on literacy campaigns and the drive to develop a national day care system in 1961.

The literacy campaigns of the early 1960s were an effective means to bring previously uneducated women into the fold of the revolution. In remote parts of the country, girls were admitted to schools (many for the first time) along with their brothers and were often taught by young female teachers recruited from Havana.⁵⁰ By 1974, an estimated 73 percent of all Cuban women had reached the sixth grade level while only 55 percent of males reached that milestone (Padula and Smith 1985, 82-83). The campaigns were successful insofar as they were able to reach women and men who had been neglected under previous regimes. Indeed, in an effort to raise and equalize living standards across the island and to garner national support for the revolution, the Castro regime sent an army of teachers and technicians into rural areas, particularly in the east. The accomplishments of Castro's revolution as viewed from a perspective of spatial equality is summed up well by Eckstein:

Castro created a cradle-to-grave welfare state for all Cubans, including the rural and urban poor previously excluded from social programs. Life expectancy rose, infant mortality declined, medical and educational facilities and services expanded, ... and rural/urban inequities diminished considerably (1994:204-205).

In an effort to equalize living standards across Cuban space, the FMC was also instrumental in the creation of the Ana Betancourt School for Peasant Women. The school was given the use of the Havana Hilton to house peasant girls who were schooled in the academic basics as well as trained in such fields as sewing, basic health care and personal hygiene (Bunck 1994, 94-96). These efforts at educating the youth of the country were thinly disguised means of inculcating the first generation of

⁵⁰ Smith and Padula report that over 70,000 literacy workers, most of them from western Cuba, were involved in the campaign (1996, 37)

revolutionaries with the basics of socialism. Part of this process was to decrease the amount of time young people spent at home with their parents, as Castro sought to dominate the development process of Cuban children. Overall, the revolutionary government made every effort to reach out to women who comprised a previously neglected segment of society. This gendered focus was part of a larger effort to bring up living standards in the rural provinces that Castro counted as the core of his support.

The FMC was also instrumental in helping to establish a national day care system (known as the *circulos infantiles*) to aid working mothers, since, despite advances in gender equality, child care was and continues to be considered the job of the women in the household (the mothers, grandmothers and older sisters of the children). Indeed, according to an FMC spokeswoman, the day care centers were created “to allow women to enter the work force liberated from their traditional roles” (Serra quoted in Bunck 1994, 97). According to one source, the government moved quickly to build day care centers and that by the mid 1980s, the country boasted six times as many centers as in the early 1960s (Eckstein 1994, 43). However, as discussed in the Chapter Two, the lack of dependable day care centers continues to be a problem for working Cuban women and the nation was never able to build enough to satisfy demand.

It is important to realize that day care centers were viewed by the Castro regime as a means to separate children from the home values that were incompatible with those of the leadership (Bunck 1994, 97). As Dalton notes, because day care centers and boarding schools were available, “parents were expected to devote more

time to voluntary activities that contributed to socialist development rather than to individualistic endeavors rooted in the nuclear family” (1993, 64). Therefore, day care centers were part of the larger plan to deliberately weaken the family structure while strengthening the role of the state in people’s lives: “The political education of children had joined sexual equality as a chief rationale for the child-care centers” (Bunck 1994, 37).

The view of the Castro regime that it was the government’s role to replace the family as the “primary agent of socialization” was at odds with traditional Cuban society where the family was considered a strong institution whose autonomy was protected by governmental and Church policy (Dalton 1993, 64). Castro believed that in order to be successful his revolution needed not only the support of women (and Afro-Cubans, for that matter), but control of their “reproductive” capabilities, as well. Reproduction in this context has to be understood not simply as the biological reproduction of infants, but in the wider context of perpetual renewal of society. This includes not only the raising of children, but the maintenance of social systems, in this case the provision of cradle to grave care for all Cuban citizens (Pearson 1997, 678-679). In paternalistic fashion, Castro sought to become the “father of the people,” so to speak, and in the process sought to transfer most of the functions (and the associated loyalties) of the family into the fold of the state. This is one reason that from the early years of the revolution children and young adults were separated from their parents and were sent to be educated at boarding schools and agricultural camps.

By the early 1970s, the Castro regime began to question the efficacy of its goal to control many of the functions associated with the traditional Cuban family.

As a result of policies focused on separating youth from the potentially “counter-revolutionary” influence of their parents and grandparents, the family came to be viewed as an institution in crisis. This crisis arose, in part, because the state accomplished its goal too well: the family had been supplanted by the state in its role as the primary reproductive agent of society. Castro pointed to various data to verify the charges that the state was failing in its role to better socialize the nation’s youth. By 1969, only 46 percent of students who had enrolled in first grade were able to finish sixth grade despite extensive educational reforms (Bunck 1994, 41). Delinquency rates also increased and minors were said to have committed over 40 percent of all crimes in Cuba, a figure above pre-revolutionary numbers. Castro summed up his feelings on the matter thusly, “Many young people are neither working nor studying. No parent has the right to permit his son (sic) to be an idler, a vagabond, a future delinquent (Castro 1967; Bunck 1994, 41-42).

The Family Code (Law 1289: *Código de Familia*) of 1975 was passed to address the problems just listed and the regime attempted to re-focus energy on the family unit. The following passage from the Code highlights the key parental responsibilities according to the Castro regime:

Keeping the children under their guardianship and care; making every possible effort to provide them with a stable home and adequate nourishment; caring for their health and personal hygiene; providing them with the means of recreation fitting their age which are within their possibilities; giving them proper protection; seeing to their good behavior; and cooperating with authorities in trying to overcome any situation or environmental factor that may have unfavorable effect on their training and development (Código de Familia 1975; Dalton 1993, 65).

While the new law mandated that men participate equally in household chores, it remained clear that men were not expected to actually change their traditional gender roles (Safa 1995, 37-38). For example, Cuban women are persuaded to enter traditionally male-oriented fields such as engineering, but men were not encouraged to staff day care facilities or become nurses (Smith and Padula 1988, 157). Nor have men followed the letter of the Family Code Law that behooves them to assist with household chores. According to most sources, overwhelmingly, household labor continues to be performed by women (see Smith and Padula 1996 and Safa 1995, et al). Padula and Smith illustrate this point with the following comment: “No member of the revolutionary elite has ever been photographed doing the laundry. One party official agreed to do the laundry but not to hang it outside. Suppose the neighbors saw him” (Padula and Smith 1985, 87).

Just as Afro-Cubans have enjoyed some benefits of the revolution, Cuban women as a whole, though undoubtedly witnessed improvements in their status as a result of revolutionary projects. Nonetheless, much evidence suggests little has changed in the traditional female space, *la casa*. While the Family Code was designed to correct problems such as rising divorce rates, increasing rates of delinquency among the Cuban youth, and the lack of domestic support to very Cuban women, in reality, the increasing demands frequently fell on the shoulders of the women it was designed to help, many of whom were already working double days. The following passage illustrates the pressure foisted on Cuban women by the leaders of the revolution:

“The revolution has put great pressure on Cuban women, who are now called upon to excel at work, to volunteer, to study, to participate in sports and politics, and to raise families- to be super women” (Padula and Smith 1985, 79-80).

The status of Cuban women in many ways mirrors that of their compatriots in the former Soviet bloc countries and China where communist regimes, despite rhetoric that embellished gender equality, actually increased women’s workloads through their policies (Attwood 2001, 158; Curtin 1975, 53-54). Ilič notes that the Bolsheviks originally passed labor laws to protect women from the worst excesses of industrial employment in the early 1920s. However, the “economic imperatives” of the drive to industrialize Russia led to the eventual retraction of those laws by the early 1930s and as a result, women began logging longer hours at the workplace (Ilič 2001, 139 & 154). The Soviets, like the Cubans, officially advocated the emancipation of women, but the result was that the “new Soviet woman” had a more complex set of tasks than her counterpart, the “new Soviet man.” She was expected to perform at a high level at the workplace and then again at home and she was to “embody the different and often contradictory qualities and traits which were supposedly appropriate to each of these spheres” (Attwood 2001, 158). The end goal of the communist regimes was not the promotion of gender equality but rather the rapid push for women’s assimilation into the world of men (the public sphere) through the application of “ancillary” changes (such as the provision of day care) to accommodate the demand for female labor (Attwood 2001, 158). While often veiled in revolutionary rhetoric (i.e., the “revolution within the revolution”), the end result was that the public sphere remained under the control of men while women were

expected to administer the private sphere (*la casa*) while participating at lesser status in the wider economic and political domain.

Overall, policy in Cuba, as in the Soviet Union, indicates that neither regime took seriously efforts to realize true gender equality. In fact, passage of the Family Code in 1975, for all of its fanfare, did little to change gender constructions since men were never widely encouraged to pursue traditional “women’s work” either at home or in the workplace despite occasional exhortations to the contrary. At the same time, women were discouraged from pursuing higher status employment, such as managerial positions, due to both official policy and the refusal of their male co-workers to support such actions. The basic assumptions that legitimized a continuing sexual division of labor were left unchallenged by the regime, “above all the notions surrounding the female as mother and the absolute primacy of biological functions” (Bengelsdorf cited in Smith and Padula 1996, 140).

The problems associated with fulfilling the role of Cuban “superwoman” of the revolution are well portrayed in many Cuban films of the Castro era including *Lucía* (1968), *Portrait of Teresa (Retrato de Teresa)* (1978), and *Up to a Certain Point (Hasta cierto punto)* (1983) (Alvarez 2000, 117). In the film, *Portrait of Teresa*, by Cuban director Pastor Vega, the protagonist, an intelligent and educated mother of three children, is a factory worker who is pressured to “volunteer” her services to a local theater group in the evenings after work. Her husband adamantly opposes her added responsibilities and demands his dinner on time while refusing to assist with household tasks. The film highlights many of the problems facing couples in this situation. For example, Teresa is forced to lobby for increased day care facilities and

against proposed plan to charge for day care. In order to cope, she begins taking tranquilizers to help her through her busy schedule and her husband's verbal abuse. In the end, the couple drifts towards divorce despite the pleas of Teresa's mother who urges her to quit her job and spend more time at home. Teresa's refusal to follow this advice underlines the major theme of the film, namely that women's fulfillment lies in activities outside the traditional female space in Latin American society, the home. Her mother represents the old-fashioned housewife who seeks to maintain the pre-revolutionary status quo while Teresa's husband is an unbending macho figure who is portrayed as out of touch with Cuba's revolutionary changes and pursuits. While clearly conflicted, Teresa in the end seems to find satisfaction in her newly found independence from her tradition-bound relatives (see discussion in Padula and Smith 1985). The conflict between the public and private sphere that Teresa encounters in the film is aptly summed up by Smith and Padula, "Parents were chided for a merely 'pro forma' participation in public activities at the same time that they were being denounced as 'neglectful' for putting their public life ahead of their families" (1996, 164).

The increased personal stress associated with the revolution is noted in climbing divorce rates that rose from 8.5 percent in 1959 to over 30 percent by 1974 (Padula and Smith 1985, 84). Birth rates also dropped to "below replacement level" due to the increased availability of birth control and improved health care coupled with the nationwide housing shortage and the new roles for women (Padula and Smith 1985, 84). The added stress of the Special Period has also contributed to low birth rates. Several women I spoke to stated that they are waiting longer to have

children due to the uncertainty of Cuba's present economic situation. Nena, a woman in her early 20s who lived in Havana stated, "I am delaying having children because I live with my husband's family and there is no room for a child" (Nena, personal communication, June 1997).

It is worth noting that while issues surrounding race and racism have been largely ignored by the Castro regime, gender issues have at least been subject to frequent, although often limited, debate as the Family Code illustrates. For example, the FMC has held five congresses over the course of the revolutionary period beginning with the first national conference in 1962. But some have charged that while the congresses provided a forum to discuss topics relevant to Cuban women, in the end they merely served as a means to effectively "rubber stamp" Federation and government initiatives. As one source notes,

"The FMC congresses dealt only with practical issues. No *federada* (congress participant) would raise a question that challenged national policy on nuclear power plants, African adventures, or economic initiatives. Doing so would invade the realm of male elites. Each congress closed with a unanimously approved statement of support for the revolution and its leadership" (Smith and Padula 1996, 51).

These examples raise the question as to whether an honest debate on gender issues is possible in Castro's revolution or if policy changes were merely a means to disguise and support an unbending revolution founded on "macho" precepts. These points serve to frame the discussion of the next section.

Gender Roles in the Special Period

The Special Period has led to some important shifts in women's roles, particularly in the economic arena. The emerging class system (that divides those who have access to dollars from those who do not), has given rise to the re-emergence of jobs once considered anathema to the regime. Sex work among young women has emerged as a popular means to earn hard currency. Ironically, as will be discussed in the next chapter, this form of employment has also led to new gender and racial constructions that many women find liberating. The number of domestic servants has also increased, particularly during the last several years. Lloyd (2002) believes that thousands of Cuban women have accepted work as domestic servants even though the work is technically illegal under current administrative laws.

One of Lloyd's interview subjects, an 88 year-old retiree who has re-entered the job market as a maid to supplement her inadequate state pension, believes that officials "look the other way" precisely because they are the key employers of maid services (Lloyd 2002). Furthermore, Armenteros (2001) concurs with Lloyd, adding that supply currently far outstrips demand for domestic servants in Cuba's capital. She suggests that the reason for this glut may be that many women wish to retire from government service and then find employment in domestic service where the pay can be four times the amount of a typical state pension. If, indeed, party officials are employing maids this represents a major breakdown in revolutionary ideology.

To place this development in context, the revolutionary regime went to great lengths to eradicate jobs in domestic service, viewing them as degrading and

exploitative. Through the auspices of the FMC, the government organized a school for former domestic servants to “get those maids away from the bourgeoisie” and “capture them for the revolution” (FMC official quoted in Smith and Padula 1996, 39). Former maids who graduated from the FMC programs were given the jobs of the bank and telephone workers who had fled the country. By 1968, these schools had out-lived their usefulness and were closed down (Smith and Padula 1996, 39). While maid service never entirely disappeared during the early revolutionary period, its resurgence raises new questions about the era of the Special Period in Cuba. This example highlights the assertion by some observers of Cuban gender issues that the Castro government, despite enacting measures to the benefit of women, continues to follow a murky path regarding gender equality.

FMC policies have come under recent scrutiny by Cuban scholars. While exact membership data are lacking, the FMC reportedly suffered a large decline in membership dating from the mid 1980s (Padula 1996, 228). One reason given for this drop in interest is that in recent years the organization may have lost its relevance. As one critic notes, “the FMC has a completely bourgeois concept of moral values” that excludes not only differing points of view, but also ignores segments of the population formerly deemed the core constituents (Herrera 2000, 123). Indeed, it has been charged that the FMC, while preaching inclusion, actually promotes “middle class white values” and fails to fully incorporate values held by many Afro-Cuban women (Herrera 2000, 123). Furthermore, some have maintained that both the overall focus and power of the FMC has diminished considerably with the advent of economic difficulties. This is illustrated by the following quotation by

Georgiana Herrera, an Afro-Cuban poet, who belongs to a non-official women's organization in Cuba known as MAGIN (taken from *imaginación* or imagination):

“It has to be recognized that [Cuban women today] were given every possibility for their emancipation-study, maternity care, day care centers, work. [However], it's gone backwards. The time came when the FMC stopped short and was only offering cleaning, cooking and embroidering, when other things were happening in the world. Now, women know they are not emancipated, that men [continue to be] predominant in many things” (Herrera 2000, 121).

It is also useful to consider that many of the women who managed to attain high positions in government were the same women who called on their compatriots to become “superwomen” without considering the social consequences. FMC leader Vilma Espín denied that she had suffered from discrimination during the Castro era and suggested that perhaps a women's organization was not necessary. In the end, she was largely correct but for the wrong reasons: the FMC, in the later years, has not functioned as an organization that truly benefits the women it is supposed to serve.

A woman I interviewed for this study spoke at length about her disappointment that Cuban women, unlike American women, were not able to fully develop at an individual level. While she offered an overall positive assessment of women's advancements under the Castro regime, she recognized that neither she, nor her daughter had been able to realize goals independent of revolutionary prescriptions. She worried that Cuban women had been taught to identify appropriate goals as those that are consistent with revolutionary ideals. This conformity to the revolution has made the Special Period austerity program all the more difficult to negotiate (Marlo, personal communication, 1997).

With the shifting employment landscape of the Special Period, the government's role as the provider (patriarch) of the Cuban "family" has come into question. As Pearson has noted, a reduction in state assistance in terms of the provision of basic necessities including food, medicine and even day care, has led to a need for mothers of families to assume greater roles in basic family support (1997, 671). For example, the lack of basic foodstuffs available from the ration book has meant that women must find alternatives in order to feed their families. Many have turned to the black market to procure basics such as cooking oil, soap, toothpaste, and many other necessities. Furthermore, with a decline in the health care options, women have a greater responsibility to care for sick children (and even elderly parents) at home rather than rely on poorly staffed and under-stocked hospitals and health care facilities. This has translated into a longer "double day" as more time is required to care for loved ones.

Cuba's women's movement during the Castro years was distinct from Western models in that it occurred with the full support and guidance of the government, whereas movements in countries like the United States have emanated from civil society (i.e., private) institutions. North American women, for example, have been encouraged to pursue individual achievement and personal development, while Cuban women have been taught to become functioning (and yet oddly subservient) members of government institutions. Although Cuban women work side-by-side with their male counterparts in sugar cane harvests and military maneuvers (despite the objections of some men), women are still forbidden from accepting employment that involves stringent physical labor. This proviso, while

appearing to protect women, actually opens the door for discrimination in other ways. Significantly the women's movement in Cuba has been characterized by Castro as "feminine" rather than "feminist" and women's loyalty and service to the state are encouraged above all else (Bunck 1994, 88). Castro's unfortunate choice of words serves to indirectly illustrate the underlying goals of the "revolution within the revolution." Indeed, as Smith and Padula note, "Cuban women were isolated by the very ideology that purported to liberate them" (1996, 183). This was because the policies came directly from Castro and were implemented by his sister-in-law, Vilma Espín. It appears that Castro called Cuba's equality movement "feminine" precisely because he wished to maintain the traditional gender hierarchy whereby women perform subservient roles.

Unfortunately for Cuban women, policy adjustments dating from the mid 1970s coupled with decreasing state support during the Special Period have meant that women have had to shoulder a greater burden in the raising of their families (and concurrently, with assisting in social reproduction.) With this point in mind, many have questioned the extent to which Cuban women have been "liberated" by the Castro regime. As previously noted, tourism has provided an opportunity for some Cuban women to negotiate the new Cuban economy and to call into question women's roles within the revolution. This point will be discussed at greater length in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

Cuba's Tourism Industry: An In-depth Analysis

In spite of the difficulties experienced by the average Cuban during the Special Period, the country has witnessed substantial economic gains as a result of the strength of tourism during the 1990s. Indeed, tourism's comeback as an important economic engine is likely the most important factor to consider in assessing the Special Period, as the industry has re-ordered Cuban society in many ways: geographically, socially, economically, politically, ecologically and so on. What follows is a brief assessment of the tourism industry through its beginnings on the island to its current role in the Cuban economy and society.

The second part of the chapter includes an examination of the social constructions and productions of tourism space during the Special Period. The discussion is focused on two distinct discourses advanced by the Castro regime. The government has attempted to maintain socialist principles while at the same time actively engaging in capitalism by seeking foreign investment and international tourists. The socialist discourse is evident in the government's maintenance of the national tourism infrastructure, the *campismo popular*, designed for the exclusive use of the Cuban population. By contrast, the spatial policies of exclusionary capitalism are most evident in Varadero, Cuba's most extensive tourism enclave.

A Brief History of Cuban Tourism

In the Cuban collective memory, tourism was an industry linked to 1950s era decadence and exploitation at the hands of the old Cuban elite, North American tour operators and visitors from the north. Indeed, much that has been written about Cuba in the 1950s centers around the role of tourism during that decade (see Graham Greene's Our Man in Havana [1958] as an example). Swashbuckling tales of American gangsters and Mafioso (Meyer Lansky was said to have been invited to operate Cuba's gambling casinos in an effort to "clean up" the industry!) and famous expatriates (including Ernest Hemingway, who maintained a residence near Havana and was often found imbibing at Havana's most famous establishments) remind Americans and Cubans alike of a time when Cuba dominated the Caribbean tourist trade (Perrottet and Biondi 1996, 35-37). Indeed, between 1952 and 1958, tourism in Cuba increased by over 30 percent, and in the year 1957, Cuba controlled over 21 percent of the Caribbean tourism market (Villalba cited in Miller and Henthorne 1997, 4-5).

The Period of Initial Tourism Development: 1919-1931

While the 1950s period was considered the heyday of tourism in the country, Cuba's reputation as the Caribbean's premier tourism location had been established much earlier. While Cuba has been welcoming guests since its early days as a Spanish colony, as a result of several factors, the island first came into its own as a

recognized tourist destination in the post World War One period. Well-heeled North American tourists had begun to visit the island during the First World War through regular service offered by several shipping lines. One of the most popular was the Cunard Line from New York that charged passengers \$40 for a one-way, all-inclusive first class ticket to Havana (Villalba 1993, 49). Tourists were drawn to Cuba by its warm wintertime weather and exotic beaches, and increasing arrivals during the war period set in motion a series of investments in Cuba's tourism infrastructure. A law to jointly legalize gambling and more greatly promote tourism on the island was passed in 1919, although as Schwartz notes, articles written into the bill clearly benefited the political and economic elite who had vested interests in the fledgling tourism industry. For example, the family of President Menocal, who signed the bill into law, gained the exclusive concession to operate *jai alai* games in the country (Schwartz 1997, 33-34).

During Prohibition in the United States that lasted from 1919 to 1933, Cuba cemented its reputation as a tourist destination by providing an outlet for Americans seeking to drink legally. The legality of alcohol, however, was not the sole reason that Americans visited the island. Basil Woon, the author of the 1928 travel guide "When It's Cocktail Time in Cuba," stated the following reasons why self-respecting "gentlemen" should visit the island:

1. You may drink as much as you want.
2. You may buy as many drinks for your friends as you want to.
3. You may chance your luck at the lottery.
4. You may lose as much money as you desire at the casino.
5. You need not carry your marriage certificate with you.
6. You may stare at the pretty señoritas, because staring in Cuba is considered a compliment- not a crime. (Woon cited in Perrottet and Biondi 1996, 35).

The guidebook also contained a section named “Naughty-Naughty Nights,” essential reading for those seeking Havana’s burgeoning pockets of vice and prostitution (Ibid.). This presents clear evidence that Cuba’s reputation as a center of illicit pleasures was established long before the 1950s. Of course, Cuba’s wealth of pristine beaches and its tropical climate were additional magnets for pleasure-seeking tourists.

Beginning in 1919, Cuban tourism promoters were anxious to establish a marketing plan to attract visitors to the island. Schwartz notes that Cuba initially lacked a well-defined image since in many ways it was typical of both the Caribbean and the Spanish colonial realm although it lacked the “authentic” Indian ruins that drew tourists to Mexico, Central America and South American countries (Schwartz 1997, 76). Between 1924 and 1931, a period of sustained growth in tourism numbers, Cuba’s marketing strategy evolved from one designed to attract up-scale clients with refined and luxurious tastes, to a plan that wooed a decidedly middle class clientele. This shift in emphasis put both Cuba and the Caribbean region in general on the tourism circuit and middle class vacationers and excursionists (defined as those who traveled to the island from Florida for a brief day or overnight stay) were the key to the region’s tourism success.

The arrival of significant numbers of tourists led to new constructions and productions of space on the island. Schwartz offers the example of what she terms “manufactured traditions” that were developed in order to attract greater numbers of visitors (Schwartz 1997, 74-87). One of these “traditions” involved changing the emphasis of Cuba’s carnival season that prior to the 1920s was a distinctly Cuban

holiday. The parades originally associated with the celebration focused on traditional Cuban themes and were noted for their informal spontaneity and high degree of local participation. During the 1920s, however, tourism promoters began to systematize carnival proceedings and in the process incorporated American themes that at one point led to the construction of a miniature Coney Island amusement park in Havana (Schwartz 1997, 84). As Schwartz notes, “Tourists [in the late 20s and early 30s] poured into Cuba and made Carnival their own [and the resulting spectacle] became more of a tourist attraction than a Cuban holiday” (Schwartz 1997, 84). Indeed, the rising popularity of carnival led to the sale of grandstand seating as part of tourist packages deals (Schwartz 1997, 83). This example points to a shifting construction of international tourism that signaled both its ascendancy in Cuba and its far-reaching ability to alter Cuban culture and ultimately restrict Cuban access to evolving tourism space.

The availability of legal alcohol along with the success of tourism promotions translated into increasing arrivals. Villalba has demonstrated that by the end of the 1920s, Cuba was welcoming over 62,000 tourists annually, compared to a rate of 31,500 in 1924. The global depression led to a plateau of visitors (91,000 in 1934), but by the end of the 1930s, the Cuban tourist economy had expanded again, accommodating over 178,000 visitors in 1937 (Villalba 1993, 44, 50). From a high point in 1937, tourism arrivals in Cuba dropped significantly in the years that followed due to heightened hostilities that led up to World War Two. Although tourist numbers began to increase again in 1946, it was not until 1949 that visitations to the

island matched those of the inter-war era. In that year 180,000 people came; and thus began the boom that occurred in the decade of the 1950s.

The Heyday of Cuban Tourism: 1946-1959

While tourist numbers began to rise at the end of World War Two, it was during the 1950s that Cuba realized its greatest growth. The high point was in 1957 when Cuba welcomed 272,266 tourists to the island (Villalba 1993, 25). Visitors to Cuba during this time period, however, were not only the typical sun, sea and sand seeking tourists. A number of mobsters, including the notorious Meyer Lansky, found a lucrative offshore profit center in Cuba (Miller and Henthorne 1997, 2-3). Mob connections and investments played an important role in the Cuban tourism sector until the end of the 1950s. Indeed, Cuba's position atop the regional tourism market was due, in part, to the generous concessions offered to tourism operators by the Batista regime that took power for the second time in 1952.⁵¹ For example, Hotel Law 2074 passed in 1955 provided tax exemptions for all new hotels as well as direct financial assistance for enterprises deemed particularly lucrative. Case in point was the Hotel Riviera, a Havana landmark that was built at a cost of \$14 million and opened in 1957. The Cuban government provided half the funding for the project and floated bond issues to cover most of the remaining cost. According to one source, Lansky and his investors likely paid only a small percentage of the total cost (Miller and Henthorne 1997, 2). This situation was problematic because little of the revenue

⁵¹ Batista was the official ruler of Cuba from 1940-1944 and again from 1952-1959.

generated from the Riviera and its infamous casino found its way into government coffers. Lansky and his associates would pay a percentage of their earnings to Batista and top government officials in backdoor transactions that some believe accounted for the over \$3 million found in his Swiss bank accounts alone (Perrottete and Biondi 1996, 36).

Cuba had to pay a price, however, for its tourism-based relationship with the Yankees from the north. As one observer succinctly notes,

“Havana [during the post WW II era] quickly became the prostitution capital of the Western Hemisphere. Businessmen could choose their *mulatta* for the weekend from photographs at the airport” (Perrottete and Biondi 1996, 35).

While the exploitative nature of Cuba’s tourism product was indeed problematic, the fact remained that the industry, as implemented, exacerbated the historic uneven development on the island. According to one source, “The glitter of Havana stood in contrast to the backwardness of some of the most impoverished regions in Cuba, particularly in the eastern-most province of Oriente” (Díaz-Briquets 1988, 47). Since tourism remained concentrated in Havana and a few choice beach resorts such as Varadero, Cuba exhibited a distinctly urban/rural divide wherein urban areas, led by Havana (a typical primate city), were much better off economically than poverty-stricken rural zones (see Pérez-Stable 1999, 14-35 for discussion). This stark urban/rural division created a situation where impoverished rural Cubans followed the “bright lights” of the tourist hotels in search of work and opportunity. Many rural women (along with girls and boys), who were drawn (and were often times forced to migrate) to Havana and Varadero, wound up working in the sex trade in places like

the notorious Casa Marina where tourists were offered 13-year-old “virgins” (Perrottet and Biondi 1996, 35).

One must also consider that despite the strength of Cuba’s tourism economy, the island continued to depend on the production and exportation of sugar. Most rural dwellers relied on seasonal employment in the sugar industry and this seasonality led to high levels of underemployment in rural Cuba. In 1956-57, over 18 percent of rural dwellers and 11 percent of urban dwellers were characterized as “underemployed” (Pérez-Stable 1999, 30). Indeed, only 64 percent of rural dwellers were considered to have full-time employment during the 1950s whereby 71 percent of urbanites were fully employed (Pérez-Stable 1999, 28).

In the final analysis, tourism during the 1950s was exemplified by stark contrasts between the spaces open to tourists and those accessible to average Cuban citizens. Furthermore, a strong division of labor forced women and darker skinned Cubans into less desirable and less lucrative jobs. According to Caute, middle and lower class Cubans were routinely barred from many tourism establishments and beaches (1974, 36). Women were frequently regarded as “hospitality specialists,” a loose term that encompassed beautiful smiling tour guides and waitresses, exotic dancers and sex workers. Many of the sex workers came to Havana and Varadero from the poorer provinces and found employment in brothels where they suffered discrimination at the hands of unscrupulous owners (Paternostro 2000). Blacks mainly played the role of the entertainer (most were musicians) and were barred from the higher class hotels and beaches patronized by American tourists and wealthy Cubans except when they were hired to play in the off-limits establishments

(Paternostro 2000). One source summed up the racial, economic and spatial division thusly, his disgust of the situation barely concealed:

“A musician’s life in Havana was poor: Cuban musicians were paid ten dollars a night, with cleaning charges for uniforms. Black skins and *mulattos* in one door, white musicians in another. No drinks on the house, no overtime. The big money went to American jazz bands and front-liners” (Hijuelos quoted in Perrottet and Biondi 1996, 36).

As will be discussed below, many of these patterns have re-emerged with the re-introduction of large-scale tourism into Cuba.

Tourism from 1959-1989: The Soviet Era

When Castro took control of Cuba in 1959, he immediately began to address issues of under and uneven development. As part of this process, the Castro regime moved quickly to establish laws that “returned” Cuba’s tourism spaces to the Cuban people. For example, Law 100 was passed in February 1959 that created the Department of Beaches for the People in an effort to provide for national tourism (Villalba 1993, 124). Through Law 851 that was passed in November 1959, the regime nationalized many of the top-rated hotels in Havana, including the Hilton, Nacional, Riveria and others (Miller and Henthorne 1997, 6). Finally, Law 636 that was passed in November 1959 established the National Tourism Institute (INIT) that was established in order to focus on national tourism for Cubans rather than the international variety (Villalba 1993, 125). The eventual downturn in tourism

numbers in the early 1960s allowed Castro to convert many tourist hotels into residential space for Cuban residents (Ibid.).

The establishment of INIT occurred concurrently with strained relations between Cuba and the United States and spurred an era of increasing national tourism coupled with a swift decline in international visitors. By 1968, the island hosted a mere 3,000 tourists most of whom hailed from Soviet bloc countries or were “western” visitors sympathetic to the Castro regime (Mesa-Lago 1981, 74). Many visitors traveled to Cuba to participate in “revolutionary” activities such as assisting with sugar cane harvests and attending cultural courses at Cuban schools and universities. The initial years of the “Soviet” period of tourism were mainly focused on providing recreational and travel opportunities for Cuban citizens.

After declining numbers of foreign visitors throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, the Castro regime once again decided to develop international tourism and began new hotel construction in 1974, a year Cuba attracted 15,000 visitors. Five years later in 1979, the island attracted 130,000 tourists, 40 percent of which were from Canada (Miller and Henthorne 1997, 8; Villalba 1993, 194). While this represented only about one-third of the yearly number of visitors who frequented Cuba in the late 1950s, it was clearly a turning point for Cuban tourism. Ten years later on the eve of the Special Period, the island welcomed 300,000 visitors, an indication that the island was once again on its way to becoming a major tourism power in the Caribbean (Miller and Henthorne 1997, 8).

It is useful to consider the role of tourism in the Soviet period from the perspective of the average Cuban citizen. To begin, the Castro regime accommodated

Cuban tourists by providing them access to the island's tourism infrastructure until the end of the 1970s. Significantly, the Cuban government insisted that new hotel construction begun in the mid-1970s in an effort to attract international visitors was consistent with an emphasis on national tourism. The government maintained that the high season for Cuban tourists, which was and remains in the summer months, complemented the Caribbean's winter peak for foreign tourists (Miller and Henthorne 1997, 7-8). Therefore, in the mid-1970s when Cuba re-emphasized international tourism, Cuban tourists were allowed to share space with foreign visitors but at different times of the year. According to Mesa-Lago, however, this arrangement was short lived due to the rapid success of Cuba's foreign tourism promotion efforts. The brief lifting of U.S. restrictions on travel to the island led to an increase in Cuban-American visitors and prompted Castro to plan for a record numbers of tourists by the mid-1980s (Mesa-Lago 1981, 74-75).⁵² In order to accommodate an increasing number of international tourists, Castro shifted investment from the domestic to the international sector. Furthermore, he warned the Cuban people that in the case of need, preference would be given to international tourists adding that domestic vacation plans were subject to cut backs in order to accommodate international arrivals. He argued that the shift in emphasis from domestic to international tourism was necessary so the island could earn the hard currency it needed:

Based on our economic situation we should give precedence to investments in international tourism rather than national tourism. We have to continue

⁵² Beginning in 1977, Cuban exiles were allowed by the Carter administration to return to the island for short visits. The returning exiles contributed \$100 million to the island's economy in 1979 alone (Mesa Lago 1981, 74). Heightened tensions between the U.S. and Cuba coupled with the election of Ronald Reagan, who adopted a hard-line anti-Castro stance, led to the re-implementation of travel restrictions for American tourists in 1981 (Rudolph 1987, 57-58).

thinking about what the socialist solution to the vacation problem is as this becomes a right and a possibility of all the people because if we continue with the previous criterion that one can go to the beach only in July and August--and all workers and all families want to go to the beach only in July and August because it also coincides with vacation time--it will be impossible to ever resolve the the vacation issue. We have to take advantage of the installations on hand all year round (Castro 1978).

From a spatial perspective, Castro's pronouncement effectively spelled the end of policies that favored Cuban tourists and set the stage for the Special Period policy of exclusionary enclave tourism. Cubans had enjoyed equal access to the island's tourism infrastructure from 1961-1979, but the arrival of greater numbers of tourists meant that the government was either unable, or unwilling, to allow dual national and international use of its facilities. As will be discussed below, Castro attempted to compensate for the loss in prime tourism space by creating the *campismo popular* camping infrastructure for the exclusive use of the Cuban population. This idea was met with a lukewarm response and most Cubans do not regard it as an acceptable substitute for the loss of tourism space to foreign visitors.

There is evidence to suggest that prostitution remained a component of Cuban tourism during the Soviet tourism era. One source notes that while the Castro regime closed the infamous 1950s-era sex shows and began an effort to "rehabilitate" Cuban sex workers, prostitution reappeared already by the early 1960s (Baker 2000, 98). The implementation of a rationing system for food and other material goods in the 1960s and 1970s also attracted women to work as *jineteras* in order to improve their economic standing (Baker 2000, 98). According to the Cuban author Guillermo Cabrera Infante, the state has always made "mulattas" (sic) available to foreign

dignitaries (Cabrera cited in Baker 2000, 98). The presence of sex workers in the early years of the Special Period was not, therefore, a new and novel response to the conditions of the Special Period.

In sum, the early Soviet era of Cuban tourism was characterized first by the increasing availability of space given over to national tourism. When international tourism began to take off in the late 1970s, Cuban tourists were once again deprived of equal status with international visitors and their access to prime tourism space became limited. In response, in 1981 the Castro regime began allocating resources to the development of the *campismo popular*, a nation-wide network of camps for Cuban tourists and educational groups.

While international tourism in the 1960s and early 1970s played a much-reduced role both economically and socially in Cuba, evidence suggests that Soviet visitors continued to view Cuba as a source of women (often euphemistically referred to as *mulattas*) who were available for their sexual gratification (Baker 2000, 98). Indeed, it is worth emphasizing that the term *jinete* has been in use throughout the revolutionary period in Cuba, although it has become more common and more widespread during the Special Period austerity program. Despite exhortations to the contrary, Castro was never able to fully eradicate prostitution in Cuba. Indeed, evidence suggests the regime was an active participant in the provision of sexual services to visitors to the country (Cabrera cited in Baker 2000, 98).

The Tourism Industry During the Special Period

The solution to Cuba's economic problems during the Special Period was a multi-faceted approach with tourism as the centerpiece. Following the demise of the Soviet Union, Cuba began actively soliciting investors in the tourism, mining, tobacco and infrastructural sectors such as telecommunications. A constitutional amendment was passed in 1992 to allow foreign partners up to forty-nine percent ownership in concerns, total exemptions on taxes, unrestricted repatriation of profits and the freedom to hire and fire their Cuban staff (Jatar-Hausmann 1999, 49-50). This effectively expanded the parameters of Law Decree 50, a law dating to 1982 that allowed for the formation of joint ventures. In 1995, with Law Decree 77, the Cuban government further expanded the rights of investors to establish corporations with 100 percent foreign ownership in some cases, though as Miller and Henthorne note, the government clearly prefers to promote joint ventures (1997, 123). Additionally, the law allowed for foreign investment in real estate to provide for "non-permanent residents in Cuba" as well as construction for use in tourism (Jatar-Hausmann 1999, 123).⁵³

In July 2002, Vice Minister of Foreign Investment stated that Cuba maintained 412 active joint ventures with foreign concerns (Spadoni 2002, 161). However, the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Investment and Economic Collaboration (MINVEC) reports that 72 joint ventures are in the process of dissolution (Spadoni 2002, 161). According to data from the Ministry of Foreign Investment (MINVEC),

⁵³ As of April 2003, Law 77 is on hold because Cuban-Americans could theoretically qualify for the new housing (Scarpaci, personal communication, April 2003).

83 joint ventures are involved in basic industry (mining, old exploration, etc.) while 75 are involved in tourism. Spain is the leader in joint ventures with 104, followed by Canada (70), Italy (57) and France (18) (MINVEC 2002). From 1988 to 2001, Cuba attracted \$5.4 billion in foreign direct investment commitments via joint ventures, but only \$1.9 billion had been delivered (Spadoni 2002, 164).

In an effort to streamline Cuba's tourism infrastructure and help satisfy investor needs, the Castro regime re-organized the administrative apparatus for tourism by transforming the National Tourism Institute (INTUR) into the Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR) in 1993. The main goal of the government was to focus on a more efficient means to provide services, particularly in marketing the tourism product, and to create distinctive hotel and tourism "groups" that would each assume responsibility for unique market niches under the larger umbrella of MINTUR. These groups include: Gran Caribe, which deals with the administration of "luxury" services such as several four and five star hotels as well as several well-known restaurants (La Bodequita del Medio in Havana, for one); Horizontes group which focuses on mainly three-star accommodations as well as particular "specialty" niches such as the maintenance of ecotourism resorts and provision of specialty tours; Cubanacán, which was given international tourism facilities to manage in an effort to earn the proceeds needed to upgrade domestic tourism needs; and Gaviota, an arm of the military that also focuses on specialty tourism in the former retreats of the Cuban elite such as Topes de Collantes located near the colonial city of Trinidad (Horizontes 2002; Miller and Henthorne 1997, 143-162; Avella and Mills 1996, 58-60).

The Cuban government has marshaled various educational resources in its effort to develop tourism. The country currently maintains regional tourism schools that exist to prepare students to work in all facets of the tourism sector, from front desk operators to assistant managers. The Castro regime has even allowed foreign business professors to teach classes ranging from management to marketing on the “western” model (Fletcher 2000). Additionally, the government supports university-level curriculum designed to prepare students for a wide range of opportunities in tourism as well as to assist in locational analysis of potential tourism sites. The Department of Geography at the University of Havana is the only department in the country to offer a degree in tourism studies (Dean Garcia, personal communication, 1996). Some students in the program have been charged with performing environmental impact studies on areas of interest for potential tourism development. One of my long-term interview participants was a University of Havana geography student who was in the midst of preparing an impact study on Cayo Coco in the northern keys through an association with a UNESCO-funded program.

On paper, tourism has proven a successful strategy for Cuba from many different perspectives. The industry surpassed sugar in 1997 as the most important source of export revenue for the island. (By convention, tourism is considered an export industry, even though “consumption” occurs within the country in question.) According to one source, the industry generated \$2 billion in 2000, compared with \$900 million earned from sugar exports (San Martin 2001). Another important source of income for Cuba is remittances sent from Cubans living abroad, and this influx of cash totaled anywhere from an estimated \$800 million to over \$1 billion in

2000, the majority arriving from Cuban-Americans in the United States (San Martin 2001; Urizarri 2001). Remittances are now the second most important source of income for the Cuban economy (Urizarri 2001).

At least for the near future, tourism will continue to grow both in the size of the industry, as well as in its importance to the Cuban economy.⁵⁴ Forecasts by experts point to the possibility of attracting 10 million people by the year 2010. According to Castro, however, this goal can only be realized when the “economic war” with the United States ends and Americans are once again allowed to travel freely to the island. Castro reported the findings of an undisclosed poll that was allegedly carried out in the United States that stated 64 percent of Americans would visit Cuba in the event restrictions to travel to Cuba are lifted by Washington (Acosta 1998,1).

While this figure may seem out of reach based on current figures, Cuba has witnessed steady growth in the tourism sector and has become a legitimate rival to other Caribbean tourism juggernauts such as Jamaica (World Tourism 2001). The World Tourism Organization (WTO) placed arrivals in Cuba at roughly 1.7 million people in 2000 and tourism receipts at \$1.76 billion (World Tourism 2001). In a recent speech, Fidel Castro noted that Cuba attracted 1.6 million people who brought over \$2 billion in revenue to the country in 2002 (Castro 2003a). In 2000, Cuba ranked third behind Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic in tourism arrivals, tourism receipts and overall market share (Castro 2003a). Between 1995 and 1999, Cuba ranked first in overall growth rate with an increase of 20.1 percent of arrivals.

⁵⁴ Cuba suffered a brief downturn in tourist arrivals and revenue spurred by the 9/11 events in the United States. See discussion in Chapter Seven.

In order to place these figures in context, between 1985 and 1996 Cuba rose from a rank of 24th to 12th place in tourist arrivals among Latin American countries. During this same period, Cuba's tourist arrivals increased 34.6 percent, the highest growth in the region (Acosta 1998,1).

Interestingly, despite Cuba's heavy investment in the tourism sector, the re-organization of the industry has actually led to a loss of jobs for many former tourism workers. Some job slashings have occurred as a result of foreign managers taking control of joint venture hotels and restaurants. Incoming bosses complained that bloated payrolls significantly effected profitability and many resorted to deep cuts in personnel. In one example, Iberostar SA hotel group of Spain remodeled the Triton hotel in Havana and re-opened with only 180 of the 750 previous workers, a cut of over 75 percent (Avella and Mills 1996, 58). A source I interviewed in 1997 stated that she and other members of her family were laid off from work when the Bellamar, a Varadero hotel, closed for renovations. She considered herself lucky to find work in another hotel since her previous job was to be terminated when the Bellamar re-opened (Carla, personal communication, 1997). Another interviewee stated that his employer, the Havana Libre, trimmed the majority of its workforce after foreign management assumed control of the Havana landmark (Humberto, personal communication, 1996).

Despite the above examples of job losses in individual establishments, the expansion of Cuba's tourism infrastructure will surely translate into further employment opportunities for Cuban citizens. Indeed, according to one source Cuba employs over 40,000 workers in tourism and over 50 percent of those are younger

than 35 years of age (Regalado 1999). Yet, as will be discussed below, Cubans are justifiably worried about a rising propensity by the Cuban government to favor “enclave” tourism development. As has occurred in other developing countries, this strategy may be aimed at restricting contact between Cubans and tourists so as to limit the ability of Cubans not employed in the tourism sector to legally acquire hard currency through direct contacts with dollar-toting tourists.

The Structural Components of Cuba’s Tourism Industry

The Ascendancy of Enclave Tourism

“The protagonists of the (enclave tourism) industry...have contended that the road to success lies in the incarceration of the tourist in spectacular multi-storied buildings...within whose walls the tourist is encouraged to drink himself (sic) silly while remaining oblivious to the country beyond his hotel window. This school of thought seems to rest, at least in part, on the assumption that the rest of the country is an object of shame which the tourist could not possibly enjoy” (Michael Manley as quoted in Britton 1980, 47)

Tourism as practiced and implemented in Cuba today conforms in many regards to what is widely accepted as “enclave tourism” and Varadero and the Northern Keys (*cayos*) in particular exhibit distinct enclaves. Under the enclave model, hotels, restaurants and entertainment facilities are built for the sole use of non-local (usually international) visitors. Many enclaves are physically separated from the wider community by walled structures and limited access entryways. Several resorts in Varadero retain beach and grounds patrols that check visitor identification cards and that have the power to remove anyone from the general vicinity. Indeed,

the Varadero city police are often seen patrolling tourist beaches and checking the identification cards of residents.

In Cuba as in many developing countries, the infrastructure of enclave tourism is not intended to directly benefit the resident population, although entry-level jobs may become available to locals. According to Jenkins (cited in Pearce 1989, 95), spill over effects, such as the creation of new entrepreneurial activities for locals, are not intentional. Non-sanctioned activities such as the selling of trinkets and other souvenirs to tourists are in some cases suppressed by tourism operators and local officials who are worried about un-due competition and who harbor perceptions that visitors are subject to harassment by local vendors and “hustlers.” Jenkins also notes that because site location is physically separate from existing communities, few trading links are allowed to develop between the local community and the tourism resorts (Jenkins cited in Pearce 1989, 95). The result of this separation is that a significant proportion of inputs ranging from food to hotel linens are imported from other regions in the country or from abroad as one source has documented (Orrio 2002).

Direct financial benefits go to both partners of joint tourism ventures, namely the Cuban government and foreign investors who under the 1982 law that authorized joint ventures, can legally repatriate any profits realized. The Castro regime prefers to rely on the peso-driven economy to meet the needs, albeit incompletely, of the local population. It attempts to keep tourism profits under its control, and hence, private initiative in the tourism industry is curtailed through a variety of means including limiting employment to those ostensibly loyal to the regime and through

direct repression of *jineteras*. All legal aspects of the tourism infrastructure, from accommodations to restaurant offerings and souvenir vending, are strictly controlled by the Castro regime. However, there are distinct geographic patterns to this state of affairs. Since the 1996 crackdown, Varadero has become a tightly controlled enclave where illegal entrepreneurialism is difficult to pursue. In contrast, my field data indicate that Havana is home to a sizeable community of *paladares* (privately run family restaurants), many of which depend on tourist traffic to earn a living (see Scarpaci, Segre and Coyula 2002, 245, and Henken 2002, 344-350 for discussion of Cuban *paladares*).

The fact that tourism provides access to dollar-generating jobs is often portrayed as an unfortunate side effect of the development strategy, and the Cuban government has repeatedly demonstrated the willingness to regulate and police the workforce. In 1998, the government began to require that new workers in the tourism industry obtain an “employment card” which entails a security check (Regalado 1999). The government claims that the new policy was adopted to combat “negative conduct” that ranged from bribery to “piracy.” One source cited as an example “unscrupulous” hotel workers who engaged in such activities as “offering to change money for male guests [an illegal activity] and asking sexual favors of female visitors” (Regalado 1999).

This move can also be interpreted as a way to weed out “counter-revolutionary” elements in the tourism industry. For example, according to Regalado, over 50 percent of Cuba’s reported 40,569 tourism workers are under the age of 35 (1999). She explicitly states that many younger workers are not prepared to “provide

excellent service,” inferring that they have had limited exposure to the demands of a modern service economy. The article also asserts that tourism workers need to be carefully chosen and monitored because some believe that younger workers are considered “more prone” to illegal activities within the tourism sector.

In order to gain a greater perspective on the views of Cuban supporters of the Revolution, I interviewed Humberto, an older, white, self-described revolutionary who had fought in Angola. When I asked him how he felt about tourism’s rise during the Special Period, Humberto became visibly agitated and criticized a nephew who worked in the tourism industry: “I am frustrated with many of today’s young people. They were given the fruits of the revolution, whereas we [older revolutionaries] had to fight for it. “Too many young people are prone to counter-revolutionary activities, including my nephew who thinks materialism is fine” (Humberto, personal communication, June 1997).

Not surprisingly, jobs in the tourism sector are highly sought-after by the nation’s old and young alike. And while many anti-Castro observers appear to revel in the fact that one can find former doctors and engineers among the ranks of Cuba’s taxi cab drivers and bartenders, (which in their minds offers a clear indictment against Cuba’s socialist system), the fact remains that the government claims to award tourism jobs based on revolutionary merit. The following vignette examines this notion from the viewpoint of young tourism workers and aspirants.

Personal Profile: Cuban Youth and the Tourism Industry

One evening in Vedado, Carlos W. hosted a domino game for several of his friends. Carlos is a chef in a tourist hotel in Havana. Among those present were his friend Juan, a hotel clerk, and Inés who had recently re-applied for acceptance into a “tourism school.” All three friends were under thirty years of age. Carlos and Juan were from Havana and Inés was originally from Sancti Spiritus, but had moved to Havana to live with relatives in the capital to seek employment. At one point in the evening, Inés wondered if she would be able to get into tourism school on her second try. She was originally unsuccessful, she believed, “because I did not stress enough my love of the revolution.” Carlos laughed and agreed that while strong revolutionary credentials were necessary, almost every applicant he knew exaggerated their devotion to the revolution. He also believed that a connection to a party official was needed to expedite the process, an obstacle he overcame by calling on a relative to vouch for him. In response to Carlos, Inés noted with a hint of sarcasm “I will try to be more like Che if I’m given the opportunity for another interview,” a reference to a popular propaganda campaign that accompanied the RP in the mid-1980s when Castro emphasized the non-material rewards and incentives advocated by Che Guevara (see Eckstein 1994, 62-63).

As the evening wore on, Carlos and Juan discussed the problem of petty theft at the hotel where they both worked. Carlos admitted, “I sometimes smuggle food out of the hotel kitchen to help my family and to sell on the black market.” All three

opined that they thought it necessary to siphon food and other supplies from the tourism sector to help alleviate shortages in the peso-driven economy. Inés declared that once one obtains a job in tourism, a person often assumes the role of the primary provider for the family, whether the worker is male or female, younger or older. “Without access to guanikiki [Cuban slang for dollars], you cannot survive in Cuba today,” said Carlos. “Everyone wants a tourism job or a relative who lives abroad.” (Based on my conversations with Carlos and friends, July 1997.)

Tourism officials and planners also promote tourism enclaves to limit contact between residents and tourists and to reduce the ‘social and cultural’ pollution associated with in-coming visitors (Pearce 1989, 95). This desire to circumvent the perceived dangers of the so-called “demonstration effect” has been widely cited by observers as one goal of Cuba’s tourism strategy, namely the limiting of contact between the Cuban people and tourists.⁵⁵ The construction of tourism enclaves in Cuba has revealed a high degree of spatial differentiation. For example, true tourism enclaves are found in locations that have been made strictly off limits to the average Cuban citizen. These include the famous tourism destination of Varadero in Matanzas province along with the northern caye resorts located on Cayo Coco and Cayo Romano in Camaguey province. Access to these resort areas is strictly controlled via checkpoints that allow only authorized Cubans and, of course, tourists to pass. In the case of Varadero, the only non-tourism oriented vehicles that may pass

⁵⁵ See Rundle 2001 for more discussion on this point.

are those registered in Matanzas province and/or those who can prove they have official business in Varadero. Cayos Coco and Romano are connected to the mainland by raised berm roads. Entrance to the berm roads (*pedeplenaes*) is strictly controlled and only tourism workers are allowed onto the cayes themselves. As discussed in the next section, the end result is the maintenance of “apartheid tourism” whereby Cuban citizens are not granted the same opportunities and advantages available to the international tourist.

Apartheid Tourism in Cuba

To most people, apartheid is a term imbued with images of a segregated South Africa, a symbol of a by-gone era. Apartheid is an Afrikans term meaning “the state of being separate” (New World Dictionary of American English, 1988 ed.). Of course, apartheid as it was practiced in South Africa implied much more than simply a spatial separation of the races into four distinct categories: Blacks, Whites, Coloureds and Asians. Rather, it provided the basis for a multi-layered, state-sponsored policy of discrimination. According to Smith, apartheid, as originally implemented, operated at three spatial scales: personal, within residential space in towns and cities, and at the national level (Smith 2000, 28). At the personal level, discrimination took the form of denied entrance into certain public facilities such as parks, theaters and transportation and lavatories. At the residential level, apartheid insured the segregation of the races in cities through the Group Areas Act, which allocated exclusive use of a defined region in the city to one race. Finally, apartheid at

the national level led to segregation in the form of 10 “homelands” assigned to the major African tribal groups (Smith 2000, 28).

The South African government originally claimed that the designation of homelands would allow for the rise of separate, but somehow equal societies within a larger pluralistic country. However, apartheid was a thinly disguised policy of discrimination along racial lines, the hallmark of which was the control of black labor by the white minority. The dismantling of the apartheid regime, while theoretically turning power over to a democratically elected plurality, has become de-facto “class-based apartheid” in that societal divisions revolve increasingly around the issue of class rather than simply race. According to one source, “whites, along with better-off members of other race groups, have been able to protect some of their privileges” at the neighborhood level (Smith 2000, 29). The presence of gated communities in the country is reported to be greatly increasing (Rector, personal communication, 1998).

Tourism as practiced in many developing countries is an industry that exhibits social patterns not unlike those discussed in South Africa. Apartheid tourism is a form of enclave tourism and can be designated as a side effect of true enclavism. While apartheid is a term that underscores racial division and inequality, apartheid tourism as practiced in Cuba is primarily, though not exclusively, economic in character. However, as established in the previous chapter, changing economic patterns associated with access to dollars (or lack thereof) are giving rise to a de facto class hierarchy that exhibits visible racial overtones. It is important to establish that discrimination on the basis of race and gender is expressly prohibited, according to official policy. Indeed, the Cuban constitution bars discrimination based on “race,

skin color, sex, national origin, religious creeds, and any other type [of discrimination] offending human dignity” (Human Rights Watch 1999).

Despite laws to the contrary, many observers and Cuban scholars have noted the increasing incidence of apartheid tourism in the country (Moses 2000; Miller and Henthorne 1997; Schwartz 1997, et al). The treatment of apartheid in the literature mainly revolves around a strongly enforced governmental policy to restrict Cubans from having direct access to tourists. As will be discussed in the remainder of this section, apartheid tourism in Cuba, like the South African prototype, is a multi-layered policy that involves the issues of class, race and gender.

Several Cubans I interviewed noted the irony of the economic and racial divisions exposed by Cuba’s tourism practices. Cuba’s involvement in Angola’s Civil War is thought to have played a role in the eventual downfall of South Africa’s white-only rule, because the Afro-Caribbean Cubans won several victories against white South African foes. The war in Angola garnered support for Castro among the non-aligned countries. Eckstein further argues that the moral basis for Cuba’s international efforts was tied to “pan-continental” racial solidarity (1994, 186-187). While some Cubans like to point out that the Cuban forces were dominated by Afro-Cubans (a form of poetic justice, they say), the fact remains that the Angolan experience continues to play a role in the Cuban collective identity and is viewed with equal importance by Afro-Cuban, mulatto and white participants. Indeed, one interview source expressed bitterness in recalling his role in “ending apartheid in South Africa” only to experience de-facto apartheid during the Special Period in Cuba (Humberto, personal communication, 1997).

It must be stressed that apartheid tourism is directly attributable to the social construction and social production of tourism by the Cuban government and their foreign investors. Up until recently, the Cuban government has followed an official policy that prohibits Cubans from staying in hotels or eating in restaurants designed for international tourists, regardless of their ability to pay in dollars. The government maintains that the policy is designed to maintain a system of equality in the country whereby one citizen is not supposed to have privileges that another cannot enjoy. Tourism Minister Ibrahim Ferradaz explains, “Cubans who have dollars cannot go to the hotels because not all Cubans can go. We defend equality” (Ferradaz quoted in Cuban Tourism Minister, 2000). At face value, the policy upholds the precepts of the revolution that are framed around issues of equality. These precepts run counter to both Cuban law and popular “policy” widely proclaimed by Castro at the beginning of the revolution. Cuban nationals are routinely barred from enjoying amenities open to foreigners; the best hotels, resorts, beaches, and restaurants are off limits to most Cubans (Human Rights Watch 1999). According to Scarpaci, many of Cuba’s finest hotels will allow Cubans to enter their lobbies if they state they are going to the dollar stores. He notes that this policy requires security guards to maintain greater vigilance (Scarpaci, personal communication, April 2003).

Despite official policy, Cubans have found ways to gain access to hotels, tourism restaurants and other establishments using both legal and illegal means. Legally, the government grants about 170 Cubans a week the privilege to stay in lower end hotels at state-subsidized prices in an effort to reward loyal workers. Honeymooners are also provided with three nights of room and board at tourism

hotels that are largely off limits to locals (Horizontes hoteles official, personal communication, June 1996; also see Bauza 2002). However, Cubans also gain access to off-limits locales in illegal ways, as well. As will be discussed below, Cubans are adept at side-stepping official policy where possible and I encountered several instances where official policy was flaunted.

Apartheid tourism in Cuba is not simply a matter of denying average Cubans access to tourism installations. Rather, discriminatory practices occur at many different levels and impinge on access to certain spaces as well as personal associations. At a personal level, many visitors to Cuba are dismayed at their inability to invite Cuban friends or relatives to their hotel room or a particular restaurant. I encountered this situation several times during my stay in Cuba. At the local and national level, Cubans are restricted from select public beaches and even from whole areas of the country such as the northern cayes and the beach resort of Varadero regardless of their ability to pay in hard currency, suggesting that “price enclavism” (the exclusion of native peoples from tourist installations due to their inability to pay tourist prices) is no longer an effective control because a sizeable segment of Cuban society has access to dollars.

To place the discussion of tourism into perspective, one observer has noted the significance of the shift from sugar production to tourism in the Caribbean. He writes,

“Where sugar is succeeded by Princess Tourism, the fragility of the industry, and the industry itself has introduced new social relations. Where sugar brought people together, working together on large estates, tourism brings people together in hotels, without it seems, the same social bonding.

Everyone is on his [sic] own. More and more tourism alienates. Especially when tourism is in foreign hands” (Hector quoted in Pattullo 1996, 85).

While most Cubans continue to be restricted from tourism work, the long-term effects of the tourism industry might be towards a greater level of individualism. This potential eventuality runs counter to Castro’s idea of collective socialism and could lead to a greater erosion of Castroist policies.

Nonetheless, evidence suggests that Cuba is moving towards the greater implementation of tourism enclaves in the country (Miller and Henthorne 1997, 13-14). As noted above, reducing the ability of Cubans to contact tourists directly in legal fashion effectively restricts the ability of average Cubans to realize any tangible benefit of tourism. As will be developed in greater detail below, residents of Varadero and Havana have noted an increase in incidences of tourist apartheid, and they claim that this diminishes both their quality of life and their ability to earn a legal living in the tourism industry.

The Social Production of Tourism Space in Cuba during the Special Period

The aim of this section is to situate and explore the dominant discourses advanced by the Cuban government regarding the production of tourism space during the Special Period. On the one hand, the government continues to develop (some would say over-develop) resorts such as Varadero that increasingly correspond to the

all-inclusive enclave model. Within this context, Varadero serves as an exclusive space that favors international dollar-toting tourists while excluding Cubans involved in private enterprise as well as Cuban tourists and excursionists (day trippers). Varadero is part of larger tourism spaces jointly produced by the Cuban government and international investors in an effort to provide for the exclusive needs of foreign tourists. Cuban citizens are involved only in building and maintaining the infrastructure and in serving foreign guests in government-controlled jobs. Indeed as one source notes, “Nowhere else [but Varadero] is the island’s “tourism apartheid” more obvious” (Perrottet and Biondi 1996, 175).

On the other hand, the government has increased spending on Cuba’s national tourism infrastructure known as the *campismo popular*. The chief patrons of the *campismo popular* facilities are Cuban tourists and young people who use the camps for education-related activities. Providing Cubans access to tourism facilities (albeit of rustic and often inferior quality) allows the government to point to tangible benefits that have accrued as a result of international tourism. It also underscores a continuing discourse on socialism for the Cuban people that is decidedly at odds with that associated with the dollar-driven tourism economy.

The government insists that Cubans benefit from international tourism via a centralized, state controlled system whereby revenue finds its way to social programs such as health care, education, food provision and recreation. While tourism money does indeed benefit the Cuban people at a certain level through wages to a few and through revenue that is invested in the *campismo popular* infrastructure, most of the profits that remain in Cuba go to maintaining the international tourism infrastructure.

Some revenue leaves the country via the repatriation of profits realized by joint venture investors. More importantly, the significant multiplier effects of international tourism that could benefit the broader Cuban populace are lost since the government refuses to allow for a rise in local private enterprise to supply commodities and a range of tourism services. Cuba relies instead on an inefficient state-directed system that is ill equipped to satisfy the demands of the developed world tourist. As a result, the government is required to import much of the food and material needed for the tourist sector. For example, in August 2002 Cuba was forced to quickly import fresh vegetables including two tons of tomatoes from Mexico when Cuban producers could not supply tourist restaurants (Orrio 2002).

Although the Cuban government dabbles in capitalism itself, it maintains a decidedly pro-socialist discourse for the Cuban population as a whole, and the public appears to accept and participate in the efforts to reinforce socialism. In the summer of 2002, the country resoundingly voted to declare socialism “irrevocable.” Nonetheless, critics have pointed to the coercive nature of the Cuban election system that leads to questionable election outcomes (Pérez-Stable 2002). In reaction to such activities, Castro has encouraged citizen loyalty pledge drives and has moved to increase membership in vigilance brigades following the public disclosure of the Varela Project, an indigenous effort that amassed over 11,000 signatures in favor of democratic reforms in the country. Varela Project organizers asked the government to hold a referendum on a broad array of civil and political rights, including competitive

elections, freedom of the press, and a general amnesty for political prisoners (Human Rights Watch 2002).⁵⁶

As part of this government-sponsored retrenchment, the regime has increased crackdowns, albeit unevenly, on illegal capitalist ventures by Cubans, particularly those that occur in tourism spaces that compete directly with government operations. While the government is acquiring land and producing space for tourism and international capital investment, the regime is at the same time calling for the Cuban population to re-affirm socialism and to denounce and avoid “dangerous” internal and external influences.

Health tourism as practiced in Cuba illustrates the “collision” of two discourses and has led to the formation of landscapes of “mixed or dual discourses.” The Cuban government is well justified in showcasing its successful health care system that is provided largely free of charge to the Cuban people, a point that serves to underscore the dominant discourse of Castroism, namely a concerted effort of investment in medical science and the utilization of medical knowledge for both country-wide and internationalist ends. The backbone of this program is the maintenance of health clinics spread throughout the island to provide more-or-less equal access to health care for all Cubans. However, with the rise of tourism in the country, many of the more prominent facilities, especially those in tourism magnets like Havana and Varadero, now treat exclusively foreign, dollar-paying tourists at the long-term expense of Cuban citizens.

⁵⁶ Some believe that the Varela Project was supported by U.S. interests. Varela Project sponsors deny this.

The effect on the social landscape has been the loss of what many consider critical space as ample evidence suggests a deterioration of health care opportunities for average Cubans and the rise of exclusionary health tourism facilities that includes recently renovated spas and health “retreats” for foreign patrons (Horizontes 2002). Independent Cuban journalists document the difference in the quality of care between the tourist or dollar denominated health facilities and the public facilities. A diabetic in Havana confirmed assertions of recent declines in service by explaining that she sometimes lacked insulin as well as special foods prescribed by doctors to alleviate her condition. She was forced to rely on a U.S.-supported Catholic mission clinic for her daily insulin (Zelda, personal communication, 1997). Arroyo (2001) described how deteriorating health care options, linked to the hijacking of clinics and personnel to serve tourists, have been a significant factor in recent hepatitis outbreaks in rural Cuba. In another report, Cosano Alén documented the siphoning of equipment from national health care facilities to those established for international tourists (2001).

In the next section, I critically analyze the two distinct and dominant discourses through an examination of the symbolism and constructions of space surrounding both national and international tourism in Cuba. Given the need for hard currency in Cuba today, it is necessary to consider the ways Cubans negotiate and indeed profit from these new spatial productions. I will first examine the discourse and historical development of the *campismo popular* indigenous camping infrastructure in an effort to provide insight into the production of socialist space. This will be contrasted with the emerging international tourism enclave of Varadero.

An analysis of how Cubans negotiate the new tourist spaces will emphasize the socio-economic movement known as *jineterismo*.

The *Campismo popular*: Nature-Oriented Tourism Facilities for Cubans

The *campismo popular* is synonymous with Castro's desire to provide nature-oriented tourism facilities for Cubans. Indeed, part of Castro's discourse represents both the attempt to show examples of government investment on the behalf of the Cuban people, as well as an effort to downplay growing rates of inequality on the island. In order to illustrate how this discourse translates into spatial access, I will document the changing role of the *campismo popular* infrastructure vis-à-vis the Cuban tourist during the Special Period.

As part of an effort to provide for the perceived needs of "nature-oriented" international tourists, the Castro regime has renovated several facilities associated with the *campismo popular* system that formerly served a clientele of only Cuban tourists and excursionists in mostly rustic, unadorned rural facilities. The sites were determined by the government to be national and ecological points of interest. Tourism officials justify the usurpation of these spaces by arguing that the average Cuban tourist has benefited from the development of international tourism in that proceeds have provided the necessary capital to improve and upgrade many other *campismo popular* facilities for both domestic and international tourism, (albeit on a limited basis). Cuban citizens however, question the persistence of the appeal and

viability of Cuba's domestic camping infrastructure during the Special Period. Others praise the *campismo popular* system as an important recreational outlet for Cubans. The establishment of a viable domestic tourism sector could aid in combating perceived instances of apartheid tourism and compensate for situations where Cubans are denied entry into international tourism installations and other dollar-only designated areas.

One must keep in mind that the Castro regime prefers to retain profits from international tourism and to use these profits to maintain government-directed social programs rather than allow for the rise of a private sector to fulfill Cuba's myriad service needs (Peters and Scarpaci 1998, 5). Therefore, a cost/benefit assessment must focus on the degree to which tourism revenue is utilized for the public good. That is to say, benefits to Cubans will not be in the form of profits earned by entrepreneurs, rather profits will go to government maintenance of larger social services that include adequate food rations, health care, transportation (mostly in the public sector) and even access to recreational opportunities. With this point in mind, the question becomes, to what extent is international tourism paying for recreational outlets for Cuban citizens.

During the 1960s, when Cuba was in the process of building a socialist infrastructure, the idea of constructing low cost camping facilities for Cuban citizens was first discussed. In part, the idea stemmed from a new regime policy to promote island-wide and especially rural development. Under a banner of "a minimum of urbanism and a maximum of ruralism," Castro sought to consolidate popular support

for his revolution by leveling living standards among the urban and rural “classes” (see Scarpaci 2000 for more discussion on this point). This leveling was to rectify historical problems of substantial un-even development and income disparities (Pérez-Stable 1993, 27-31). The completion of a six-lane highway along the spine of the country quickly integrated the country, at least from an economic standpoint, and greatly expanded travel possibilities within Cuba, allowing Cubans the opportunity to more fully appreciate the cultural and environmental diversity of their country (Núñez-Jiménez 1985, 7).

In 1981, Castro founded the *Campismo Popular* agency to oversee construction of a nationwide network of camps that initially provided simple facilities for tent campers. These were later replaced by a system of huts and bungalows and by 1986 the campismo network included 106 facilities throughout the country, some of which boasted amenities such as cafeterias and game rooms (Spokesperson for *Cubamar*, personal communication, 1997). As can be noted in Table 4, the system is reported to have attracted over 1.3 million visitors in 1986, meaning that the facilities were used by over 1/10th of Cuba’s population in that year. Castro viewed the *campismo popular* as the best means to offer recreational outlets for Cuban citizens, since despite generous terms of trade with the Soviet Union the island lacked the necessary monies (and indeed the desire) to develop a comparatively expensive tourism infrastructure. One author believes this to be an early attempt at ecotourism development, since it involved efforts at conservation as well as an opportunity to educate Cuban young people about the natural environment (Aitermoser 1995, 59-

Table 4: Visitor Data for the *Campismo popular* Infrastructure: 1981-2001

Year	Number of Facilities	National Visitors	Accumulated Total
1981	6	34,455	34,455
1982	31	256,014	290,469
1983	70	535,136	825,605
1984	95	776,167	1,601,772
1985	100	1,128,012	2,729,784
1986	106	1,364,233	4,094,017
1987	103	1,112,007	5,206,024
1988	101	1,460,684	6,408,165
1989	99	1,342,482	7,750,647
1990	100	1,307,706	9,058,353
1991	101	1,460,684	10,519,037
1992	101	908,089	11,427,126
1993	101	1,061,769	12,488,895
1994	93	1,040,563	13,529,458
1995	89	748,815	14,278,273
1996	89	825,000*	15,103,273*
2001	82	925,000*	19,000,000*

Sources: *Cubamar*, 1996; *Granma diario*, Jan. 31, 2002.

*Denotes estimated visitors

62). Furthermore, local materials were used in the construction of these facilities, and food was (and continues to be, in some cases) locally grown or grown on-site for use by the visitors (Spokesperson for *Cubamar*, personal communication, July, 1997).

Castro himself stated, in reference to the *campismo* system, “we were the first country in the world to truly establish ecotourism and on a large scale” (Castro discusses, 1996). Indeed, the *campismo popular* in many ways exemplified Castro’s goal of institutionalizing the revolution by promoting a deeper indigenous attachment to the island’s environmental assets. Furthermore, it relieved pressure at traditional beach tourism resorts such as Varadero and Havana’s Playas del Este where,

following Castro's victory in 1959, many tourist hotels had been converted for use as worker apartments (Castro discusses, 1996).

With the advent of the Special Period and the growth of international tourism in Cuba, the government established the tourism agency known as *Cubamar* that was given the directive to commercialize various *campismo popular* facilities by renovating them for use by international tourists. As with other state-run agencies and industries in the Special Period, *Cubamar* was directed to function self-sufficiently and hence to rely little on the state for funding. For this reason, the agency assumed control of a percentage of the profits from their international installations. These monies were to be used to maintain the agency and the *campismo popular* system. *Cubamar* renovated existing *campismo* sites to develop three distinct types of low-cost installations designed for use by international visitors. Included were villas, nautical bases (camps on the coast with access to water and boating activities), and "mixed" facilities for use by both international and domestic tourists (Aitermoser 1995, 38-39, Spokesperson for *Cubamar*, personal communication, 1997). As shown in Figure 2, *Cubamar* currently manages three villas including Aguas Claras and El Abra in Pinar del Rio, and Guajimico near Cienfuegos, and maintains two nautical bases in Puerto Escondido and Rio Canimar, and four "mixed" facilities that include Dos Hermanas in Pinar del Rio province, Sierrita in Granma, Silla de Gibara in Holguin, and Rio La Mula in Santiago de Cuba.

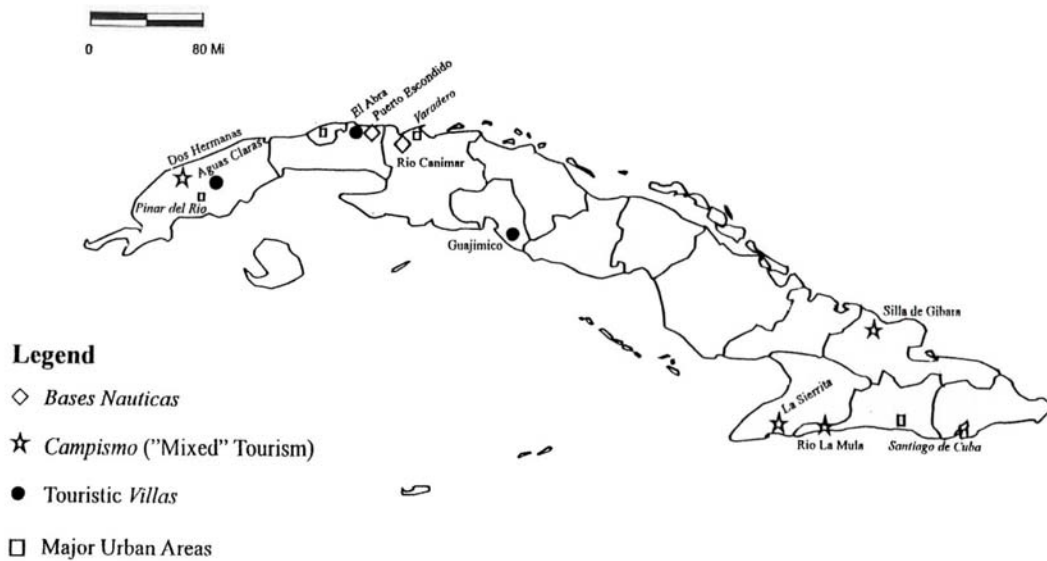


Figure 2: Map of International Ecotourism Installations (Cubamar)

The “mixed” facilities are referred to by *Cubamar* as tourist “bungalows” and serve as basic accommodation for “nature” tourists. They lack comforts such as air conditioning and private bathrooms with running water. As in many North American and European campgrounds, tourists share common bathing facilities. An important feature is that the “mixed” facilities are also available to Cuban vacationers who pay for their stay in national currency (the peso) as opposed to the parallel currency (the U.S. dollar) used by tourists. It is important to realize that while dollars became legal for Cuban citizens to hold and use in 1993, possession of dollars does not grant Cubans automatic access to tourist-oriented hotels, restaurants and shops, although as noted earlier, Cubans are increasingly allowed into hotels in order to shop in dollar stores (Scarpaci, personal communication, April 2003). In 1996, international

vacationers had access to a nearby restaurant and gift shop that charged in dollars; Cuban vacationers at that time were not allowed to enter those facilities regardless of their ability to pay in the requisite currency. Cubans who entered establishments for international tourists were usually asked to leave by tourism personnel or security agents. Flagrant violations are subject to fines and even imprisonment.

While officials at *Cubamar* advertise the “mixed” facilities as a means for international tourists to meet and interact with Cuban tourists, it appears that few travelers have heeded the call despite their low cost. Oscar González, director of the *Campismo Popular* agency, noted that the internationalized campismo sites were only able to attract 3,000 foreign tourists in the first quarter of 1999 (González 1999).⁵⁷ In the summer of 1999, prices for international tourists at the mixed facilities ranged from \$9.00 for a single to \$18.00 for a triple. Touristic “villas” and nautical bases cost \$14.00 for a single up to \$30.00 for a triple (all prices quoted in U.S. dollars) (*Cubamar* 1999).

I conducted interviews with representatives at *Cubamar* in 1996. Ana Eugenia, the assistant director, revealed that the agency had a two-fold directive: to enhance offerings for international tourists and to use a percentage of those receipts to breathe new life into the *campismo popular* infrastructure for use by Cubans. In 1999, Oscar González of the *Campismo Popular* agency noted that *Cubamar* had invested 10 million pesos (equivalent to roughly \$475,000 in 1999) to remodel and expand the campismo infrastructure. He declared that fifty percent of the investment came from the agency’s earnings in the international tourism market with matching

⁵⁷ According to *Cubamar*, occupancy data for individual installations were unavailable.

funds supplied by the Ministry of Tourism (González 1999). This investment includes improvements to installations for both international and Cuban tourists. As of summer 2001, 82 of the original 106 camping facilities remained open to Cuban visitors; the others had either been closed permanently or had been renovated for use only by international tourists (Más 2001). Despite an overall reduction in facilities, *Cubamar* welcomed a reported 925,000 Cuban tourists to the *campismo popular* in 2001 (Más 2001). González cited improvements in the quality of services as a main reason for the increased use by Cubans, including renovated installations and improved offerings at restaurants and cafeterias (González 1999).

Tourism officials such as González argue that the Cuban tourist has begun to receive benefits from receipts earned through international tourism. My interview data disputes González' assertion, however. In 1996, I conducted a poll in Havana and Varadero involving fifteen Cuban citizens of varying ages, races and genders. I drew participants from those who had visited a campismo site at least once and I asked them each informally to offer their opinion of the *campismo popular* infrastructure. Ten stated that they did not enjoy "camping out" and would rarely or "never again" utilize the infrastructure. Two adults believed the program was best suited to children and young adults and had not visited an installation during their adult years. In addition, all but two noted that the overall lack of reliable transportation (a concern duly noted by *Cubamar* officials) made visiting the sites unappealing at best and impossible at worst. A female respondent in her late 40s stated, "most Cubans are not interested in camping vacations, rather we prefer time at the beach or access to nightlife activities." (Carmela, personal communication, June,

1996). She believed the government had made little effort to provide the citizens with quality accommodation and tourism options and was critical of governmental policy that prohibited entry into international tourism establishments and areas.

Three interviewees in Varadero, however, spoke in favor of the campismo installation located on the eastern tip of their peninsula referred to as *Rincon Frances*. All three respondents were white males in their early 20s. Two lived in Varadero and the other lived in Cardenas. They stated that they felt more comfortable away from the international tourist hotels from which they were restricted or otherwise made to feel unwelcome. Furthermore, one respondent believed the international installations to be de-humanizing and charm-less; he preferred the “easy-going” pace and ambience of the campismo facility. Other reasons stated in favor of the campismo sites included the lack of a police presence coupled with the chance to meet international tourists interested in socializing with “regular” Cuban citizens (as opposed to tourism workers). Unfortunately for these respondents, the Varadero campismo facility has been torn down in order to construct a new hotel for international visitors (*Cubamar* representative, personal communication, 2000). According to the source, there exist no plans to build a new campismo site in Varadero for Cuban visitors. Rincon Frances is not the only Cuban space to be given over to international tourism. According to a published report, “José Martí Pioneer City,” a multi-million dollar camp east of Havana that could accommodate up to 20,000 children, was recently converted into hotel space for international tourists (Allen 1999).

In addressing the government claim that the benefits of developing an infrastructure for international tourism will ultimately enhance tourism facilities for Cuban people, several participants argued that the problems they face in day-to-day life in the Special Period overshadow any benefits they might receive as tourists in their own country. Indeed, the fact that *Cubamar* was allowed to pursue mixed tourism is notable in that the Castro regime has increasingly discouraged contact between tourists and Cuban citizens as was noted in Chapter Two. Indeed, Cuban access to an improved *campismo* infrastructure must be weighed against the loss of prime local tourism space in many locations throughout the country. Cases in point include Varadero and Cayo Coco which are now accessible only to international tourists and the Cubans who have been cleared to work there, primarily construction and tourism workers; the average Cuban is denied entry into the area.

Some have complained that this prohibition runs counter to measures enacted after the Revolution such as Law 437 of July 7, 1959 which called for: “the creation of a Department of Beaches for the Cuban people, the fostering of tourism beaches and the guarantee to allocate reasonable tourist attractions (for Cubans).” At that time, the government also passed laws that “recuperated” former international tourist space for the use by the Cuban people including Resolution 1077 of December 16, 1959 that “returned” the Hilton hotel to the hands of the Cuban people (Villalba 1993, 124-125). As previously discussed, recent shifts in policy have effectively overturned these laws leading many to question the position of the Cuban people in the new geographical realities of international tourism. Indeed, the presence of apartheid tourism has become a serious point of contention among some Cuban people. As one

observer has stated, “in defiance of socialist ideals, this enclave system is as divisive as the former Berlin Wall. Hotels are like country clubs that no Cubans can join” (Perrottet and Biondi 1995, 72).

Another contention over the use of Cuban space cited by several officials and Cuban people involves charges that environmentally destructive tourism projects are carried out with the full knowledge and approval of the Cuban government. While the Castro regime has employed experts to study areas where tourism is deemed an appropriate strategy, expert recommendations are often ignored in the final implementation of many tourism projects. A tourism official interviewed for this study was dismayed that the recommendations outlined in his impact study at the Guajimico campismo site were seemingly dismissed, a situation he believed was driven by the desire for rapid construction of the facility. Specifically, he noted an example where workers clear cut trees along with the neighboring vegetation in a mangrove swamp to make way for an imported white sand beach for tourists. Citing this and other examples, he openly questioned the government’s commitment to conservation efforts.⁵⁸

At the present time, it appears that revenue from international tourism is slowly making its way into the *campismo popular* infrastructure for the benefit of Cuban tourists. Despite the misgivings of many Cubans, if greater investment causes the *campismo popular* to grow in popularity with both between Cuban and international visitors (as Oscar González, director of the *Campismo Popular* agency has predicted) then the infrastructure could serve as an important vacation option for

⁵⁸ See Perez-Lopez 2000, 261-266 for more discussion on conservation.

Cubans. Many observers have noted that in some areas where apartheid tourism is present, pressures also exist to provide locals access to some facilities at reduced prices. In Kenya and Ecuador, solutions such as differential fee structures and other price breaks have been tried. Locals are allowed access to areas such as national parks that recoup operating fees from international tourists, who are charged at a higher rate (Wallace 1993, 76). In Jamaica, holidays for workers have been organized at tourist resorts in an effort to combat the twin problems of psychological and price exclusion of locals (Pattullo 1996, 204-205). As mentioned, in the “mixed” campismo facilities, international tourists are charged dollars whereas their Cuban counterparts pay in pesos to use the same facilities. However, it appears that many Cubans would rather have access to hotels now reserved for international tourists, an option currently available only to honeymooners and “exemplary” workers who can earn a short vacation usually in a two or three star tourist hotel. As stated above, the rest of the population is forbidden from staying in hotels managed for international tourists. I develop the counterpoint to the *campismo popular* (socialist) discourse in the following section.

The Discourse of Tourism in the Special Period: The Case of

Varadero

“Varadero: seemingly endless, clean, powdery, white beaches; a broad, shallow, sandy slope far out into the sea, with coral reefs beyond; three yachting marinas; water colors you always assumed were airbrushed into the travel magazines and brochures” (Miller and Henthorne 1997, 23).

Varadero, as a socially constructed and produced space, is subject to analysis from several points of view. First of all, it represents a symbol of the revival of tourism and all the attendant aspects of that industry during the Special Period. This includes the return of substantial foreign investment to the country and the role of the state in promoting the area. Varadero is Cuba's leading beach tourism destination and in many ways represents a typical enclave tourism resort. Located on the Hicacos Peninsula roughly 90 miles east of Havana, it is home to over 19,000 permanent residents and at any given time entertains Cuba's second largest community of international tourists after the capital city. Some locals complain that the town is developing too quickly and believe that if continued unabated, Varadero will soon resemble its overdeveloped rivals in the Caribbean region. Varadero boasts over 8,000 of Cuba's roughly 50,000 available hotel rooms and one source believes that 25,000 might eventually be available on the peninsula thereby placing Varadero in the same league with Cancun (Miller and Henthorne 1997, 26). Many locals interviewed for this study, including some not directly employed in the industry, worried about the (seemingly temporary) effects of the 1996 crackdown that they believed led to a dip in tourism numbers to the peninsula. Varadero residents view tourism as important to their personal economic well-being as well as to the health of their town.

As is the case with some critics of the *campismo popular* system, several Cuban officials, including those at the Cuban Institute of Physical Planning, have expressed concern about the environmental ramifications of tourism development on the Varadero peninsula (Díaz-Briquets and Pérez-Lopez 2000, 262). A geography

professor at the University of Havana believes that tourism-related buildings are being constructed too close to the shore line which could eventually lead to profound beach erosion (Dean Garcia, personal communication, 1996). Other officials point to Varadero as a model for development in other regions such as Cayo Coco where building continues apace and features both sea and air connections with Varadero. It should be noted that the development of Cayo Coco has been roundly criticized since access has been provided by a berm (referred to as a *pedraplene* in Cuba) that connects the island to the mainland. Ecologists believe the construction to be environmentally unsound since it blocks the flow of water in the intra-coastal waters leading to increasing contamination and adverse effects on local flora and fauna (Díaz-Briquets and Pérez-Lopez 2000, 264-265).

Varadero as Symbol

Varadero represents many things to many people and serves as a symbol for tourists, Cuban officials and average citizens alike. Over the course of the revolutionary period and especially during the Special Period, Varadero has served as a key indicator of the dominant thinking and concerns of the revolution. Compared to its multi-faceted and much larger tourism rival Havana, Varadero is a relatively small, self-contained enclave that is easily controlled since there exists only one road onto the peninsula. Its physical setting is a textbook example of a Caribbean paradise that tempts tourists with its warm, shallow waters, pleasant climate and fine-grained white sand beaches. Cuban officials project Varadero as a model of the form of tourism

that they wish to produce and maintain: enclave, all-inclusive tourism packages that allow greater control of revenue as well as a means to limit contact between visitors and Cuban citizens. As proof of this latter assertion, the government issued a severe crackdown in 1996 on both legal and illegal economic activities on the peninsula (discussed below).

Varadero also serves as a symbol for Cuban citizens. Varaderans are proud of their town's heritage as is evident from the capital invested in the restoration of many of the wooden balloon-framed houses dating from the late 1800s. During interviews, many seemed pained by Varadero's new exclusionary practices that recall the Batista-era whereby many Cubans were effectively second-class citizens in the most attractive parts of their country. Furthermore, many Cubans, who lived in former hotels that had been renovated into citizen apartments early in the Castro era and had once again been adapted for the use of foreign tourists during the Special Period, are disappointed that they have had to relocate into generic apartment blocks in nearby Cardenas.

While tourism was, and remains, Varadero's economic mainstay, the peninsula was first known for the production of salt. In fact, the first recorded history of the area begins in the year 1587 when Don Pedro Camacho began engaging in salt extraction. Salt mined from the area amounted to 250,000 sacks (size not indicated) per year, which was enough to satisfy the needs of Cuba and the Spanish fleet that anchored in Havana en route to Spain (Nuñez-Jimenez 1990, 8). By 1928, the peninsula reportedly produced over 22,500 *fanegas* of the commodity annually; salt

production in Varadero was terminated in only 1961 (Condensed History 1988, 57-58).

The future tourist resort boasted long stretches of fine-grained white sand beach that now prove a major draw for tourists. The town was first “put on the map” by the Havana elite who built leisure houses and developed the beginnings of a tourism infrastructure on the peninsula in the late 1800s. According to the Condensed History of Varadero (1988) published by the Museum of Varadero (*Museo de Varadero*), the Varadero Sport Club was established in 1889 to promote aquatic sports, but it also served as a social venue for meetings, dances and dinners. Also in that year, Varadero’s first theater and casino were built for vacationers (Condensed History 1988, 57).

Despite the early attempts at development by wealthy patrons, the town grew slowly due to “unhygienic” conditions created by physical features of the peninsula. While the first major hotel, the “Varadero,” was built in 1915, it was not until the mid to late 1920s that a sustained effort to build tourism establishments was undertaken. The peninsula suffered from both limited access to clean drinking water, as well as swampy conditions on the southern edge of the peninsula that favored the breeding of malaria-carrying mosquitoes. Indeed, these conditions were cited as the main reason that Varadero, which was long considered a location of incomparable natural beauty, developed slowly and even lost population from 1899 (1,029 people) to 1919 (668 people) (Condensed History 1988, Appendix One). It was not until the late 1920s that the twin problems of water impurity and malarial swamps were satisfactorily addressed and tourism began to expand at an accelerated rate. The growing popularity

of Cuba as an excursion destination for American visitors, and the “discovery” of Varadero as a locus of villas for wealthy American businessmen fueled this growth. Irénee Dupont, the French born chemicals magnate, purchased 512 hectares of land in the center of the peninsula in 1926 through his real estate company, *Peñas Hicacos*. Dupont eventually constructed a series of retreats, the centerpiece of which was a vacation mansion he named “Xanadu,” including an 18-hole golf course (Perrottet and Biondi 1996, 175).

Despite this investment in the 1920s, Varadero drew a limited number of visitors until the tourism boom of the 1950s. After its beginnings in the 1920s as a playground for the wealthy, by the 1950s Varadero began to attract tourists of all classes and became a key cog in Cuba’s tourism infrastructure, helping to underscore the popular moniker for Cuba: the playground of the Caribbean. Development in Varadero exploded in the 1950s with private investment spiraling from \$245,000 in 1951 to \$3.5 million in 1957 (Schwartz 1997, 128). When Fidel Castro came to power in 1959, he portrayed Varadero as a symbol of what he perceived were the pathologies of the previous regime. Varadero, he stated, was home to the decadent ills associated with capitalism including vice, prostitution and entrenched inequality (Perrottet and Biondi 1996, 70). By opening up the beaches to the entire Cuban population and renovating many hotels into apartments for Cuban citizens, he effectively re-christened the town and claimed it as a symbol of socialism and equality. Indeed, the passage of Law 437 and Resolution 1077 that nationalized tourism beaches and hotels encouraged people to think of resort towns such as Varadero as their own personal space. Cubans were actively encouraged to visit the

former domains of the foreign visitors and they were accommodated by many of the same hotels and restaurants that were built from the 1920s to the 1950s, including the centerpiece of the peninsula, the *Hotel Internacional* built in 1957.

Personal Profile: A Changed Varadero

It was in the summer of 1995 that I first traveled to Cuba where I established a research base in Havana. Over the course of two months, I traveled to Varadero on three separate occasions with groups of American students and Cuban friends from Havana. At that time, Cubans were allowed to enter Varadero and on every visit we found the town and the beach bustling with a mixture of Cuban day trippers and foreign tourists. While Cubans at that time were restricted from several “private” beaches, there were ample stretches of sand where Cubans and international tourists intermingled. One vivid memory I have of Varadero was watching the sex workers ply their trade along the beach. The women (and some men, a.k.a., beach boys) would proposition tourists on the beach and would either leave with their dates (presumably to hotel rooms) or they would conduct their business in the ocean. Offers for cigars, rum and drugs were also frequently posed and hawkers of tourism trinkets were found on every street corner.

Two years later on a return visit to Varadero, I noticed that the illegal hawkers and sex workers were mostly gone from the scene. The tourism officials had been successful in “sanitizing” the town, Prosecutor Juan Escalona’s euphemism for removing the sex workers and other unwanted “pests” from the beaches and from

public view (see Tamayo 1996, 1). Also gone were the Cuban excursionists who were no longer allowed to visit their island's most famous, and some would say most attractive, stretch of beach. In Varadero, a few stretches of public beach remained open for residents of the town and immediate vicinity,⁵⁹ but I noted an increasing number of private beaches that fronted the new enclave resorts that had sprouted in the intervening period. Varadero was much quieter and appeared from my perspective to be a completely different place in the summer of 1997 than it was in 1995.

With the return of international tourism in the Special Period, Varadero once again became the centerpiece of the regime's economic strategies that are in many ways at odds with the socialist discourse. Thus, over the past ten years Varadero has reverted to an exclusive space where Cubans as tourists are no longer welcome. Indeed, its importance to international tourism was underlined in 1996 when the Castro regime restricted non-authorized Cubans from entry onto the peninsula and issued a crackdown on illegal activities in the area. The regime erected the first toll booths of the revolution on the road from Matanzas to Varadero in the same year. Private cars are charged \$2 US and tourist buses pay \$4 US. Residents claim the toll booths were mainly constructed to keep prostitutes out of Varadero and to limit traffic

⁵⁹ Only Cubans who can demonstrate their residency in Matanzas province are allowed to enter Varadero. Exceptions are made for those on official business or who have clearance to visit the area.

by other Cubans who have no legitimate business in the area (Scarpaci, Segre and Coyula 2002, 302).

The following vignette discusses ways that some Cubans have found to navigate the new realities of the tourist economy following the crackdowns of 1996.

Personal Profile: Varadero's Shifting Geography and Lived Spaces

Carlos (20 years old) is a lifelong resident of the Varadero region. He and his sister, Ana (18 years old), were born in the town and currently live in the nearby city of Cardenas, not by choice, but due to government action. They grew up in a former hotel that had been renovated to accommodate Cuban families during the early years of the Castro regime. However, in 1994, due to increasing demand for tourism space on the peninsula, they were forced to move into a newly constructed apartment block on the north end of Cardenas. Both Carlos and Ana disliked the idea of leaving Varadero for Cardenas. Even though their new residence is only eight miles away, transportation into and out of Varadero can be difficult, especially in the evenings. This is because most available buses have been allocated to the tourism industry and most currently transport tourism workers between Cardenas, Matanzas and Varadero.

Carlos and Ana's father was a taxi driver in Varadero even before the Special Period. He was able to work for the first few years of the Special Period and Carlos remembers this time fondly as his father was able to bring home dollars from the tips he generated. Unfortunately, the father became ill and passed away in 1995 and Carlos and Ana's mother, Clara, was forced to seek employment to support the

children. Clara found work in the Hotel Bellamar in Varadero but was laid off when the hotel was closed one year later for renovation. She currently draws unemployment from the state and says she has been promised a job in Varadero “soon”, but insists that the pay will be insufficient for her family’s needs.

To help with family expenses, Carlos has been seeking work in the tourism industry. When we met, he was working as the camp manager of Rincon Frances, the erstwhile *campismo popular* installation located on the eastern tip of the peninsula. Carlos’ duties included managing the small discotheque and food rations as well as checking in and supervising visitors. While Carlos earned his wages in pesos, he was able to supplement his income by selling lobster on the black market. An excellent swimmer, Carlos would swim a great distance past the reefs to elude beach patrols. He would sell his successful catch for cash or trade to a friend who he called a “small time jinetero.” Carlos spent some of his money on entertainment and gave the rest to his mother.

In the summer of 1997, Carlos met an English woman who was on vacation in Varadero for several weeks. They began dating and Carlos “moved in” to her cabana near the Hotel Internacional. Interestingly, Carlos was allowed to stay despite the full knowledge of the management that he was there. Indeed, based on my experience in Varadero, it appeared unproblematic for a white Cuban male to accompany foreign females into hotels, restaurants and shops. During my stay in Varadero, I was aware of several other Cuban men besides Carlos who were staying in hotels with the foreign girlfriends they had recently met. Ana, Carlos’ sister, believed that she would have a much more difficult time “moving in” and spending several days in the hotel

room of a foreign man following the 1996 crackdowns. She believes that Cuban officials make a distinction between the relationships between Cuban males and females and their foreign partners. The situation of a male dating a foreign woman is not necessarily construed as a union based on a financial agreement; rather: “it is seen as a conquest by the Cuban male.” By contrast, Ana believes, a Cuban woman dating a foreign man is always looked upon with suspicion and is considered an act of *jineterismo*. A double standard based on access to tourists was confirmed by interview data, as Cubans generally believed that men enjoyed greater access to foreign women (and hence to spaces reserved for foreign visitors) than Cuban women enjoyed with foreign men. The informants believed darker skinned Cubans had the greatest difficulties in negotiating these spaces.

Varadero and the Crackdowns of 1996

The headlines of *Juventud Rebelde* (the Young Communist League’s official organ) stated, “In Varadero, they’ve broken the chain.” The date was April 4, 1996 and the Cuban authorities had begun a systematic attack on “prostitution” (*jineterismo*) throughout the country, but focused their efforts on Varadero, Cuba’s second-most important tourism space. According to the newspaper article and several authorities I have subsequently interviewed, Varadero had become the site of growing networks of prostitution and vice where pimps (*proxenetas*) were said to control whole systems of sex workers, illegal private taxi drivers and illegal private restaurants along with black market sales of counterfeit cigars, drugs and rum

(Schwartz, 1997: 211).⁶⁰ The crackdowns were said to be “long overdue” and were consistent with a desire to promote a brand of tourism that Cuban officials labeled “family-oriented” (Elizade and Pulido 1996). The government claims that it keeps the throngs of hustlers at bay in order to project a safer image in places like Havana and Varadero (San Martin 2001). According to one observer, “The war against the *jineteras* was on. But it is a war the Cuban government cannot afford to lose and cannot afford to win” (Paternostro 2000). Indeed, as will be noted in this section, Castro alternately depends on Cuba’s sex workers and hustlers while at the same time he fears their potentially destabilizing influence or power.

While the crackdown effectively squelched illegal activities in Varadero, the Castro regime mounted a concurrent effort to increase control of many officially legal forms of self-employment. This was accomplished through the implementation of harsh tax laws that forced many self-employed Cubans out of business in a variety of occupations, including the operators of small private restaurants known as *paladares* that had proven an increasing draw for tourists (Perrottet and Biondi 1996, 62). One reason for the multi-level crackdown was the fear on the part of the Cuban leadership that the forces of capitalism were slowly moving beyond the direct control of the government. The situation in Varadero was a case in point. Castro was also afraid of the growing popularity of enterprises that competed directly with state-run facilities such as restaurants and hotels and that were capable of draining money away from

⁶⁰ Beginning in January of 2003, Cuban authorities instituted a series of crackdowns similar to those of 1996. They targeted legal and illegal operators in the informal economy and in the process reportedly confiscated “tons” of products and equipment (Rodríguez Valdés 2003). The government has also reportedly carried out raids on medical dispensaries operated by civil organizations that draw support from international agencies. In a March 24th raid, the government is said to have confiscated 90 pounds of donated medicines from a Havana dispensary (Armenteros 2003).

government coffers. As Fusco has noted, the government often changes rhetoric in order to rein in activities where they believe direct control is waning (1998, 161). The subsequent crackdown on *paladares*, illegal taxi drivers and individuals who rented private rooms to tourists was widely seen as an attempt to limit the degree to which “unauthorized” Cubans could benefit directly from the burgeoning tourist dollars entering the country. As established in Chapter Three, these unauthorized (illegal) workers are collectively referred to as *jineteros*.

Personal Profile: *Jineterismo* in Varadero

Pedro is a truck driver by trade who lives just south of the main thoroughfare (1st Avenue) in Varadero and is representative of many part-time *jineteros*. He rents a room in his house to tourists whenever he gets the opportunity, although he has to be careful, because the police increasingly keep tabs on private rentals following the 1996 crackdowns. When a foreign tourist asks if she will get into trouble with the authorities if she agrees to stay in his house, Pedro tells her that the government recently made it legal to rent private rooms in Cuba. What he neglected to tell her was that Cubans who wish to rent out rooms must register with the authorities and are subject to a tax system that charges them a flat rate regardless of whether they have rented their space or not. While Pedro rents his room illegally, he always checks with the local CDR representative when “friends” (his euphemism for foreigners) and family stay at his house to reaffirm that they are not staying permanently. He hopes this arrangement will deflect the attention of the local police. Pedro charged tourists 10 dollars a night to stay in his house and he included one meal that was prepared by

his wife, Laura, who stayed at home with the children while Pedro was at work. According to Scarpaci, most private rentals cost at least 20 dollars in 2003 (Scarpaci, personal communication, April 2003). (Based on my conversation with Pedro, June 1997)

The above profile illustrates that *jineterismo* includes many more activities than sex work. Cubans often perform such acts in ad hoc fashion to take advantage of opportunity as O'Connell has demonstrated (1996, 40). For example, Pedro illegally rents out a room in his house whenever he is able and he depends on word of mouth to attract tourists. It was unclear from our discussion whether the CDR official he notifies receives compensation for his cooperation with Pedro's scheme. Judging from Pedro's ability to avoid harassment by the police during a period of heightened enforcement of anti-*jineterismo* legislation, I suspect he has made some arrangement (financial or otherwise) with his neighbor.

Despite the fact that *jineterismo* is an umbrella term for any act deemed by the government as an illegal form of capitalism, sex work remains the activity most frequently attached to the term. It is useful, therefore, to consider how the discourse surrounding Cuban sex work compares to that practiced in other countries and particularly in other tourism resorts. Prostitution, both as an act and a distinct economic sector, has no universal definition. As Truong has noted, many continue to define prostitution through the lens of normative assumptions regarding the primacy

of intercourse and other sexual acts as acceptable only within the confines of socially sanctioned unions (1990, 9). Furthermore, the term “prostitute” continues to carry a stigma in most societies and this has led to instances of women being labeled prostitutes for engaging in acts that challenge the societal norms (Truong 1990, 10). As Hubbard has noted, “Prostitution is a form of work imbricated with the same sort of complex and contradictory power dynamics which face all people in their jobs; simultaneously empowering and exploitative, sex work can be a life-line for some, a life sentence for others” (1999, 8). As a result of economic realities present during the Special Period, the definition of the word prostitute in Cuba has taken on an expanded Marxist interpretation. The Spanish word for a female sex worker is prostituta, but is rarely used by Cubans in that context. Rather, sex workers are simply called (like others engaged in illegal activities) jineteros.

It must be noted that I adopt the term “sex worker” to follow the lead of feminists and even the World Health Organization who identify the selling of sex as a legitimate form of commerce. The women and men involved in the provision of sexual services view their activities as labor and believe they should be granted the same provisions as other workers including such issues as workplace safety. Sex work as it is practiced in Cuba falls within this category in many Cuban minds, and as such, presents a challenge for feminists and other observers, because the act of selling one’s body in exchange for sexual favors is often condoned and even encouraged by the families of young Cuban women.

One reason sex work is popularly condoned by the Cuban public is that it is regarded by the government first and foremost as an act of illegal capitalism or

jineterismo. Therefore, the act, in general, fails to illicit the response of shame associated with moral turpitude that it does in most other regions in the world. Fusco aptly demonstrated this point during an interview with two *jineteras*. When asked what the men in the neighborhood think about their profession, the women reply, “They see the (client) coming in with a girl, and they don’t see him. They see a chicken, beans, rice-a full fridge” (Fusco 1998, 157). On the other end of the spectrum, in Belize, Ragsdale and Anders’ work on sex workers notes the degree to which women in many Latin American societies are stigmatized by their form of employment. They write that women (in Central America) “share a constant fear of being discovered, which creates very stressful situations when they run into an acquaintance or a family member near or in their place of work” (1999, 222).

For these and other reasons, today’s sex worker differs from Cuban prostitutes of the 1950s in that she (and he, in some cases) is generally much better educated and would often be considered middle class. Many observers have noted that Cuban prostitutes often engage in their work in a rather ad hoc fashion, seizing opportunity when it is presented to them (see Rundle 2001 and O’Connell 1996, 40-41). Cuban sex workers are also distinct in that they are rarely subject to contractual obligations to third parties (i.e., procurers: pimps), despite government rhetoric that overstates the presence of organized crime rings. Rather, sex workers are relatively autonomous opportunists who take advantage of local conditions (O’Connell 1996, 40-41).

Furthermore, evidence suggests that sex workers are often supported in their decision to perform this work by family members who encourage them to seek out tourists in an effort to earn hard currency (Paternostro 2000). In some cases, they are

instructed to seek a marriage proposal from a foreigner in an effort to leave the country. Once this occurs, the woman who has left the country is expected to send remittances back to the family and/or attempt to arrange immigration for family members left in Cuba. It is ironic to note that the construction of sex workers as simple working women by some family members can lead to an exploitative relationship wherein the worker becomes, literally, a work horse who supports the family.

The crackdown on *jineterismo* of all types dating from 1996 but including sporadic crackdowns through 2003, must be viewed in the context of government concern surrounding growing income inequalities. As Locay noted, Cubans with the least access to dollars, either gained through *jineterismo* or via remittances from abroad, are also thought to be the regime's strongest supporters. Therefore, as the government cracks down it is likely to be directly punishing its largest cohort of support by making it yet harder for them to make a living (Locay 1998, 86-87). Fusco believes that Cuban women see foreign men as replacement providers during a period when the government has a reduced capacity to provide for them or their families. She writes,

“From the salsa singers, the cab driver's quips and the bawdy folk art renderings of *jineteras* I encountered around Havana, I got the sense that on the street these women are perceived as heroic providers whose mythical sexual power is showing up the failures of an ailing macho regime” (Fusco 1998, 154).

In an effort to combat perceived criminal activity, the Cuban government amended the penal code to facilitate the prosecution of “profiteers” (translated as

pimps: *proxenetas*) who are believed to have enriched themselves unduly through dealings with international tourists (Pérez-Lopez 1998, 72-74). Since that time, the regime has frequently cited this law in dealing with suspected *jineteros* in all lines of work. Indeed, the 1996 sweep of Varadero was carried out under the auspices of enforcing the penal code. However, the evidence suggests that the enforcement of the code is both selective and geographically uneven. For example, while anti-*jinetero* crackdowns have occurred in Havana as well as Varadero, there remain pockets of “vice” in Havana (typically in dollar-denominated discos and nightclubs) whereas Varadero remained a virtual “police state” in the late 1990s in terms of opportunities available to the average *jinetero*. For example, during the summer of 1997, while in Havana, I frequently utilized (cheaper) private and national “for Cubans only” taxis rather than the more expensive tourist (*turist*) taxis even though this practice was technically against the law for the operators. However, in Varadero it was impossible to procure anything but a tourist taxi; neither national taxi drivers nor private automobile drivers would even consider picking up tourist fares.

Sex Workers and the Castro Regime in the Special Period

Colin Hall, in his study of sex work in Southeast Asia, noted that authoritarian governments are often in control during periods when sex tourism is promoted by the state. He writes, “it is possible that the denial of individual rights by authoritarian regimes may encourage the perspective that individuals are sexual commodities to be utilized for advancing the national economic good” (Hall 1995, 68-69). In

accordance with Hall's theory, in the early 1990s the Castro regime touted Cuban sex workers as educated, clean and healthy assets to the country; four years later, however, the regime had changed its discourse. Since the 1996 crackdowns, the government has seemingly embraced two discourses at odds with one another. Maria de los Angeles, an expert on Cuban affairs noted, "What bothers the government now is not that women are selling themselves. It's that the business is out of their hands. The State has been directly involved in promoting sex tourism for years" (de los Angeles quoted in Fusco 1998, 162). Her point is echoed by Paternostro who writes, "Castro's campaign against prostitution is not mainly about higher moral standards; it is mainly about state control" (Paternostro 2000). In 1996, almost overnight, officials labeled sex workers (along with other *jineteros*) as morally deficient exploiters who engaged in their activities in an effort to feed their consumer desires. About the increasing demand for sex workers by foreigners, the regime was mute when in fact the government was promoting sex tourism to foreigners.

It is important to clarify that the Castro regime views sex work through a different lens than it does other forms of *jineterismo*. For example, the government does not view sex workers as potential competitors with the State since the regime does not maintain brothels or directly arrange sex tours. However, the government does view other capitalist enterprises such as *paladares* (both legal and illegal) and illegal taxis as direct competitors with state-operated restaurants and tourist taxi services. Indeed, one scholar has studied *jineteros* in Havana and believes that the Cuban government and *jineteros* maintain a symbiotic relationship at one level, despite overt actions designed to stamp out their activities. She writes,

“It is difficult to argue that *jineterismo* currently represents a fully formed and coherent “resistance culture” capable of challenging the established system, (since) jineteros are more interested in economic survival than in political resistance. By directing tourists to hard currency stores and dance clubs, their behavior is more aptly characterized as collaboration” (Elinson, 1998: 8).

In other words, while jineteros can in some instances compete directly with the government and their activities in and of themselves go against the grain of socialism (such as in the illegal rental of rooms to tourists), jineteros can also complement the government’s efforts to encourage tourist spending in selected establishments. For example, some jineteros (both sex workers and illegal guides) aid the government by steering tourists to establishments such as nightclubs, tourist-only dollar stores and restaurants whose profits go directly into government coffers. This is undoubtedly one reason why they are tolerated and even seemingly encouraged to operate in some tourist locations that are out of sight of the average Cuban. Many have suspected that the government deliberately allowed sex work in touristic zones to prosper as a means to stimulate growth in tourism (Paternostro 2000; Pope, personal communication, 2000).

From a public relations standpoint, however, the government has taken a hard line stance against sex workers and other jineteros. In an effort to discredit *jineterismo*, the government turned to the (captive) press and the writings and speeches of Fidel Castro himself. In addition to printing articles critical of sex workers, the government enlisted commentators to write on the topic. The following was printed by the Cuba Press in 2000:

“To look at her, crossing the street with her baby in a brand-new pram, you would think she is lucky, that she has family abroad who can supply enough

dollars for her to be a “pretty woman” with a “nice baby.” But you would be wrong. Because Marieta, at 24, had the baby with an old Italian who was a grandfather when she met him, but who went gaga when the beautiful Cuban mulatta told him over the phone that she was pregnant. ‘I’m not sure the boy is his, because at around that time I was also hanging out with a Canadian, a Spaniard and a German.’ No matter what the kid looked like, she could debit any one of the four” (Quintero 2000).

The tone of the piece is critical of Marieta’s lifestyle and portrays her as a promiscuous gold digger who attempts to extract money from a client without proof of paternity. Reading between the lines, the commentator is also critical of her access to money that allows her to buy a new pram and dress as a “pretty woman.”

Independent Cuban journalist Hector Peraza penned a poem called the Romance of the Sad Jinetera (*Romance de la Jinetera Triste*) in 1996. The following passage is an excerpt:

Televisor a color
Le regalo a su mama
La grabadora, a su hermano
Un pantalón, al papa
A la abuela, le envió una copa
de crystal de Baccarat

A color television
a gift to her mother
A tape player, for her brother
A pair of pants, for her father
To her grandmother, she sends a crystal
Baccarat goblet

Su familia está contenta
¡Que inteligente es la niña!
piensen todos en la casa
Un giro siempre les llega

Her family is happy
How intelligent she is!
everyone thinks
She always brings them money

“No trabajes tanto, hija,”
le dijo la madre un día
Ellos creen que labora
en turismo, como guía

“Don’t work so hard,”
Her mother tells her one day
They think she works
in tourism, as a guide

Viente años cumple’ hoy
algo le falta, imagino
a la Linda jovencueta
Que sera’ lo que no tiene
si de encajes esta llena
si el hambre ya la sacio

She turns twenty years old today
something is missing
thinks the pretty young woman
What could be the matter,
if she is covered in lace,
if her hunger is finally satisfied,

si muy pronto en un avion
a otras tierras viajara
casada con un señor
que le triplica la edad

if very soon she'll travel in a plane,
to another land,
married to a man,
three times her age

Peraza illustrates several themes that Cubans often associate with sex workers. On the one hand, sex workers are believed by critics to engage in their labor to pursue purely consumerist ends. However, she is also portrayed as a significant monetary contributor to the family, although in this case she buys them non-essential material items, just the sort of activity the government frowns upon. Finally, the jinetera imagines herself married to an aged foreigner and moving to another country in an effort to satisfy her material needs. Presumably, this ultimately leads to an unhappy existence.

Fidel Castro has also spoken out on the problems he associates with jineteras and their lifestyles. Reversing his stance of 1992 when he spoke out in praise of Cuban sex workers, Castro, “sounding like a hurt father,” proclaimed in 1999,

“A pair of high heels, a luxurious little shoe, a seductive perfume, a new dress cannot be the price of honor and the sustenance of a nation. It hurts too much that a country that has done so much to dignify women, that a foreigner can come to trick her, fill her with vices...to corrupt her” (Castro quoted in Paternostro 2000).

In the passage quoted above, Castro has shifted the blame from the jinetera to the foreigner who “tricks” and corrupts her using material rewards as a lure. Vilma Espín of the FMC called for a battle against prostitution “not only for the dignity of women, but for the dignity of Cuba” (Espín quoted in Tamayo 1996).

The Spatial Patterns of Sex Work in Cuba

“A week in Havana, and no jineteras in sight...the women are almost impossible to find. They’ve abandoned Quinta Avenida, they are gone from the cobbled streets of Havana Vieja, they’ve vanished from the Malecón and the Hotel Riviera, which housed their favorite nightclub. Incredibly, prostitution seems to have disappeared from Cuba” (Paternostro 2000).

When considering the social production of space in post-revolutionary Cuba, it is important to establish the limited role assumed by private (meaning non-government sponsored) “producers” of space in that country. Despite efforts by average Cubans to carve out private (mainly economic) space in the country in the form of *paladares*, snack bars, etc., the overwhelming majority of spatial production is directed by the strictly maintained policies of the central government. Furthermore, despite the advent of tourism development in the country that has privileged the role of foreign investors, the state maintains a strong presence in directing the construction of the tourism infrastructure. Indeed, while it is theoretically possible for hotels and other tourism buildings to be 100 percent owned by foreign entities, the government clearly prefers to enter into 50/50 joint venture agreements as a means to exert control over spatial production. This policy echoes Hayden’s assertion that “One of the consistent ways to limit the economic and political rights of groups [in this case the Cuban populace as a whole] has been to constrain social reproduction by limiting access to space” (1995, 22). In Cuba, this has been done by reducing the legal avenues available to earn hard currency through transactions with foreign tourists.

Ordinary Cubans, however, have attempted to establish what Lefebvre (1991) referred to as “counterspace,” or private spaces that function either as contested economic or political space. For example, early in the Special Period, Havana and Varadero in particular were magnets for sex workers and other jineteros interested in economic contacts with tourists. In the early 1990s, sex workers were openly visible in hotel lobbies, nightclubs and restaurants. Some of the more brazen would proposition customers on the beaches (sometimes in front of wives and girlfriends) and in the water (Elizade and Pulido 1996). In fact, many trysts occurred in the ocean. The first wave of crackdowns in 1996 effectively ended this state of affairs. The expulsion of prostitutes from prominent areas in Varadero occurred almost overnight, according to sources. In 1996, a local hotel employee stated, “There are very few jineteras around. The bars and beaches are almost empty” (Tamayo 1996). According to the opening quote by Paternostro, jineteras were suddenly also difficult to find in Havana.

While jineteros once again plied their trade in Havana, by 1996 they were then forced to operate in a much more inconspicuous manner (Elinson 1999). While it has never been legal for sex workers to accompany tourists into their hotel rooms during the Special Period, lax enforcement and corruption made it possible for sex workers to circumvent this policy.⁶¹ The regime also does not allow brothels (sanctioned or non-sanctioned) to operate in the country. The result is that the government has limited the space available for Cuban sex workers to operate and to conduct their

⁶¹ Some sex workers are able to circumvent these prohibitions since managers and security staff at Cuban hotels are believed to take bribes to allow Cubans into the hotel rooms of foreign visitors (Ana, personal communication, 1997).

business. As was noted above, some acts of *jineterismo*, including solicitation by sex workers, are increasingly performed in semi-public spaces such as discos, nightclubs, and beaches. These tourism spaces are considered semi-public in that they are not considered “Cuban space,” because they are off-limits to the average Cuban. The spaces are maintained in an effort to earn hard currency from tourists. The fact that many *jineteros* are able to gain entrance into such establishments suggests that the government has allowed some activity to continue, and in some spaces and at some times actually facilitated it.

The effort of the Castro regime to isolate sex workers in discos and nightclubs meant for foreign tourists appears to be a means to remove them as visual reminders of income inequality to the Cuban population at large while allowing these same practices with the potential to alleviate inequality to continue. Pope interviewed police officers in December 1999 who verified that a new policy was then established in Havana to arrest sex workers who operated out in the open. The officer noted that the policy ran concurrently with efforts to move nightclubs popular with tourists to the Havana suburbs in order to “officially” curtail prostitution in the major tourist zones in Old Havana and along the Malecón waterfront (Pope, personal communication, 2000). This allows the regime to criticize the practice in public while allowing sex workers and other *jineteros* to have out-of-the-way spaces in which to operate, although the practice is still technically illegal. Indeed, according to one source, the state is an active participant in the provision of sex work and has co-opted the role of tout in that a form of “steering” now occurs that entices foreigners to spend money in Cuba’s clubs thereby creating “an underworld of

consumption in a society that demands socialism or death” (Paternostro 2000). In this fashion, sex work has moved from the overtly public spaces of beaches and street corners to the semi-private spaces in Cuba where only tourists are legally allowed to venture.

Part and parcel of Castro’s sex work spatial plan was to relocate back to their rural villages girls who were assumed to be sex workers because they were operating in public but could not prove they were originally from Havana or Varadero. Repeat offenders were subject to rehabilitation camps such as a center that opened in 1998 in Valle Grande near Havana (Rice 1999). According to Rice, a processing center for sex workers in Havana dealt with 6,714 women in 1998 alone. Fifty-nine percent of those processed were from the provinces and were forced to return home (Rice 1999). However, as Paternostro (2000) notes, most find their way back to the capital since only limited opportunities exist in their home regions. It is worth noting that on April 22, 1997, Castro signed Decree Law 217 that created internal migration regulations for Havana out of an espoused interest in public health and public order concerns. By late April, the government announced that 1,600 people had been returned to their home provinces “using persuasive methods” (Decree 1999).

Some Final Thoughts on Sex Work in Cuba

From the previous discussion, I have attempted to show how sex work in Cuba today is in many ways different from that of the pre-revolutionary period. As one source notes, “There is a big difference in the prostitutes [of the 1950s] and the

prostitutes now. They are different in their quality. Women are called *jineteras*, because it is she [sic] who dominates the animal” (FMC official quoted in Paternostro 2000). What this official meant is that sex workers during the Special Period are often highly educated and healthy and often choose to engage in activities with tourists in ad hoc fashion (Paternostro 2000). Furthermore, pimp-run brothels do not exist in Castro’s Cuba and for that reason sex workers of today are more autonomous than sex workers of the 1950s.

In choosing to compare sex work during these two distinct periods, I am in no way suggesting that prostitution was completely eradicated between 1959 and the onset of the Special Period. In fact, as discussed earlier, during the 1970s and 80s, sex workers were reportedly available to foreign tourists (mainly from the Soviet bloc countries but also Western Europe, Latin America and Canada) and were well-placed near major hotels. According to one source, many sex workers operated with the expressed consent of the government and were reportedly employed by the Ministry of the Interior (MININT) to inform on the movements and activities of their clients. Furthermore, Cuban men (particularly those in the Party elite) were said, as well, to have access to sex workers (Fusco 1998, 153).

An interesting aspect of *jineterismo* throughout the Special Period is that tourism space has proved an area where mulattas and Afro-Cuban women have often been more successful than their white counterparts. This is because North American and European sex tourists deliberately seek them out as the exotic Caribbean “Other.” Sex tourism, then, represents an arena where race and gender intersect. Fernández (1999) has noted the entanglement of race and gender within the popular perceptions

of sex work in Cuba. While some observers believe that Afro-Cuban women predominate as sex workers in the country, Fernández correctly notes the degree to which race is socially constructed in Cuban (and, indeed, Caribbean) society. She writes, “Black, mulatto and white are not self-evident categories as much as they are negotiable and malleable identities constructed in social interaction” (1999, 87). For this reason, she believes that while the possession of money can in some regards “whiten” one in Cuban society, socially questionable activities such as sex work can conversely “darken” (Fernandez 1999, 87). Fusco supports this assertion by noting, “To engage in sex work practically means to assume mulatta identity by association” (1998, 155).

The earning potential for mulatta and Afro-Cuban sex workers has, in some situations, mitigated disparities in income between the white and black populations. Given that sex workers are able to earn in one night what the highest paid Cuban professionals earn in one month, they have often been expected to support extended families. In many ways, they represent the Cuban equivalent of the Philippines “New Heroes,” women who work in the sex industry and in the “maid trade” with the implicit support of both their families and the regime. Indeed, some Cubans actively encourage their daughters to engage in sex work, a point noted by Herrera of the Afro-Cuban women’s organization known as MAGIN. She mentioned the case of a mother who was a member of the party who encouraged her daughter to bring back money so they could go to the dollar stores (Herrera 2000, 124). In fact, Herrera notes that she has older friends who say that if they were twenty years younger and attractive, they too would go out to the streets. However, she expresses a cautionary

note, “For a young, intelligent woman to go out and give her body to bring food home for her family and for herself, she has to have very high self-esteem, she has to be very sure of what her values are and what she’s going after” (Herrera 2000, 124).

Evidence shows, however, that police target mulattas and Afro-Cuban *jineteros* at a higher rate than their white counterparts. For example, I, myself, observed an unusual number of darker-skinned Cubans being questioned by the police in Varadero in 1997 while white Cubans were allowed to pass by without incident. Elinson found that white *jineteros* find it easier to approach tourists and have fewer problems with the police than their darker skinned counterparts (1999, 2). Fusco notes that when Cuban men or women who are considered part of the elite engage in *jineterismo*, “everyone looks the other way.” However,

“The fact that black and mulatta *jineteras* are succeeding in marrying Europeans at an unusually high rate also makes these women the objects of envy (in the country). The more affluent, and mostly white sectors of the female population often resort to moralizing rhetoric as a mask for their resentment” (Fusco 1998, 160).

Jineterismo has changed not only the geographic spaces and discourse of the Special Period, but those spaces associated with race and gender, as well. Unfortunately, my research indicates that this unequal access to space has sexist and racist overtones. The following chapter continues on this theme and examines representations of women and Afro-Cubans in the tourist literature.

CHAPTER SIX

Representations of Race and Gender: The Social Construction of Tourism Space through Brochures and Guidebooks

This section draws from the previous chapter but shifts the focus to the dominant government discourse as it relates to representations of race and gender associated with the tourism industry. After placing the research in its theoretical context, I explain the results of a survey on tourism literature and the representations of race and gender highlighted from that analysis. In an effort to more fully examine representations of race and gender, I conducted a quantitative and qualitative analysis of tourism literature produced both in Cuba and in North America for an audience of international tourists. I surveyed three categories of publications, including brochures, guides and magazines.

The purpose of this section is to focus critically on the use of images in the marketing of Cuba as a tourist locale by highlighting the discourses of gender and race promoted by the literature and to examine how Cuba's tourist gaze is influenced by the production of tourism space during the Castro period. The inclusion of literature on Cuba from both Cuban and foreign sources highlights several issues regarding representation. First of all, representation of gender and race is a key component within the ideas of social constructionism and cultural hegemony and raises the question as to who has the "socio-spatial" power to represent? (Pulsipher 1997, 285). Secondly, Castro has embraced an international tourism model that

embodies ideas anti-thetical to revolutionary precepts. Therefore, Cuba embraces not only the tourism model developed in, and diffused from, capitalist countries, but publishes and distributes materials with image themes that mirror those in the foreign-produced media. I discuss the findings of my analysis after I first establish the theoretical basis and explain the importance of the image as a tool for academic research.

“Representation” in the Tourism Literature

According to Dave Cooper, who did his work in Southeast Asia, tourism images “are not just reflections of the world as it appears, but [are] socially constructed and meaningful representations...they act as metaphors, symbols or devices that refer to meanings and understandings outside the frame” (1994, 145). This point is echoed by Morgan and Pritchard who write, “Images are the currency of cultures, reflecting and thereby reinforcing particular shared meanings and beliefs and particular value systems” (1998, 3). Pictorial images can carry multiple meanings and their interpretation necessarily involves not only aesthetic but political judgments on the part of the observer (see Jackson 1992, 89 and Cooper 1994, 145). Images are imbued with relationships of power that can at times be hidden from the casual observer, just as power relationships can remain opaque in other forms of representation. Jackson (1992) writes, “For any claim by one group to ‘represent’ another is itself a form of power, exercised over subordinate groups by those more powerful than themselves” (1992, 89). He cites as an example Said’s promulgation

of Orientalism (1978) that demonstrates the degree to which representations of other cultures more accurately reflect “domestic concerns” rather than a clear portrait of those they claim to represent. Said presents the European take on Asian people and suggests that a discourse developed out of the practices of colonialism that positioned the ‘Orient,’ and former colonies more generally, as culturally, economically and politically subordinate and inferior to Europe (Jackson 1989, 89). The result is the predominant viewpoint that the developed West is superior to backward and therefore dependent non-Western cultures. This is accomplished, in part, by the imposition of Western science and Western classifications on other places, in essence, the West defines the East, turning it into an object to be dissected by both Western science and academic research in general (Said as paraphrased in Coffay 2001).

Urry (2002) introduced the concept of “tourist gaze” to refer to a socially organized and systemized production that enables the tourist to “gaze upon or view a set of different scenes, or landscapes and townscapes that are out of the ordinary” (2002, 1). The gaze as described by Urry is one-way, with an active subject, and a passive object that allows the observer to define and thereby “contain” the object. This attempt at containment has found voice in popular culture, which has served to both “museumize” cultures deemed inferior to the West, as well as to reinforce colonial attitudes of race and gender. For example, as Lutz and Collins (1993) have noted, *National Geographic* articles and exhibits tend to concentrate the Western gaze on more “primitive” cultures and this tendency has, in effect, “served to naturalize and legitimate racial and gender hierarchies” (Quoted in Coffay 2001).

Part and parcel of this colonial discourse is the development of a form of “academic” gaze, or the employment of ascendant voyeuristic methods to observe and study the Other (read here to mean the colonized, women, and those of races different from that of the observer) in the guise of scientific discovery (Crang 1997, 362). The underlying message or “gaze” influenced by today’s travel literature has not changed substantially from colonial-era representations of “exotic” locales. Derek Gregory examined tourism in Egypt during the 19th century and in so doing underscored Said’s contention that travel writing in particular stressed the cultural superiority of Europe. He notes that travel writers “construct Egypt as a *transparent* space, exposed to the gaze of the observer who had the power – and the duty – to sweep aside the mask or, in a visible sexualized project of ‘dis-covery,’ to remove the veil” (Gregory 1999, 115). Duncan and Gregory continue in this vein and note that travel writing serves as “an act of translation that constantly works to produce a tense ‘space in-between’” (1999, 4). Therefore, travel writers “‘translate’ one place into another” and can in the process lose and even transform symbolic meaning (Ibid.). Indeed, travel guides often serve as a ‘cognitive map’ for tourists, telling them not only what to see, but how to interpret things they actually do see (Coffay 2001).

Studies by Dean MacCannell (1992) and Mike Crang (1997) dispute the idea that the tourist gaze necessarily flows from the tourist’s position of advantage to the detriment of objectified subjects or Others. Rather, they note that the gaze can flow in both directions thereby allowing the tourist subjects space to develop or control their own power of representation. MacCannell provides the example of groups of Native Americans in the western United States who, upon the arrival of a car full of

tourists, routinely interrupt their own lively conversation and laughter to play act the role of the downtrodden, drunk or depressed “Indian,” only to resume their laughter and conversation once the tourists depart (1999, 141). Crang writes, “The idea of a single touristic gaze becomes disaggregated through the embedding of picturing practices in social relations” (1997, 367). He notes that many former subjects such as the Kayapo in Brazil have adopted video cameras in an effort to control their own representational power (1997, 369). One of the notable by-products, he observes, is that the images produced by the group have been used by the western media to represent the Brazilian rainforest (1997, 369).

It must be noted, however, that the Kayapo example represents an exception in the literature. Most researchers highlight the one-way aspect of the tourist gaze. Indeed, Crick, in his analysis of representations of international tourism, has assembled a wide array of studies by academics and other observers that confirm the gaze as flowing from the tourist to the object. He noted that tourism commentators, from Mark Twain to Claude Levi-Strauss, frequently utilized terms such as “barbaric” and “blasphemous” to describe modern middle class travelers (Crick 1989, 307-308). In short, the tourist “gazer” has been generally criticized by observers for myriad perceived shortcomings. Many have focused on the role of the tourism literature in proliferating and reinforcing the tourist gaze.

Like travel writing, images developed to sell tourism and aid tourists over the course of their travels perform the function of reinforcing the power relations that underpin the gaze. The gaze reflected in these images frequently conforms to the desires and world-views of tourists and potential tourists (through the “brokerage” of

tourism providers and marketers), most of whom (in the case of Cuba and most other Caribbean destinations) hail from Europe and North America. Therefore, what is portrayed for the consumption of these developed world guests is often refracted through the lens of lingering colonial mindsets and indeed serves to reinforce many misconceptions of developing world tourism regions through the typical imaging of a “romantic” or idyllic tropical paradise. The end result is often the portrayal of women and darker skinned citizens in ways that run the gamut from simple misrepresentation to patently false, fantastical illusion.

The Image as a Tool for Scholarship

While scholarly attention to tourism literature was rather limited in the past, recent critical tourism scholarship substantiates the significance of tourism writings and images as research tools. One of the first studies to explore and critique the tourist image in-depth was Boorstin’s aptly titled article, *The Image* (1962, 77-117). The author was critical of what he believed was the “replacement” of the “genuine art of travel” with prepackaged spectacles and pseudo-events (Boorstin 1962, 106; Sternberg 1997, 954). Boorstin believed that representations by tourism marketers were partially to blame for (falsely) developing expectations of “authentic” tourist experiences in foreign locations. For example, through sustained tourism marketing, visitors to Hawaii have been instructed that the hula dance presented by natives is an authentic slice of native Hawaiian culture. Over time, the hula dance has become a

pseudo symbol or signifier of Hawaiian culture and therefore a crucial (but erroneous) element of the typical tourist's impression of indigenous life in the islands.

Britton (1979) built on Boorstin's work with his study that was concerned with the content and implications of images in the developing world (Third World in his parlance.) He was mainly interested in how and for what purpose tourist locations in the developing world were portrayed (represented) by the tourism industry. He cites architect Clare Gunn who contended that images of tourist locations evolve in two ways: organic and induced (Britton 1979, 320). Organic images are those stemming from non-tourism communications such as news reports, television or cinematic representations or word-of-mouth accounts from acquaintances. Induced images, by contrast, are those that derive from a deliberate effort of promotion, advertising and publicity (Britton 1979, 320). Britton believes that in the promotion of developing world countries, induced images tend to be more prominent given the under-representation of the developing world in the Western media and because organic information might continue to exhibit tinges of the place during its particular colonial period (Britton 1979, 320).

While this study certainly considers the role of organic images, the following section will concentrate on induced tourism images. Namely, aside from particular news events such as the widely reported Elian González custody case of 2000 or other news detailing political tensions, Cuba receives very little positive promotion (or, indeed exposure) in the developed world media, particularly in the United States. In light of this fact, Cuba has established a multi-pronged infrastructure to concentrate on promoting Cuba's tourism product through producing induced images (this point

was developed in Chapter Five). Additionally, the island depends on promotion by agents in the tourist's country of origin, hence inclusion in this study of Canadian examples. Some observers have noted a disparity between how Cuba promotes itself as a tourist destination and how the country is promoted by European agents. For example, Fusco has noted that Cuba is often promoted in Europe, by European agencies as a prominent sex tourism destination, an implication largely missing from the Cuban produced tourism literature examined in this study (1998, 152).

Britton also identified several predominant themes found in the tourism literature that described developing-world locations (1979, 321-322). One nearly ubiquitous theme is that poor countries are not represented as "real places"; rather, representations amplify the exotic nature of the destination. In order to accomplish this feat, advertisers favor pastoral images over industrial and urban images. Additionally, they often include text that focuses on the pre-modern conditions present in the destination, conditions that correspond to a supposed by-gone era free from stress and the bothersome by-products of the industrial revolution. Paradoxically, tourism copy also highlights modern conveniences in an effort to assure travelers that they will be safe and comfortable. In a perhaps ironic note, when the exotic is perceived as perhaps too uncomfortable, foreignness can be minimized through creative representation. Britton offers this example to illustrate the point: "Government of India ads are headlined, 'India: The most foreign country you can visit...speaks your language'" (1979, 322). Other examples of tourism copy that underline this point include: "To allay fears about service" Thai International Airlines cabin crews are portrayed with distinct Caucasian-featured faces by advertisement

artists who soften the Asian features of the personnel portrayed in tourism advertisements. A German-owned hotel in St. Lucia declares “To maintain our impeccable credentials, we have thoroughly trained the local staff...and brought in our top personnel from Europe to assume key positions in the hotel.” (Britton 1979, 322).

The minimization of foreignness is also upheld via selective omission, whereby references to the “real” or “authentic” place where tourism takes place are missing. Advertisements often include images of casinos, hotels, cocktails and “beautiful people” (both tourists and exotic locals), but very rarely show the real features of the place where tourism happens or occurs (Britton 1979, 322). Not surprisingly, many observers have highlighted the prevalence of sexual themes in travel advertising (see Britton 1979; Morgan & Pritchard 1999, 187-205). Advertisers and guides often portray locals as exotic and submissive “Others” rather than ordinary people with everyday lives.

The images produced during the 1990s in Cuba, as well as the pre-Revolutionary themes, affirm many of the above assertions. For my analysis, I focused on the Special Period and therefore I did not include images from before 1990. I did, however, peruse samples from guides and magazines that were produced during the 1960s and 1970s (by both Cuban and foreign sources). The literature from the pre-Special Period is a decided departure from current publications since it is focused more intently on the socialist nature of the country and includes ample text and photographs detailing the industrial and agricultural accomplishments of the Revolution. This is particularly evident in material produced by Soviet bloc

publishers that include several travelogues (see for example Burchard 1967) and the black and white photos used in Russian and Polish guides. A few Western European examples such as Cloës colorful French language guide for Cuba (1968) also depict social features. The literature from the 1960s and 70s also devotes more space to documenting Castro’s preeminence in Cuba and particularly focuses on his formative years prior to the 1959 victory, themes mostly absent from the literature produced during the Special Period.

It must also be noted here, however, that one study designed from a feminist perspective by Marshment, a practitioner of cultural studies, contradicts Britton’s (and other’s) assumptions that tourist images of women are necessarily sexual in nature. She writes,

“There is no shortage of images of women in this material, nor of swimsuits, but the regimes of representation within which they appear are structured to produce a range of meanings around gender and holidays that are not necessarily sexual, nor which articulate the sexuality of women to other discourses” (Marshment 1997, 16).

In an important distinction, Marshment establishes that the ubiquitous “woman in a swimsuit” functions as a *signifier* of a beach holiday rather than a part of the holiday package (1997, 20). In her view, the woman of the image is not promising sex, per se, but rather is suggestive of a leisured lifestyle or luxurious idleness. In this way, she functions in much the same way as an image of a beach, a palm tree or other tropical representation; objectified, but not necessarily sexualized. This point will be explored in greater detail vis-à-vis Cuban images in the discussion section below.

As Britton also noted, another key characteristic of tourist brochures and guides is the promotion of the region as “safe” for tourist traffic. The destination may

advertise the country as exotic and out-of-the-ordinary, but it must convey the idea that no harm will come to the tourist participant (Britton 1979, 321). Images are a convenient means to promote safety through the use of familiar “signs” (such as inviting sand beaches and palm trees) along with non-threatening locals who are portrayed as rather more eager to serve than to harm tourists. The Caucasoid features of Asian flight crews are an added example of a means to promote a mixed message highlighting the exotic and the safe in a single image. While Cuban images also focus on white tourists and Cuban tourism workers alike, Cuban-produced literature additionally highlights the island’s self-proclaimed low violent crime rates as a point of safety. In this context, Cuba’s tradition of strong social controls (for which it is often severely criticized) is portrayed in a positive light.

Since Britton’s study of 1979, several recent works, including many by geographers, have focused on the tourist image as a valuable research tool. Dave Cooper drew from tourism brochures and postcards to study their differing roles within the tourism industry. While brochures are developed to sell a location to a prospective tourist, postcards, “confirm the tourist’s attendance in the presence of the Other by certifying the validity of the experience” (1994, 144). He continues, “the different stages of the tourism path are marked by images that manipulate, codify and confirm prior expectations of the travel experience” (Britton 1994, 144). Further, travel photographs are not just reflections of the world as it appears, but are socially constructed and meaningful representations that when read “metonymically” are perceived as signs, recording the traces of concrete phenomena and presenting them as an objective representation (1994, 145). Cooper drew from two methodologies in

his interpretation and analysis of photographic imagery. First, he sought to interpret what he referred to as the “concrete phenomena” of the picture’s content. This would include an analysis that would deal with, for example, the number of people pictured, their age and gender, mode of dress, type of activity performed and whether their activities were staged or “natural.” The second form of interpretation, however, deals with the image as a whole in relation to the accompanying written narrative (1994, 145). He argues that the use of both categories of interpretation allows the researcher a greater opportunity to contextualize and decipher the embedded codes within the image and text.

Laffey produced a Master’s thesis that focused on predominant images and themes of tourism literature as it applied to the Caribbean island of Montserrat. She notes the suitability of using tourist images as a research tool thusly:

“As telling as...verbal references may be, visual representations most clearly reveal tourism literature’s construction of (race) relations. With greater subtlety than words, pictures can, with a deceiving sense of transparency, represent the roles, characteristics, and power relations that Euro-Americans associate with people of different races” (1995, 41).

Her analysis revealed the ways in which “touristic representations of Montserrat reflect Euro-American class distinctions, understandings of racial and ethnic difference, and desires for ‘authentic’ or unmediated experiences” (1995, 2). Laffey based her study on fifty-six pieces of tourism literature that included a mix of brochures, magazine articles, tour guides and maps. She found that tourist literature produced for the Montserratian industry was “forged out of the cultural understandings and desires of Euro-American tourists” (1995, 64). Furthermore, she

found that tourism literature reflected and indeed propagated Euro-American constructions of social inequality vis-à-vis their dealings with former colonies (Laffey 1995, 64).

According to Laffey, a key aspect of the production of the tourist brochure in Montserrat is the idea of “racism by omission.” In other words, she found that the island’s black populace was missing as a key element in the ethnicity on the island. Instead, blacks were often referred to as the “Black Irish,” an apparent attempt to construct them as descendents of the island’s Irish past who somehow maintain Irish traditions (Laffey 1995, 35-37).⁶² Outside of the Black Irish representations, Laffey noted a dearth of information regarding the black population on the island. (As will be discussed shortly, my findings of Afro-Cuban representations in Cuba also point to a policy of obscuring the role of blacks in Cuban society). Furthermore, she writes, “picturing Montserradians performing ‘traditional’ activities, while failing to depict them in the ‘modern’ activities that occupy most of their lives, clearly reveals tourism literature’s interest in constructing the island’s black population as ‘simple’ and ‘backward’”(1995, 44).

Pattullo found that images worked in tandem with encounters tourists had with locals such as beach boys, waiters and even female sex workers. Since there are no representations of “ordinary” people in the tourism literature, tourists arrive and come away with a truncated view of the local society. As Pattullo writes, “Tourists only meet beach boys, therefore the idea of a Barbadian man is restricted to that image” (1996, 87). Morgan and Pritchard echoed Pattullo’s findings and noted the

⁶² Scholars have found little evidence to conclusively show that Irish culture survives on Montserrat (Lydia Pulsipher, personal communication, 2003).

strong element of stereotyping that occurs in the production of tourist images. As they suggest, most images are the result of what amount to clichés that correspond to the commonsense, everyday articulations of the dominant ideology (1998, 176).

Canadian geographer Robert Dilley conducted a study using content analysis of twenty-one tourist brochures designed for Canadian tourists that detailed international destinations. Dilley's findings underline the importance of considering the audience of a particular item of tourism literature. For example, he notes that in his samples relatively few of the brochures contained scenes of coastal locations in Europe, since his past research indicates that Europeans (and the British in particular) tend to favor vacations in coastal areas. He believes that the North Americans, the particular audience for the brochures he examined, are less concerned with the coastal attractions in Europe since they have access to Caribbean and Pacific beaches (1986, 62). This point is important to consider because this study will review literature produced both in Cuba by Cuban authorities as well as in Canada by Canadian tour operators.

Graham Dann, a British sociologist, developed his work on tourist brochures to advance study on "semiotic ethnography" of tourist literature. Dann drew from several previous studies including Albers and James (1988), and was interested in how tourists and locals were portrayed in British produced tourist brochures for eleven popular overseas destinations. He noted that the distinct advantage to research of tourism literature was that it was unobtrusive and did not modify the behavior of respondents (1996, 62). Operationally, Dann developed a method that mixed both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Drawing from images depicted in

5,172 tourism photographs, he constructed a matrix that compared the frequency that tourists and locals were depicted in tourist images (as opposed to scenes devoid of people). He found that 24.3 percent of the photographs depicted no people whereas 60.1 percent portrayed tourists only, 6.7 percent depicted locals only, and 8.9 percent showed tourists and locals. Dann then conducted a qualitative analysis in an attempt to contextualize and explain his findings. He concluded that most indigenous people were featured as ancillary hotel staff, vendors or entertainers. He writes, “understanding the people of tourism is thus, above all else, an analysis of images” (1996, 79).

Framing the Analysis

My analysis of tourism literature includes samples produced in Cuba, North America and Europe that were designed for the gaze of international tourists. My data set stretches from 1990 (the beginning of the Special Period) to 2000 and includes samples of tourism brochures, magazines and guidebooks produced during Cuba’s ten-year tourism explosion. I sampled 1220 photographs in which people are depicted (see Appendix 1 for a complete list of tourism literature). Cuban companies employ images produced in the country, although there are two cases where Cuban produced-literature was edited in Cuba, but published in abroad: *Viajeros Cuba* magazine published in Spain, and *Cubanacan 94-95* brochure published in Canada. Despite the origin of the publications, there is a remarkable similarity in overall content and the material portrayed was typical of the average Caribbean tourist

destination, although the overall presentation was of decidedly lower quality in most of the Cuban-produced literature. The Canadian brochures exhibited higher quality production standards, but the themes were largely similar in terms of how the editors represent race and gender. I will address this issue in more detail in the discussion section below.

Lutz and Collins, in their analysis of photographs in *National Geographic* magazines, noted that it might appear counterproductive to “reduce the rich material” of a photograph into categories that are quantified in a coded matrix (1993, 89). However, this process allows the researcher to uncover patterns that may not appear evident from a casual observation of the images. Furthermore, the establishment of distinct categories of analysis beforehand protects the researcher from a subconscious search for only those photographs that confirm one’s initial sense of what the images portray (Lutz and Collins 1993, 89). The examination and coding of every photograph in a particular publication further guards against the tendency to “Cherry pick” only photographs that confirm the research hypothesis. I chose to focus on brochures, magazines and guides in an effort to achieve the greatest breadth of analysis since these publications typically employ a significant number of photographs. Each of these materials performs a different function within the overall tourism scheme. The tourism industry employs brochures in a direct attempt to sell their “product” to consumers, most of whom possess a limited knowledge of the prospective destinations. Carefully constructed brochures using “representative” photographs of the location in question are thought by many observers to be one of the most significant factors in “reaching” or enticing potential tourists (Cooper

1994,144; Dann 1996, 62). In this study, I examined 24 brochures produced in Cuba for international travelers and six produced by Canadian travel agencies for a distinctly Canadian audience.

In contrast to brochures, the tourism magazines examined in this study are produced in Cuba for tourists already present in the country, with the exception of *Viajeros Cuba*, which is edited in Cuba but published and distributed in Spain. While using many of the same collection of photographs for promotion (they are oftentimes identical) that are found in Cuban-produced brochures, magazines also produce feature stories that highlight Cuban citizens, most of whom are employed in the tourist sector. *Prisma*, one of the Cuban tourist magazines used in this study, focuses mainly on tourism managers, Chefs and bartenders who serve to promote Cuban specialties that “define” the tourism experience in the country. For example, a feature found in all *Prismas* sampled called “*Nuestro Chef*” (Our Chef) spotlights a different Chef each month who prepares such Cuban “specialties” as “*Pollo al Aljibe*” (Aljibe Chicken), that according to the featured Chef is made from secret ingredients.

It must be noted that the government could have produced an alternative discourse that focused on “real” Cubans, such as Afro-Cuban doctors and female engineers, and thus highlight the successes of the Revolution. But such a depiction would have required and potentially led to greater contact between tourists and Cubans. The government did not choose this course of action because the control of tourism was deemed more important than showcasing Cuba’s successes. The end result is that most Cuban people do not benefit directly from tourism, a state of affairs that allows the government to maintain its hegemonic control.

Tourism guidebooks occupy a different niche from brochures and magazines. Indeed, half of the guidebooks I sampled were published in the United States and were prepared for an American audience. Insight Guide: Cuba is published in the U.K., but is widely available in U.S. bookstores. Both the Guia de Varadero, published in Spanish by an Italian company, and Varadero: Guia Turistica, a multi-lingual guide published in Cuba, are widely available in tourism shops throughout the country. Overall, the guidebooks offer a more in-depth look at Cuba and include discussion on a wider range of issues than the brochures and magazines. Guidebook photos, therefore, more closely mirror the material and include attempts to portray significant themes in the wider culture deemed of interest to tourists. Further, as Bhattacharyya notes, the guidebook plays a distinctive role in the tourist experience because it serves to mediate the relationship between the tourist and the host by providing a cognitive framework for interpreting what one perceives in a new location (1997, 372).⁶³ In other words, it helps to inform (or reinforce) the tourist gaze.

My purpose in this section is to draw from Bhattacharyya's (1997), and Dann's (1996) methodologies in particular as a point of departure in my examination of Cuban tourist brochures and other literature. Both authors developed matrices to conduct content analyses of select tourism literature. Bhattacharyya analyzed the guidebook, Lonely Planet: India, which she regards as the most popular guidebook for that country, in an effort to discern ways in which the indigenous population is portrayed. Her matrix was constructed to focus on portrayals of native Indians as

⁶³ Brochures and tourist maps also mediate but perhaps less immediately and less accurately.

they relate to tourists. She found that “Indians are present in the text either as middlemen providing tourism services or as objects of tourist sightseeing interest” (1997, 371). The guidebook, therefore, was an important instrument for reinforcing images of India and privileging tourist desires in their relationships with indigenous inhabitants (Ibid.).

Establishing the Matrix

In an effort to focus on ways in which Cubans are portrayed in the tourism literature I developed a coded matrix that concentrated on Cuban actors rather than the foreign tourists portrayed. The actions of tourists were not considered because they were not the objects of analysis; however, tourists were included in the count data to see how many times they were portrayed in comparison with Cubans. I also wanted to see how the results from the Cuban literature would compare to Bhattacharyya’s and Dann’s findings that locals are most often portrayed in activities that place them in subservient positions in relation to foreign tourists and as objects of the tourist gaze. The y-axis of the matrix included categories that depicted the actions performed by the actors in the photos only if they were considered to be “locals” (i.e., Cubans posing as international tourists) or Cubans. I was not concerned about the actions of foreign tourists and therefore I simply counted them in that singular category. I counted (foreign) tourists and local Cubans pictured together as “locals and tourists” only in instances when the Cuban actors could not be counted in any category listed in the y-axis. Cubans were keyed into categories based on two general

criteria: my interpretation of the principle action performed (such as entertainer or tourism worker), or the symbolic quality (such as exotic or sexualized) I perceived the image was attempting to portray (see Table 5 below).

Because my study is concerned with representations of race and gender in Cuban tourism literature, the categories on the x-axis were keyed to those constructions. The categories I utilized included: 1) black or mulatto male, 2) black or mulatta female, 3) white male, 4) white female, 5) racially mixed males, 6) racially mixed females, 7) gender mix, racially black or mulatto, 8) gender mix, racially white, and 9) racially mixed males and females.

Table 5: Master Matrix

Master Matrix	B/M	B/M	White	White	Race	Race	Gender	Gender	Race	Totals
	male	female	male	female	mix male	mix female	mix White	mix B/M	mix M/F	
Tourists	1	0	32	22	0	1	168	1	1	226
Locals and Tourists	0	0	0	0	2	0	13	0	9	24
Children	7	0	3	7	1	2	5	0	16	41
Exotic (sexualized)	4	22	4	49	0	3	6	10	4	102
Entertainer	25	11	19	14	6	2	13	5	12	107
Heroes	0	0	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	19
Idlers/Posed	6	5	7	3	3	0	1	2	3	30
Laborer (common)	5	0	23	3	6	0	0	0	1	38
Miscellany	7	3	18	7	4	0	19	0	13	71
Private Enterprise	2	0	7	3	0	0	1	0	0	13
Rafters	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Revolutionary	0	1	1	0	4	0	0	0	4	10
Shoppers	1	2	4	4	0	0	1	0	2	14
Sports	4	1	14	1	3	0	2	0	2	27
Transportation	3	2	21	1	2	1	10	0	8	48
Tourism Worker	5	3	83	42	2	0	10	0	7	152
Locals as Tourists	0	0	14	18	0	0	235	2	26	295
Totals	70	50	271	174	34	9	484	20	108	1220

Predictably, the vast majority of people portrayed in the literature were either depicted in typical “tourist” scenes that covered the wide range of conceivable leisure activities to be experienced in Cuba, or were engaged in activities that reflected, presumably, editorial judgements of what interested the typical tourist. In instances where the action portrayed, or the actors involved, could have easily represented more than one category, I chose the category that I believed was the central focus of the photograph. Often, I deferred to the accompanying text in making decisions on how to categorize the photographs. In an effort to maintain consistency throughout the analysis, each photo was only tallied once in the matrix, despite the potential for multiple categorization and interpretation. For example, a photo that included a Cuban tourism worker dispensing information to a group of tourists was counted under the category “tourism worker,” rather than “tourists.” Only those photographs that depicted tourists at leisure without accompanying Cuban actors were counted in the matrix as “tourists.” This policy was pursued in an effort to focus on the representations of Cubans in the tourism industry, rather than give overemphasis to the role of tourists in photographs.

While a few of the categories on the y-axis of the Master list in Table 5 are self-explanatory, several require more detailed explanation. To begin, I used the code “Exotic (sexualized)” when actors were portrayed in situations that focused on their construction as an attractive or “available” Other. This would include people in colorful “native” dress, people suggestively dressed or posed, or people engaged in activities outside the norm of the average tourist (such as those portraying

santería rituals). I used the category “Entertainers” to refer to those who were specifically engaged in a performance for a tourist audience. Most of the entertainers were musicians and several were dancers. In instances where I believed the image was produced to focus on the exotic or sexualized nature of musicians or dancers, I tallied the results under the exotic category. I pursued this policy out of an interest in consistency: for example, santería practitioners are often employed as tourist entertainment, but they are usually portrayed in a manner that suggests and accents their Otherness. Interestingly, the number of times Cubans were portrayed as exotic and sexualized was similar among the three media: 8.6 percent of images in guidebooks, 6.6 percent in brochures and 9.7 percent in magazines. However, those portrayed as entertainers were more evident in the magazines (20 percent) as opposed to the guidebooks (7.1 percent) and the brochures (5.9 percent). One reason for the skewed results of the entertainer category is that several of the magazine articles dealt specifically with selected Cuban artists.

I faced another challenge when I attempted to develop categories that best portray those at work or at rest. I enlisted Lutz and Collins for guidance in developing this part of the matrix. They noted that photographs in *National Geographic* magazine often reflect western assumptions of the typical forms of labor performed in developing countries versus labor believed synonymous with more developed countries. They noted that people at work are depicted in two-thirds of the photographs they sampled from *National Geographic* (1993, 106). Darker skinned peoples were more often depicted in manual labor whereas lighter skinned subjects were portrayed conducting more highly technical labor. Furthermore, whites were

depicted as idlers or people at rest more often than darker skinned peoples (Lutz and Collins 1993, 106). In an effort to better document the portrayal of work and rest, I included four categories related to those topics: Idlers/Posed (those at rest or not portrayed as performing work), Common Laborers, Private enterprise workers and Tourism workers.

Idlers are people who are engaged in no discernible activity. They are sometimes posed to convey a sense of tranquility or restfulness or to better focus on the physical characteristics of the subject. The deliberate posing of subjects in idle positions also reflects a more artistic interpretation in the tradition of portraiture. Idlers were found in over 10 percent of the guidebook images but in less than one percent of the brochure and magazine images. One possible explanation for this finding is that Cubans in the brochures and magazines are deliberately portrayed engaging in some sort of activity on the behalf of the tourist, who is seeking idleness herself. The tourism literature reinforces the idea that tourists are provided opportunities to be idle. Tourists and potential tourists generally turn to brochures and magazines to get a better sense of the services provided with the tourist product. Therefore, these media will be more apt to portray Cubans working rather than in idle positions.

As noted above, I established three categories for people engaged in some type of work activity. Common laborers are engaged in non-tourism related state-directed activities that range from agricultural work to tobacco rolling. Common laborers are portrayed at a higher rate in tourist guides (8.2 percent) than in brochures (1.3 percent) or magazines (2.4 percent). I developed the category Private Enterprise

to indicate those engaged in self-employment such as running private restaurants and repairing bicycle tires. I often deferred to the accompanying text to separate those tallied under Private Enterprise from those categorized as Common Laborers. Those engaged in private enterprise made up 2.1 percent of the images in guides and less than one percent in both brochures and magazines. One reason for this difference could be that the brochures and magazines are developed to showcase Cuba's state tourism offerings and therefore they omit information on competing services (i.e., those provided by *jineteros*) such as private restaurants and private room rentals.

Cuban tourism workers, in contrast to the other categories of workers, were coded in activities ranging from bartending to hotel reception. Images in this category occurred more greatly in magazines (32 percent) and tourism brochures (11.1 percent). Guidebooks portrayed tourism workers in only 1.8 percent of their images. Indeed, as mentioned above, the tourism magazine *Prisma* runs several articles per issue that concentrate on tourism workers in Cuba. It was sometimes necessary to defer to the printed text to properly code workers, since the nature of the work performed was not always clear. For example, someone working in a private *paladar* was coded as private enterprise while a worker in a tourist restaurant was counted as a tourism worker.

I included two categories that highlight the construction of Cuba as a socialist country: heroes and revolutionaries. Photos coded under the category of Heroes are portrayals of Cuba's pantheon of revolutionaries who had been granted meritorious status by the Castro regime. The two most popular were Che Guevara and José Martí. The Revolutionary category included portrayals of those engaged in activities

with an overt theme of nationalism. For example, Cubans participating in popular rallies and waving Cuban flags would be coded under this category. Interestingly, heroes and Revolutionaries were both more evident in tourism guidebooks (collectively portrayed in 8.6 percent of the images) than in brochures (0.1 percent) or magazines (2.0 percent). For this reason, this particular category more greatly reflects outsiders constructions of Cuba. One reason for the greater emphasis on revolutionary heroes in U.S. produced guides, I believe, is to emphasize the Otherness of Cuba and to accent themes of interest to a general audience. Also, guidebooks concentrate more heavily on Cuban history and the political system; brochures and magazines tend to focus more on the services offered by the industry. Furthermore, the Castro regime likely wishes to de-emphasize many of the revolutionary tenets that largely run counter to a tourism industry focused on consumption.

The remaining categories require explanation, as well. “Rafters” are images of Cubans attempting to sail to the United States in homemade vessels, an activity that increased with the economic difficulties of the Special Period. I included this category in response to high profile media reports that attempted to portray the rafters as symbolic of a failing socialist system. However, only three photographs depicted this activity, all of which were in guidebooks. In the same vein, western media reports of the paucity of materials available in the peso economy coupled with the rise in the importance of dollar stores in the Special Period led to widespread interest in the shopping habits of Cubans. As a consequence, depictions of Cubans as shoppers are found in fourteen photographs, five of which were in the guidebooks.

Sports is another theme that is frequently reported in both the Cuban and western media, most often in relation to baseball. Cubans engaged in sporting activities are found in 27 photographs, 14 of which were found in brochures and ten that were found in guidebooks. Finally, I tallied children in a separate category regardless of the activities performed in the image. Children were only coded when they were pictured without adults present. I pursued this coding method to concentrate on the actions performed by Cuban adults. Guidebooks portrayed children in 6.5 percent of their images while brochures (2.8 percent) and magazines (0.7 percent) lagged behind them. The miscellany category served as a default for actions that could not be coded in other categories. Seventy-one photographs were counted under the miscellany category.

I must point out an interesting feature of several of the Cuban brochures, particularly those produced by Horizontes Hotels. It is quite obvious to even the casual observer that the “tourists” portrayed in the brochures are in actuality Cuban models. For this reason, I added the category “locals as tourists” not to reflect portrayals of Cubans as tourists in their own country, but rather Cubans thinly disguised as foreign tourists (see Plate 9). The majority of images in this category were found in brochures due to the fact that Horizontes in particular developed an entire series built around Cuban models. Indeed, over 38 percent of the images in brochures were labeled as locals as tourists. By contrast, this category was represented in less than three percent of magazine and guidebook images.

I included the additional “locals as tourists” category because I believe it raises some interesting questions regarding representations of Cubans. With the

exception of one pair of models, the Cuban “tourists” are not only white but additionally very fair skinned people who frequently sport blond hair. While their clothing and other markers reveal their Cubanness to Cuban and outside observers, their presence in tourism photographs reveals, evidently, the “types” (read phenotype) of tourists sought by Cuban officials. Indeed, in one photograph, the ostensibly European couple descend the stairs from a French airliner with the caption, “First Impressions: 100% clear skies. The Cubatur guide was there and welcomed us in our own language” (Havana with Cubatur 1997).

It must be noted that the matrix I chose and the coding of each photograph might be critiqued on several scores. To begin, any reading of an image is susceptible to multiple interpretations depending on the “position” of the viewer (Cooper 1994, 145). This includes the potential for some to question the ability of the researcher to properly categorize the images. The researcher must be careful to categorize the portrayed information in such a way as to refrain from under or overstating a particular phenomenon. I have attempted to address this point by coding only one category per image rather than attempting to code all portrayed activity present in every image.

Another level of critique deals with the accuracy of racial coding. As established in Chapter Five, racial divisions in Cuba are more fluid than in the United States thereby confounding easy categorization based on racial features. As Carrion has noted,

“The issue of race in Cuba is a complex one; some say that there are as many opinions about race as there are Cubans. Cuba is a racially mixed society, with

more flexible and ambiguous racial identities and definitions - unlike the United States, where one drop of black blood has historically defined a person as being Black” (Carrion, 2000).

I am comfortable that my personal assessment of the photos in question (regarding my ability to differentiate between the racial groupings) is valid in that I am a member of the general audience (North Americans and Western Europeans) that the literature is geared towards. I am well aware that many dark-skinned Cubans differentiate themselves using a wider spectrum and largely reject the black/brown/white divide. However, as my sampling indicates, marketers prefer to portray the Cuban citizenry as predominately white either in regards to service workers, or the population as a whole.

Discussion of Findings

In the previous section, I established the rationale of the matrix and I discussed the results of each category on the y-axis in terms of the frequency of images presented in each of the three media. At this point, I turn to a discussion of the portrayal of images on the basis of race and gender. I will present the results of the analysis at two levels: first, I will explain the race and gender patterns that emerged from the overall matrix, and second, I will contextualize the social and geographic ramifications of my findings as they relate to the constructions of race and gender in Cuba.

Based on frequency of appearance, black and mulatto Cubans are underrepresented in photographs detailing the tourism industry, although they are perhaps better represented in tourism guides that present an overview of the country as a whole. Recall that *mulattos* and blacks make up an estimated 62 percent of the Cuban population whereas whites account for 37 percent of the population, according to the CIA World Factbook (2002). The cohort of blacks and *mulattos* is found in only 20 percent of all photos that include representations of people. In the guidebooks, blacks and *mulattos* are represented in 25 percent of the images while that figure drops to 11.1 percent of the images in magazines and 10.8 percent of brochures. Photographs that depict exclusively black and mulatto men account for only 5.7 percent of the total. Of those, 35 percent depict Afro-Cubans as “entertainers” who are generally playing in music groups for tourists (See Figure 3). By contrast, only seven percent of the photos depicting exclusively black and mulatto men portray them as tourism workers.

Black and mulatta women are also underrepresented as a whole (See Figure 4). They are found exclusively in only four percent of the photographs. Of those portrayals, two-thirds of the photos depict them as either “entertainers” or “exotic/sexualized.” Like the black and mulatto males, they are rarely portrayed as tourism workers (only six percent of black and mulatta representations fall under this category.) Both sexes of blacks and *mulattos* are also more highly represented as “idlers/posed” than their white counterparts. Black and mulatto males and females are counted in this category in nine percent of the photos, whereas whites are depicted as idlers/posed in two percent of the photos where they are exclusively pictured.

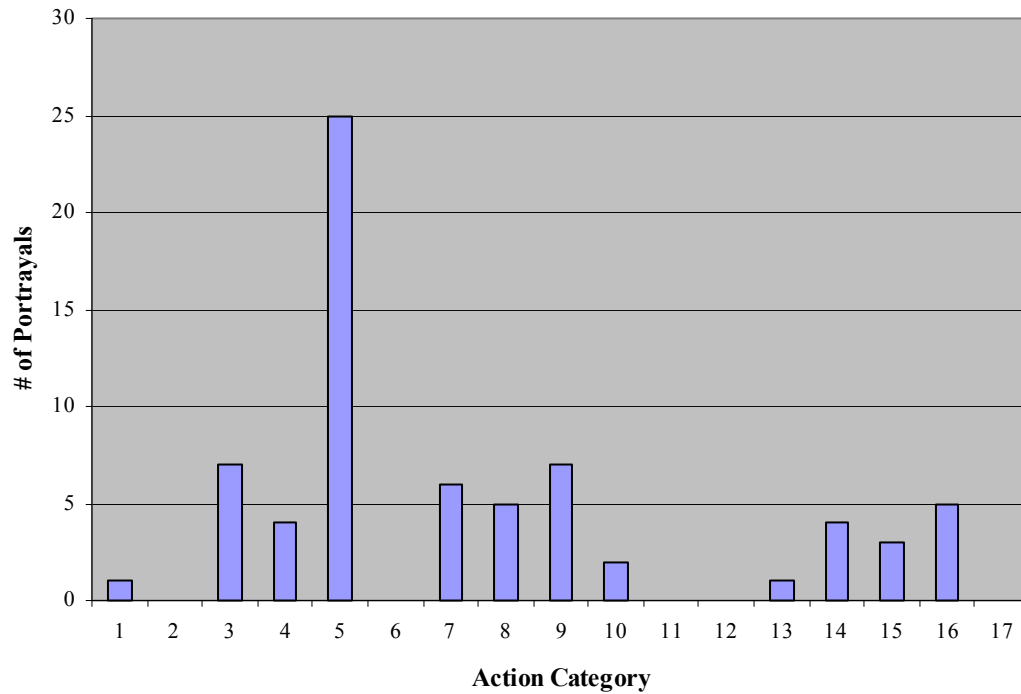


Figure 3: Black/Mulatto Male Depictions by Category

1. Tourists
2. Locals and Tourists
3. Children
4. Exotic (sexualized)
5. Entertainer
6. Heroes
7. Idlers/Posed
8. Laborer (common)
9. Miscellany
10. Private Enterprise
11. Rafters
12. Revolutionary
13. Shoppers
14. Sports
15. Transportation
16. Tourism Worker
17. Locals as Tourists

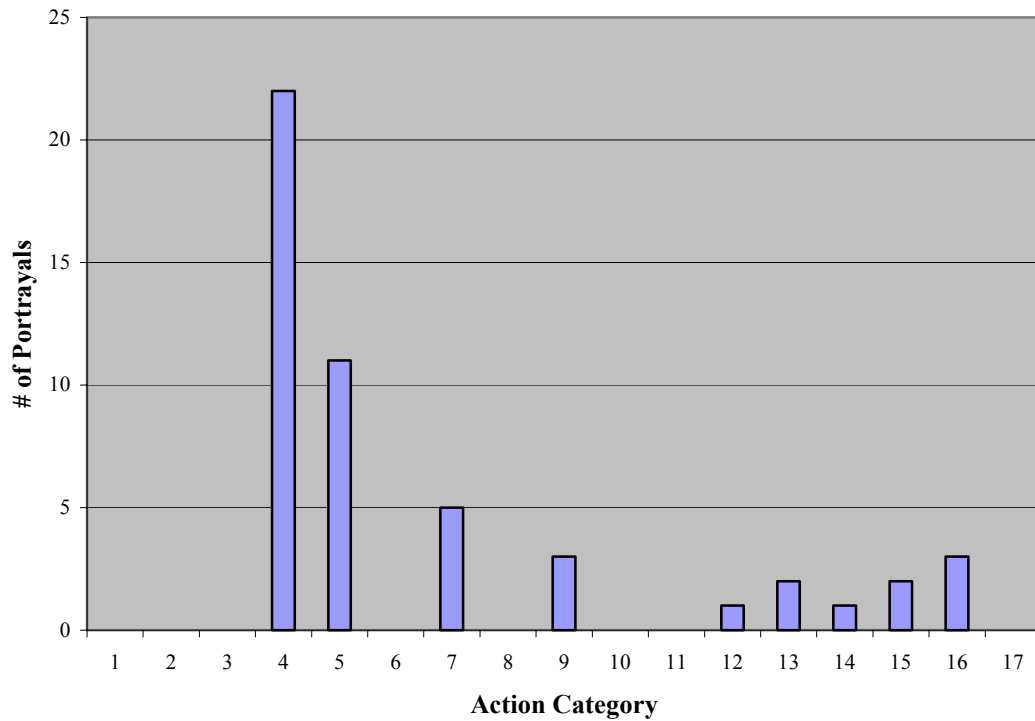


Figure 4: Black/Mulatta Female Depictions by Category

1. Tourists
2. Locals and Tourists
3. Children
4. Exotic (sexualized)
5. Entertainer
6. Heroes
7. Idlers/Posed
8. Laborer (common)
9. Miscellany
10. Private Enterprise
11. Rafters
12. Revolutionary
13. Shoppers
14. Sports
15. Transportation
16. Tourism Worker
17. Locals as Tourists

I believe this can be explained by the propensity to portray darker-skinned Cubans as signifiers of the Caribbean region in general. White Europeans and North Americans expect to see images of darker-skinned natives in this region. Overall, however, given that Afro-Cubans and *mulattos* are generally considered to make up a majority of the population in Cuba by most observers, darker-skinned Cubans are generally under-represented in most categories of the tourism literature.

White females, while outnumbered by white males in the analysis, are portrayed in greater numbers in three main categories: exotic (sexualized) where they make up more than 50 percent of those portrayed, tourism worker (they are portrayed in 27.6 percent of the images in this category), and locals as tourists (See Figure 5). This last category is skewed based on a large number of photos (over 200) published by Horizontes that detailed a complete vacation by an ostensibly French couple through the course of an entire brochure. Pictures of this brochure were borrowed for publication in others, thereby exaggerating the presence of this couple in the sample. While white females have a larger number of images characterized as “exotic-sexualized” as compared to Afro-Cuban and mulatta women, they account for a lower number of images proportional to their overall total. Proportionally, Afro-Cuban and mulatta women were more often portrayed as exotic-sexualized subjects in the sample. By contrast, men overall were deemed exotic-sexualized in less than eight percent of the images in that category.

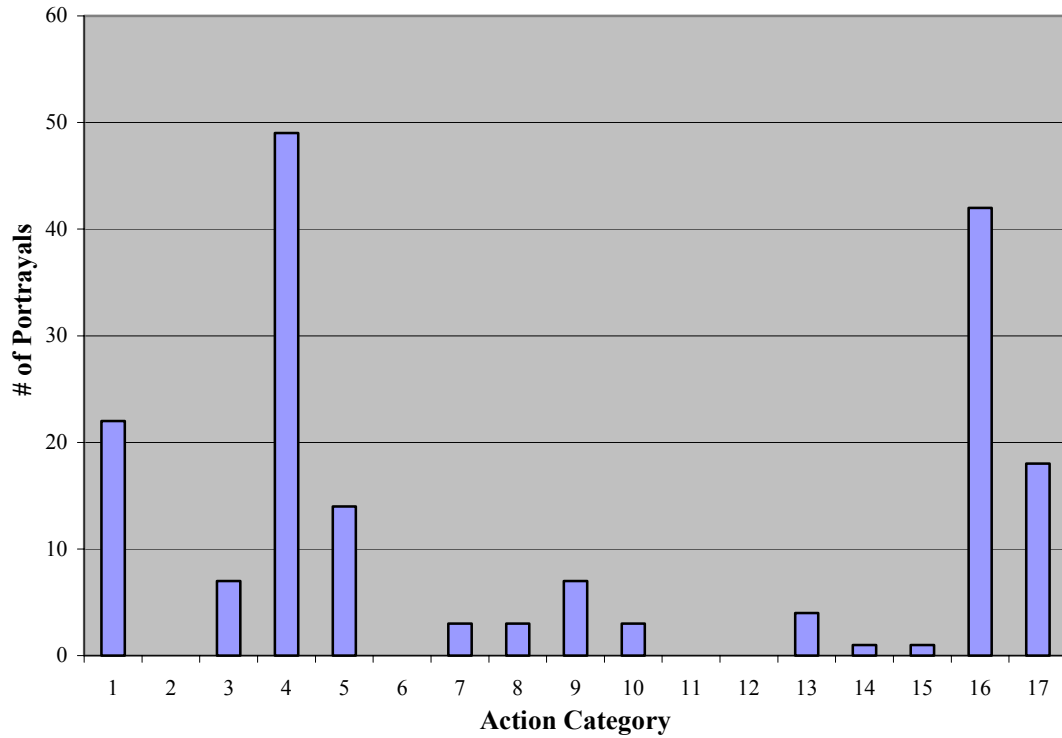


Figure 5: White Female Depictions by Category

1. Tourists
2. Locals and Tourists
3. Children
4. Exotic (sexualized)
5. Entertainer
6. Heroes
7. Idlers/Posed
8. Laborer (common)
9. Miscellany
10. Private Enterprise
11. Rafters
12. Revolutionary
13. Shoppers
14. Sports
15. Transportation
16. Tourism Worker
17. Locals as Tourists

White males, in contrast to the other cohorts, were more commonly portrayed as tourism workers. In images where white males were photographed exclusively and with white females, they accounted for over 61 percent of the total number of tourism workers. White males were also presented more frequently in all three media and were present in almost two-thirds of all images where people were depicted (See Figure 6).

The dearth of Afro-Cuban and mulatto representation in the tourist literature is consistent with their overall low level of representation in tourism-related employment. These findings closely correspond to those reported by de la Fuente who noted that hotel administrators have expressed their preference for whites or light-skinned *mulattos* because those groups have a reported “*buen apariencia*” (good looks) that they believed tourists desired and expected (de la Fuente in Howell 2001). In terms of racial representation in the tourist literature, my findings mirror those of Marshment who found “an average of one [photo of black holiday goers] per brochure massively under-represents the proportion of young black people in the population” (1997, 21). The portrayal of Afro-Cubans and *mulattos* as primarily “entertainers” and as “exotic” practitioners of *santería* in many ways confirms stereotypes held by Cuba’s most sought-after tourists. This state of affairs parallels the findings of Jackson who studied Afro-Cubans in the U.K. He writes,

“(The) West Indians’ alleged propensities for sports and entertainment...serve(s) a restrictive and exclusionary function, confining black people to certain occupations and reflecting an inequality in the power of definition which is not afforded reciprocally to those who are thus defined.” (Jackson, 1989:148)

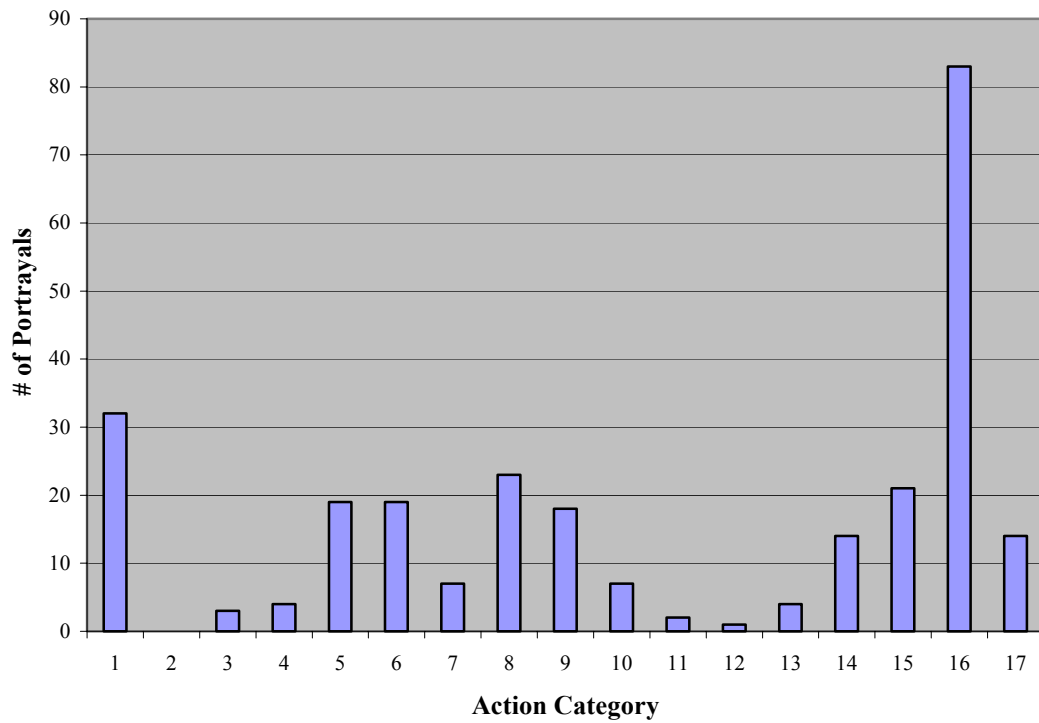


Figure 6: White Male Depictions by Category

1. Tourists
2. Locals and Tourists
3. Children
4. Exotic (sexualized)
5. Entertainer
6. Heroes
7. Idlers/Posed
8. Laborer (common)
9. Miscellany
10. Private Enterprise
11. Rafters
12. Revolutionary
13. Shoppers
14. Sports
15. Transportation
16. Tourism Worker
17. Locals as Tourists

He believes that representations of race in the popular media (and, in this case, the tourism literature) often reflect the cultural discourse of racism that has become institutionalized as the dominant ideology in countries such as the U.K. Because the developed-world countries exhibit institutionalized racism often based on and reinforced by powerful stereotypes, representations of race found in the tourist literature mirror or reflect the prevailing discourse found in wider society.

As further proof, take the image of the mulatta performer, pervasive in both tourism brochures and tourism guidebooks. Cuban tourism officials believe that visitors come to see these exotic dancers who were also a powerful symbol of Cuban tourism in the 1950s. According to Kutzinski (1993), the “iconic mulatta is a symbolic container for all the tricky questions about how race, gender, and sexuality inflect the power relations that obtain in colonial and postcolonial Cuba” (1993, 7). According to Figure 4, Afro-Cuban women and mulattas are overwhelmingly portrayed as exotic figures or entertainers (or both); they are categorized as such in two-thirds of the photographs where they are exclusively depicted. Coffay’s study of the representation of mulattas in the Cuban tourism literature also points to the predominant portrayal of the so-called “hot mulatta,” a woman best identified by her sex appeal (and supposed sexual appetite) (Coffay 2001).

One reason for the portrayal of blacks as “entertainers” is that santería has been popularized in recent years, in part to take advantage of a perceived tourist demand for santería-themed entertainment (see Cubaweb 2002). For this reason, a potential tourist to Cuba who had little knowledge of the island beforehand, upon perusing the tourist literature would be forgiven for assuming that santería was a form

of popular entertainment. Santería practitioners, many with explicit blessing by the government, offer an “insiders” view of the religion by “performing” specific rites for the consumption of foreign tourists.

Many tourism observers have lamented that this commodification of “traditional” rites of some societies leads to an overall “cheapening” and degeneration of local ritual and artistic endeavors in the process of their morphing into tourist-only shows (see MacCannell 1999, Taylor 1993, and Urry 1990, et al). However, Harrison has shown in the case of Alarde, a ritual common in Fuenterrabia in Northern Spain, that focus on the ritual “held considerable political significance for the townspeople” (Harrison 1995, 21). He notes, “that the ritual became a tourist attraction, and was used as a source of income, undergoing changes in the process, is not at issue; that it lost meaning for the local people is highly debatable” (Harrison 1995, 21). Other scholars noted by Harrison have found that tourism can actually strengthen local support for traditional arts, crafts and tradition, particularly in the case of Bali in Indonesia.

One of the promises of travel to developing world destinations is a sense of moving back in time, to observe a more primitive or “authentic” lifestyle of the advertised Other (Cooper 1994, 159). Despite the marketing of Cuba that highlights its Caribbean-ness, tourism promoters are careful to represent a hint of Cuba’s political uniqueness, though in a non-threatening way. Signs of Cuba’s past, including the predominance of 1950s American automobiles lends the country a particular timeless and quaint charm. Pictures documenting the typical “Tropicana”

style show draw on the same “nostalgic” idea of Cuba as it was in the 1950s, yet without the decadence of gambling and overt prostitution.

In sum, with a few exceptions, Cubans are represented in similar ways by both Cuban and international editors of tourism literature. This suggests that the representations of Cubans in the tourism literature are largely based on existent models that favor images of inequality. As mentioned previously, the government has chosen this course of action rather than focus on Cuba’s revolutionary successes. While tourism brochures, magazines and guides perform different functions within the spectrum of tourism literature, they all include representations that privilege the white (read European or Western) tourist gaze.

I believe the portrayal of women and darker-skinned Cubans in the tourism literature illustrates the concept of “discursive violence” as discussed by Jones, Nast and Roberts. Discursive violence involves “practices to script groups or persons in places and in ways that counter how they would define themselves” (1997, 393-94). In the process, the socio-spatial relations counter how the groups or persons would define themselves. The end effect is that they are relegated to “subaltern” or essentially minority positions in society (Jones, Nast and Roberts 1997, 394).

As I have previously documented, racism in Cuba remains a powerful issue that is hidden beneath official proclamations of racial equality. However, representations found in the tourism literature suggest that Afro-Cubans and *mulattos* are not equally represented in the tourism industry. Indeed, the representations of darker-skinned Cubans in the tourism literature (or lack thereof) are consistent with

the overall hierarchical status of differently hued Cubans on the island itself. In short, the hidden becomes overt and concrete in the Cuban-produced tourism literature.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to investigate the intersection of race, gender and tourism during Cuba's Special Period. I hypothesized that Cuba's focus on tourism betrays revolutionary principles by privileging practices that are discriminatory and unequal. At the beginning of the study, I posed several questions built around the query, "development for whom? I address this question below by examining Cuba's track record during the Special Period. Secondly, I tested Gramsci's theory of hegemony, a Marxist model based on the assumption that hegemonic power is rooted in the Western European capitalist model. My goal was to test this theory by deciphering how hegemonic power is wielded in Castro's Cuba, a self-proclaimed socialist society. The socialist government argues that many of its maladies are products of the island's attempt to participate in the global marketplace under its own terms, while maintaining a modicum of basic services in the areas of health care, education, housing, and food provision. However, as this dissertation asserts, the Castro regime has deliberately attempted to exclude the average Cuban citizen from full participation in new tourism economy and in the process has allowed for an overall decline in standards of living and reduced access to a formerly well-functioning, but Soviet subsidized social safety net; in short, the government has failed to live up to revolutionary promises of equality and nationalist rhetoric that favors Cuban citizens.

The evidence from the research suggests the Castro regime has betrayed the Revolution at many different levels. First of all, Cuba maintains a growing disparity between those with access to dollars (and hence enhanced purchasing powers) and those who must survive largely in the peso economy. I conclude that this divide is not merely economic, but also has wide-ranging social, racial and gender implications and leads to other, sometimes less obvious, divisions. Indeed, the divide frequently falls along lines of race: the evidence shows that lighter skinned Cubans tend to have greater access to dollars than their darker hued compatriots due to a combination of demographic patterns and state-supported economic and political practices. On the one hand, Afro-Cubans and mulattos tend to have fewer family members living abroad who have the wherewithal to send remittances. Additionally, white Cubans have used the informal “*socio*” network to tap friends and relatives for lucrative jobs in tourism although evidence suggests that race-based hiring practices of some foreign managers may also play a role in limiting Afro-Cuban involvement in the tourism sector. If the data from my analysis of the tourism literature are representative of actual employment patterns, white Cuban males would hold the greatest number of jobs. Race-linked economic patterns are consistent with government attempts to stifle real debate about race and racism on the island, a point I developed in Chapter Four.

At another level, Cuba’s tourism product during the Special Period is eerily similar to that of the 1950s: apartheid tourism has been reconstituted, albeit in different forms, and inequality and racial/gender divisions of labor (that never completely disappeared) remain in force. Early in the Special Period, the average

Cuban citizen was denied access to most tourism installations regardless of their ability to pay in the requisite dollars although evidence suggests that Cubans are now able to enter dollar shops in the poshest hotels (Scarpaci, personal communication, April 2003). However, Cubans are continually denied access to many of Cuba's finest beaches and are limited in their ability to enjoy the fruits of tourism themselves.

Cubans are also denied access to self-employment opportunities and while the island's tourism infrastructure continues to grow, the government has severely restricted the development of private industry to meet the needs of the tourism industry. Therefore, rather than evolving in organic fashion, tourism remains a centrally planned and produced industry built on external capital investment coupled with restrictions on the development of private spill-over industries. Recent reports suggest that the government is attempting to increase its hegemonic control by restricting private sector activities both in the legal and illegal realms (Rodriguez 2003). To cite one example, government control of the tourism supply network is evident in the maintenance of state-operated "art factories" in Havana and Varadero that produce tourist trinkets and souvenirs for international tourists. The average Cuban citizen currently has no legal option to open a private souvenir production business.

I conclude that, in direct contrast to Marxist and Gramscian theory that links the rise and maintenance of hegemonic power exclusively with capitalist regimes, Castro's Cuba functions as a de-facto hegemony at several different levels. First of all, the regime stifles debate and dissent with the blanket response that anything not for the revolution is aligned against the revolution (i.e., counter-revolutionary) (see

Dalton 1993, 14-15). Indeed, the Castro regime remains the ultimate arbiter in determining whether practices are acceptable or counter-revolutionary. Thus, when Castro proclaims that the conditions for racial and gender inequality have been erased by the Revolution and racism and sexism will cease to exist in socialist Cuba, there are no avenues open for real debate. Secondly, Castro maintains a discourse that all are equal in a Revolution where the State is the designated provider. At one level, Cuba's enviable health statistics indicate that the regime has been successful in providing basic care to its citizenry, although there appear to be increasing holes in the system. Further, the data show that Cubans receive adequate caloric intake, in spite of an overall reduction of the amount of food available through the *libreta*, or state-run ration system (see Scarpaci, Segre and Coyula 2002, 249-254). At the same time, Castro has frequently cracked down on private enterprise and vocal opposition groups in an effort to maintain his grip on power. Opposition groups, in particular, have been subject to harsh jail sentences as counterrevolutionaries (Human Rights 1999; 2002). While the regime embraces capitalism, Cuban citizens are instructed to stay the socialist course or pay a severe penalty. In this way, the segregation of tourists and Cubans is an indication that the regime has failed to uphold revolutionary precepts.

As Jackson (1989) and Lefebvre (1991) noted, a plurality of cultures exists in every society, and each attempts to resist the dominant hegemon. During the Special Period, Cubans have resisted Castro's hold on power in many ways. In a less direct manner, people engage in black market activities and acts of *jineterismo*, including sex work. Some have resisted by attempting to leave the country by various means

including meeting and marrying foreigners to attempting to cross the Florida Straits by raft and speedboat. In an effort to exercise its control over potential vehicles of dissent, the government has attempted to derail opposition, in part by appropriating aspects of culture such as santería spectacles and Afro-Cuban music ranging from son to rap. In line with their economic goals, the government has packaged santería ceremonies and indigenous Afro-Cuban music for sale to foreign consumers.

I maintain that acts of *jineterismo* pose a direct challenge to the government's socialist discourse, even though many acts are carried out to meet pressing needs. For example, the evidence shows that sex work is folded into wider considerations of *jineterismo* meaning that the definition of prostitution is imbued with Marxist overtones in Cuba. This interpretation of prostitution has important gender and racial implications. Indeed, Cuban sex workers, rather than being vilified by the general public for perceived moral lapses, sometimes command respect by those who view them as the ultimate entrepreneurs or survivors during the Special Period (Herrera 2000, 124; Fusco 1998, 154). Like women in other countries, Cuban sex workers are often charged with caring for extended families through their hard-currency earning power. Many Cubans apparently view sex work in the same vein as selling goods and services in the black market; in other words, a means to a financial end. This is important to realize because Cubans, unlike people in most societies, may celebrate the female sex worker as one with the wherewithal to successfully navigate the Cuban "New Economy," often with the tacit support (which was more overt in the early stages of the Special Period) of the Cuban government. Furthermore, Afro-Cuban women and mulattas turn their "Othered" status in their own favor by attracting North

American and European men seeking an “exotic” encounter with a darker-skinned woman.

Nonetheless, a cautionary note on this point is in order. While the rate of HIV/AIDS is reportedly low in Cuba, sex workers certainly expose themselves to the danger of contracting the disease and they also open themselves up to the potential for violence and abuse at the hands of clients. Additionally, although state or privately owned brothels do not exist in Cuba and the widespread trafficking in women that occurs in other tourist destinations such as Thailand does not occur in Cuba (O’Connell Davidson 1998, 29-30). Some observers note the presence of procurers in tourism locales who act as intermediaries between tourist and sex worker (Scarpaci, personal communication, April 2003). Further, the possibility exists that Cuban women (as well as boys and girls) are subject to coercion into sex work by family members or relatives who recognize the potential to significantly increase personal or family incomes. To my knowledge, no studies have been completed that address the issue of coercion among sex workers in Cuba and this topic represents an important avenue for further study.

In this study I was also concerned with the *spatial* considerations of sex work and other activities characterized as *jineterismo*. I found that the prevalence of sex workers in the tourism industry is not uniform, but rather demonstrates distinct spatial patterns. Sex workers predominate in the major tourism centers, but the occurrence of sex work varies by space and scale. The comparison between Havana and Varadero reveals a situation where sex work remains largely available in the former city (albeit increasingly hidden from view), but has been severely restricted in the

latter. This state of affairs is the result of several factors including considerations of the scale and “image” of these tourist locations. For example, Varadero, after initially exhibiting “free-wheeling” sex for hire, has attempted to control *jineterismo* in an effort to (officially) maintain a façade of “respectability” by projecting an overt image that portrays Varadero as a “family” resort. Varadero is also much easier to police by virtue of its relative size and the fact that only one road connection exists between the “peninsula” (Varadero is actually an island) and the mainland and it is controlled by a toll booth. At another level of scale, the locations where sex work is negotiated within Havana have shifted over the course of the Special Period from public spaces associated with tourism centers such as lobbies of tourist hotels and street corners of popular tourist locales such as the Malecón waterfront and the squares of Old Havana, to increasingly private clubs and discotheques that are government owned and operated but are largely off-limits to average Cuban citizens.

Because the production of space in Cuba ultimately rests with the Castro leadership ostensibly operating within the tenets of the Revolution, the researcher can achieve a fairly accurate and comprehensive reading of the status of Cuba’s citizens over the course of the revolutionary period. In other words, since no meaningful (or even legal) opposition exists, spatial productions and representations can be accurately assessed and compared to revolutionary pronouncements and goals. In order to place these current representations in perspective, it is useful to recall the situation of women and blacks in the tourism industry of 1950s era Cuba. According to one source, women were frequently regarded as “hospitality specialists,” a loose term that encompassed beautiful smiling tour guides and waitresses, exotic dancers

and sex workers. Blacks were also entertainers (mainly musicians) who were barred from the higher class hotels and beaches patronized by American tourists and wealthy Cubans (Caute 1974, 36). According to my data, Cubans once again perform many of these functions as the country recycles images from the perceived heyday of Cuban tourism in the 1950s. These images are perpetuated in the tourism literature that is produced for the consumption of international tourists. In the final analysis, Cuba's tourism space remains a highly gendered and racialized field controlled by a strong, centrally focused hegemonic power.

Afterword: The Future of Tourism in Cuba

In January 2003, Fidel Castro attended the grand opening of the Hotel *Playa Pesquero*, a new 944-room resort in Holguin province located on the northeast coast of Cuba. The hotel complex cost \$100 million and was completed in 22 months with some capital and technical assistance provided by the French firm Bouygues (Castro 2003). A year before, christening a hotel on the scale of the Playa Pesquero may have appeared ostentatious and even foolhardy. Like many countries that depend on tourism, Cuba suffered a downturn in tourist arrivals in the aftermath of the September 11th, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. (Burns 2001). In 2002, Cuba witnessed an overall five percent decline in arrivals from the previous year, a state of affairs that further dampened the country's economic outlook. According to one source, tourism was down twenty percent in the first six months of 2002 but recovered somewhat in the

months of November and December (Espinosa 2003). Government figures in January 2003 pointed to a 33 percent increase from the same month in 2002, leading some to declare that the industry was in the midst of a healthy recovery (Snow 2003).

The fact that Castro and the Cuban elite showed up to the grand opening of the Playa Pesquero in all of their finery suggests the continued importance the regime places on the production of tourism space in Cuba and the degree to which the regime has strayed from focusing on the well-being of Cuban citizens. Castro delivered a speech that was broadcast throughout the country in which he touted the amenities of the hotel. As Snow noted, the broadcast included sweeping shots of the coastline and close-up views of the new complex, a hotel that Cubans cannot freely visit (Snow 2003). Cuba now maintains 40,000 hotel rooms throughout the country, most of which are reserved for international visitors. Cuba and its joint venture partners have planned a further 2,000 rooms that are slated to be completed by the end of 2003 (Castro 2003). Despite the downturn in tourism numbers in 2002, the government added 1,500 new hotel rooms in that year alone.

Immediately before the 2002 downturn in tourists, the Cuban government began a campaign to proclaim that the worst of the Special Period was over. (It appears from the recent turn-about in Cuba's tourism fortunes that in the short term, the country can once again count on tourism revenue to serve as their motor for development). According to the Castro regime, the tourism industry is the key source of growth and the populace was exhorted to "stay the course" and support continued efforts to expand Cuba's tourism infrastructure. Billboards were plastered across the island that read: "Revolución es Construir" (Revolution means building). Another

billboard pictured Cubans in hard hats with their fists raised with the caption: "Hombres de Nuestros Tiempos" (Men of Our Time) (San Martin May 27, 2001).

From a Gramscian point of view, these regime-sponsored promotions of nationalism were carried out in an effort to maintain the public's "voluntary" consent for Castro's policies. In other words, the Cuban population is sold the idea that the sacrifices necessary to promote tourism serve the best interests of both the Cuban government and the Cuban people. However, the reality is that Castro is merely attempting to maintain his hegemonic grip on the island. Gramsci believed that hegemonic power was the result of European-rooted capitalism and socialism represented a means counteract the negative aspects of hegemony. Castro's socialist experiment in Cuba is evidence that hegemony can be achieved in any society where a plurality of cultures is actively suppressed in favor of an agenda followed by a dominant, unaccountable regime. To cite a recent example, the Cuban government began a crack down on black market activities and on *jineterismo* in general in January 2003, a policy that does not bode well for Cubans attempting to earn a living during a period when the government remains steadfast on keeping austerity measures in place (Rodríguez Valdés 2003). Castro demonstrated the lengths he is willing to go to maintain power when in April 2003 he ordered the detention of independent journalists and the executions of three Afro-Cubans responsible for an attempted hijacking of a ferry boat (Kellogg 2003). While the perpetrators of the hijacking were evidently attempting to defect to the United States, the government labeled them terrorists and counter-revolutionaries and summarily issued the death

penalty. Indeed, Castro's famous assertion "everything for the Revolution, nothing against" is a key component in the maintenance of hegemony in Cuba.

As I noted in Chapter Two, Duncan asserts that each discourse forms attendant landscape models that are reflections of the culture within which they were built (1991, 11). The development of Cuba's tourism landscape underlines this point at several levels. For example, Cuba continues to transform its prime locations into tourist attractions designed for the exclusive use of foreign visitors, in essence to create exclusionary "capitalist" space. Indeed, with a few exceptions, Cubans are not allowed to freely utilize this space. In both Varadero and the northern Cayes, Cubans are actively denied access to these areas through the use of toll booths and checkpoints. In effort to support his socialist discourse for the Cuban populace, Castro actively touts the *campismo popular* infrastructure as Cuban space. However, my interviews with Cubans established that few have a desire to visit the poorly appointed camping infrastructure. Indeed, it is telling that several *campismo* sites, including the former *Rincón Frances* on Varadero peninsula, have been reallocated for use by international tourists, a signal that the dominant capitalist discourse has trumped the socialist discourse and that Cubans have lost access to space in the process. In short, much of the new tourist development occurs in enclaves that serve as physical reminders of separate, yet unequal state-constructed tourism landscapes in Cuba today.

Fidel Castro recently reiterated his assertion that Cuba could potentially attract an additional one million visitors to the island, thereby increasing the number of arrivals by one-third, in the event that the U.S. government lifts travel restrictions for

American citizens. Castro joked with attendees of the hotel grand opening by stating, “we will practically have to move from the country, that day their constitutional right to travel is respected” (Castro 2003, n.p). However, recent action from across the Florida Straits suggests that Castro will have to wait for that day. In March 2003, the Office of Foreign Assets Control decided not to renew non-student travel licenses to Cuba. As a result, alumni groups, museums, and other non-profits (except religious organizations) will not be able to travel to Cuba in 2004, or whenever their license expires, leaving only church groups, scholars, students enrolled in classes, and American journalists legally able to travel to Cuba from the states (Scarpaci, personal communication, April 2003). This recent policy change on behalf of the U.S. government suggests that despite greater trade connections between the two countries, it appears that only a voluntary or forced removal of Castro from office would precipitate normalized relations between Cuba and the United States that would include the removal of travel restrictions.

In sum, I believe that recent efforts to re-establish central control in Cuba has led to a latter-day Rectification Period emerging in 2003. Some of the similarities between Cuba in 1986 and 2003 include a perception by Castro that private entrepreneurs possess too much wealth, thereby posing a threat to the regime’s control. In 1986, the wealth in the private sector was generated through market openings, primarily in agriculture. Today, remittances from abroad and access to tips fuel growing disparities of wealth in the country. In addition, as in 1986, external economic shocks, in this case related to a world-wide downturn in tourism in late 2001 and 2002, have given the government cause for concern. It is my belief that the

regime feels that a crackdown is necessary lest growing opposition movements (personified in the signators of the Varela project) gain too much power for the government to counteract. The key question remains whether tourism revenue will lead to significant improvements in the living standards of average Cubans, particularly women and darker-skinned people as the government says it will.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Travel Literature Sampled

<u>Year</u>	<u>Country Produced</u>	<u>Title/Publisher</u>
<u>Brochures (729 photographs)</u>		
N/D	Cuba	Cuba: A puerta abierta
N/D	Cuba	Cuba: A Practical Guide
N/D	Cuba	Cuba: Flor de Islas
N/D	Cuba	Cubamar: Naturaleza
N/D	Cuba	Cubamar: Turismo especializado
N/D	Cuba	Cubatur: La Habana
N/D	Cuba	Horizontes Hoteles: Aparthoteles y Villas
N/D	Cuba	Horizontes Hoteles: Caza
N/D	Cuba	Horizontes Hoteles: Cuba
N/D	Cuba	Horizontes Hoteles: Cuba
N/D	Cuba	Horizontes Hoteles: Ecoturismo
N/D	Cuba	Horizontes Hoteles: Pesca
N/D	Cuba	Horizontes Hoteles: Pinar del Rio
N/D	Cuba	Islazul: Cienfuegos
N/D	Cuba	Las Terrazas Tourist Complex
N/D	Cuba	Rumbos: Cienfuegos
N/D	Cuba	Rumbos: Palacio del Valle
N/D	Cuba	Rumbos: Santiago de Cuba
N/D	Cuba	Rumbos: Varadero
1992	Cuba	Havanatur: En cuerpo y alma
1992	Cuba	Havanatur: Guia de Hoteles
1992	Cuba	Havanatur: Guia de Museos
1994	Cuba/Canada	Cubanacan: 94-95
1994	Cuba	Havanatur: Informacion Tecnica
1996	Canada	Magna Holidays: Cuba, Turn Up the Heat
1996	Cuba	Montemar: Peninsula de Zapata
1997	Canada	Air Transat Holidays: 97-98
1997	Canada	Alba Tours: Fall, Winter, Spring (97-98)
1997	Canada	Hola Sun: 97-98
1997	Canada	Sunbook Vacations: 97-98
<u>Guides (279 photographs)</u>		
1990	Italy	Guia de Varadero
1992	Cuba	Varadero: Guia Turistica
1996	UK	Insight Guide: Cuba
1999	USA	Cuba Companion
2000	USA	In Focus: Cuba
2000	USA	Moon Handbooks: Cuba

<u>Year</u>	<u>Country Produced</u>	<u>Title/Publisher</u>
<u>Magazines (212 photographs)</u>		
1995	Cuba	Prisma: (No. 268)
1995	Cuba	Prisma (No. 269)
1995	Cuba/Spain**	Viajeros Cuba
1996	Cuba	Prisma (No. 275)

Study Literature: 40 publications
Photos Sampled: 1220

*Edited in Cuba, published and distributed in Canada
**Edited in Cuba, published and distributed in Spain

Appendix 2: Tourism Images



Figure 7: Tourism “Signs.” Portrayed are some of the “signs” of Cuba that inform the tourist gaze. Note the 1950s era American automobile, the exotic mulatta, the stylized white sand beach and the colonial architecture.



Figure 8: *Diferente*. Accenting the exotic and the “different” for potential cruise customers. Note the portrayals of the Cuban and Jamaican “natives” (the exotic mulatta, the entertainers and the cigar smoking native with accented “bemba (lips).”



Figure 9: Tourism Icon. An example of the iconic “hot mulatta.” Examples such as these were coded: Exotic (sexualized) in the matrix.



Figure 10: Ché. This image was also coded Exotic (sexualized). Note the “revolutionary” component with Ché portrayed in the background.



Figure 11: Laborers. Images of cigar producers are found in all tourism literature categories. Examples such as this were coded common laborers.



Figure 12: Tourism Image Juxtaposition. These images were published side-by-side in Insight Guide: Cuba. The text juxtaposed the carefree, dollar-spending European tourist with the Cubans of “*la cola*,” the lines characteristic of the Special Period where those who earn primarily pesos are forced to spend a large percentage of their time.



Figure 13: Female Tourism Worker. This image was coded White Female Tourism Worker.

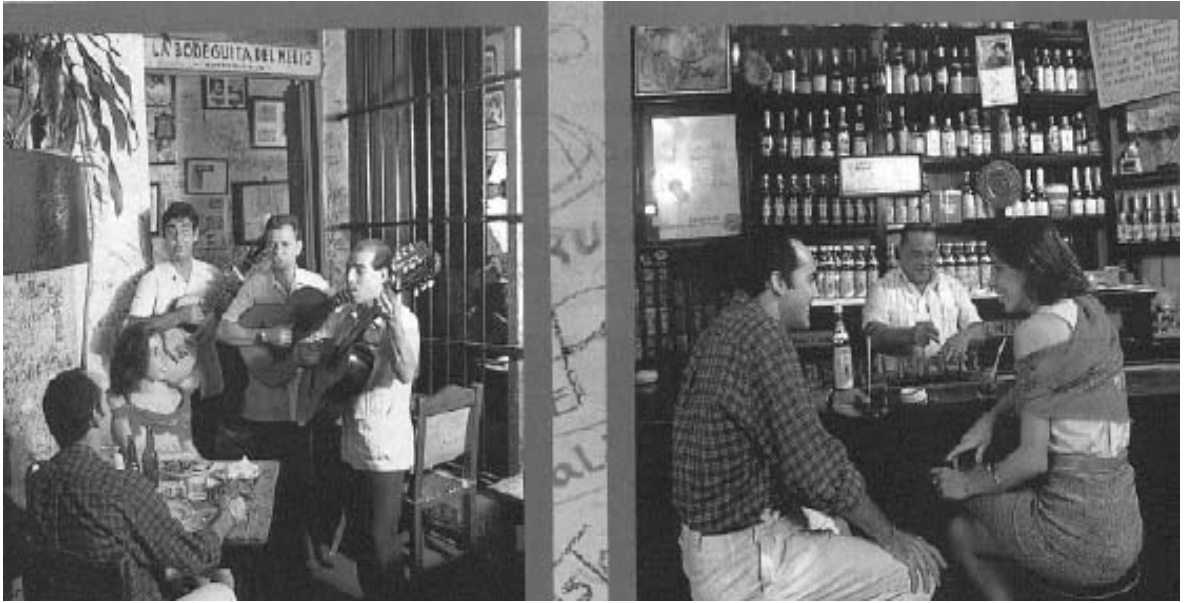


Figure 14: Male Tourism Workers. These images portray scenes in Havana’s famed Bodeguita del Medio. The image on the left was coded White Male Entertainers and the image on the right was coded White Male Tourism Worker. In an effort to focus on representations of Cubans in the tourism literature, the tourists in these images were not coded in the matrix.



Figure 15: Locals as Tourists. These models are a prominent couple in many of the Cuban produced tourism brochures. Horizontes Hoteles developed a series of brochures built around a storyline that focused on these models. In the brochures, they are identified as European, but this and other photos suggest their Cuban-ness. This image was coded White Gender Mix: Locals as Tourists.



Figure 16: Idle/Posed Cuban Woman. Cubans as “idlers/posed” were more prominent in tourism guidebooks than in magazines and brochures. I keyed this woman as posed (as opposed to merely idle) because the point of interest is her mode of dress and general countenance.

Vita

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