Black Market Tourism

Cristina Webb

Syracuse University

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BLACK MARKET TOURISM
HAVANA, CUBA

Cristina Webb
Spring 2011

Committee:
Brendan Moran
Jonathan Lott
# Submitted towards a Bachelor of Architecture
Spring 2011

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contention</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition of Tourism vs Tourism in Cuba</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Context</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline of Events</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline of Social Impacts</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Context</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Events</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal Condition vs Unique Condition in Cuba</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapping Havana</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapping Government Ideal</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapping Tourist Ideal</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local vs Tourist</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Market</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaces of the Black Market</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the City</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing Havana</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Black Market Tourism</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapping the Black Market</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I contend that architecture can stimulate certain types of activity and informal exchange that political policy restricts or forbids.

Over time, as society evolves and policy changes modes of interaction and activity, architecture should be able to be reprogrammed and reconfigured for societal need and according to political regulation. At the same time, it should be able to accommodate activities that circumvent or subvert policy as new modes of operating become socially necessary.

These spaces will allow for the evolving experience and reality of the city to be revealed as policies and their impact on people change.

Tourism, and the spaces that it occupies, has become an important political tool to disseminate a very specific image of the city to outsiders, especially in the way it controls how space is occupied.

The city, and especially resorts, are over programmed and over controlled as a way of commodifying space and maintaining a specific image of the place and the way it’s spaces are to be used.

Because of what Koolhaas describes as the “programmatic indeterminacy of an unstable context,” the “architectural specificity” of spaces in a place of constant political change should be highly manipulable to deal with and provoke change.

I propose a new ‘black market’ architecture that not only allows for change, but attempts to stimulate it by allowing for a new space of exchange outside of the rigid controlled image of the city and reveals it to outsiders.

---

“If travel is mysterious, even miraculous, and often lonely and frightening, tourism is commonsensical, utilitarian, safe, and social, “that gregarious passion,” the traveler Patrick Leigh Fermor calls it, “which destroys the object of its love.” Not self-directed but externally enticed, as a tourist you go not where your own curiosity beckons but where the industry decrees you shall go. Tourism soothes, shielding you from the shocks of novelty and menace, confirming your prior view of the world rather than shaking it up. It obliges you not just to behold conventional things but to behold them in the approved conventional way.”

Top Tourism Cities in the World
+"Resort" Pairings and their ‘Type’ in Relation to City

As tourism to popular cities increases, how does the influx of ‘outsiders’ affect the original functions of the city? In these cases, by urban need and tourism desires, alternate settings of the place emerge as ‘resort’ versions of the original.
Authenticity and Identity

“The fake may at times be a more real copy of the real, one so perfect as to be impossibly real, and hence desirable in itself”

Paramount to the concept of authenticity is image and the subsequent projection of that image, charged as cultural meaning or a message to indicate validity. That validity is challenged by the individual and their perceptions regarding authenticity, whether they are an outsider or insider. To the local (insider), the authentic image of place is reflected in their perception of their identity within it. The identity of the city then reflects in many ways how insiders function within it and how they understand what the authentic city is.

However, important to the understanding of a city’s authenticity is the image agents within the city construct for display to the outside. What is perceived as authentic to the outsider is pre-scripted and designed to portray a specific image and function of the city. The way this is executed through tourism leaves a divide between what insiders and outsiders perceive as authentic, and thus how spaces are constructed to be in line with these understandings. Tailoring the city to touristic needs then alters how insiders identify with and relate to place.

Influence

An influx in tourism has effects of influence over the local culture, not only within the existing framework of the city and the way it operates, but also in how the city evolves to meet the needs of outsiders. This can be seen in the divide of standard of living and amenities in tourist accommodations as compared to the average residence of the local.

In Cuba the government has created policy to limit the interaction of locals and tourists. Through the creation of spacial divides, they have attempted to limit not the influences of outsiders on space, but the degree to which insiders can interact with the spaces of the outsider. This attempts to limit the interaction of individuals by restricting the access of different groups of people to different spaces.

This distinction of space access cannot be distinctively determined, however, because of a bleed over in activity and use. For instance, until recently Cubans weren’t allowed in tourist hotels, but at the same time they worked in the hotels serving the tourists. How then, if at all, is control attempted in these bleed zones and what serves as the spacial boundary beyond walls?

Commodification, Branding, Theming

Commodification is tangible product or place that has some value, use, advantage or profit that can be redeemed.

Place is being commodified to the point, especially within the Caribbean, where the experience of the city as a commodity for outsiders is valued more than the place as shaped and belonging to insiders.

The architecture of cities is used as a tool to attract and accommodate tourists, rather than as a place of exchange for insiders and outsiders.

Place becomes a sterile, idyllic setting based on outsider preconception, rather than local reality.

The identity of place becomes a brand, apart from authenticity, a sugarcoated version of reality to attract foreign investment. New construction then follows this ideal, based on this new desired identity of the place, to accommodate the new visitor, rather than the current inhabitant.

New themed resort cities are created to be in line with the brand of the place. They function apart from cities or any existing infrastructure. They are self-contained environments solely for outsiders.

However, the theming of space, especially in the Caribbean creates a generic atmosphere that no longer provides a unique experience, such as that within the city. For instance, in the Club Med resorts pictured to the right, the identity of the place is not decipherable from one image to the next.
**Policy and Control**
What control do locals have on the way they use the city?
How does policy shape the way the city is constructed and functions?
What influence do the people have on how the control manifests?

**Loopholes**
How do locals circumvent policy and what are the motives behind this? (money, interaction, etc)
How does architecture challenge the control government seeks and policy they put in place?
How are loopholes in the political system manifested in the form of space?

**Black Market**
What are existing types of spaces that use loopholes for specific types of social exchange?
How can architecture create space for certain changing uses that are provided for because of policy?
How can the space allow for change in policy that forces new modes of exchange to happen?

This project is a tool amid constant and unpredictable crisis. This crisis within Cuba emerges as change that can’t be controlled by the people and that effects everyday function within the city. It is policy change based on government will and desire that alters and restricts the basic modes of operating within the city.
Glossary

Paradise: A place that offers contentment and happiness via its immense beauty, delight and peacefulness. It exists in opposition to the normative human experience as a place that fulfills any unmet desires and experience.

Embargo: The restriction or prohibition of trade and commercial activity with a specific country from another for political purposes, often to isolate it or restrict it economically.

Enclave Tourism/“Tourism Apartheid”**: The intentional segregation of locals from tourists, especially in tourist areas, such as resorts and hotels, to isolate the native society from outside/foreign contact and influence (usually mandated and enforced by the governing body).

Infrastructure: The essential systems and structures that are needed for the operation and function of a society, country, city or area (i.e. transportation, power, roads, factories, communication systems, schools, etc). These factors are necessary for, and help determine, the economic function and growth of a place.

Leisure: Time spent away from work and everyday domestic life to escape day-to-day normative activity and relax.

Local: A person from a particular place, or a resident of that place.

Resort: A city, town or commercial establishment operated by a single company that attract tourists for relaxation and recreation. They are self-contained entities which can provide tourists with most accommodation, leisure, recreation, entertainment and commercial desires within their premises.

Tourism: (1) The activity of traveling for pleasure and leisure also (2) The industry and services involved with accommodating, transporting, entertaining and attracting tourists.

Services within this industry include:
- Transportation Services - airlines, cruise ships, ports, taxis, rental cars, tour busses, etc
- Hospitality Services - accommodations, hotels, resorts, etc
- Entertainment Services - casinos, zoos, museums, theaters, malls, amusement parks, etc

The United Nations World Tourism Organization classifies three forms of tourism:
- Domestic Tourism - residents from a country traveling only within that country
- Inbound Tourism - non-residents traveling into a country
- Outbound Tourism - residents traveling in another country

Tourist: A person traveling for pleasure and leisure outside of their normative environment. They typically have high levels of disposable income, leisure time, education and consumptive tastes.

Tourist Attraction: A place of interest that draws tourists. The draw may be its cultural value, natural or constructed uniqueness or beauty, historical significance or entertainment value. The attractor itself may be an event, structure, landmark or community/culture.

Tourist Destination: A country, city or area that is dependent on tourism as a significant portion of its total revenue. It may contain one or more tourist attraction or be one in of itself.

Tourist District: An area of the city, often near the urban center, with a strong focus on hospitality, entertainment and commercial activity to attract and contain tourism activity.

Tourism Infrastructure: The essential systems and structures serving tourists within a country, city or area (i.e. hotels, convention centers, restaurants, theaters and other services that cater primarily to tourists, as well as the systems for attracting and delivering information to tourists). These factors are necessary for, and help determine, the economic force and growth of tourism as an industry in that place.

Tourist Trap: A created place of interest that was established with the purpose of attracting tourists and their money. These traps draw and entice tourists to stop and divert from their projected path to spend money on services, entertainment, souvenirs, and other products.

Key

- Cuban Local Insider
- Foreigner Tourist Outsider
- American Tourist Outsider
All natives are tourists somewhere.*

*Except Cubans.
Historical Context of Cuba

Regulation

Freedom

World War II

Event, event, event, event

Revolution/Castro

Collapse of Soviet Union

Event, event, event, event

Now...

Event, event, event, event
Historical Context of Havana/Cuba

Havana as Tourist Destination

Once the primary port city in the Caribbean, Havana, Cuba was also the “first major island destination” in the region (Beekhuus 326). Major transitions in governmental power and social policy have likewise caused major shifts in the country and a decrease in tourism driving and stabilizing its economy over the last century. The country is “one of the last self-identified socialist states in the world” and as the rest of the rapidly globalizing world focuses on their ideal of the democratic, capitalist state, “Cuba [remains] a developing nation struggling to find a foothold in the new global capitalist economy that will enable it to grow economically, while preserving its socialist accomplishments in health, education and social welfare” (Michalowski 552). Today, Cuba, and more specifically, Havana, once again has “turned to tourism in order to compete within its region and stabilize its economy in the Post-Soviet era.”

As the complex conditions of government have changed and evolved, as drastic social policy and control has been enacted and enforced, and as outsiders have been allowed within Cuba’s boarders in waves of tourism over time, the social interactions between these societal bodies—government/institution, citizens, and tourists/outiders—has shaped and molded the city landscape. The urban framework must evolve and transform with those that inhabit it. The social relationships alter the infrastructural relationships. In one sense, the structure of the city can directly be seen as the policy shaped interactions between the different groups of people within the socialist city. The behavior and lifestyle demanded by these policies inevitably create boundaries, physical and implied. This occurs between people and space, citizens and outsiders, and citizens and government. Ultimately, the Cuban government’s control over its citizens shapes the actions of people within the city and people’s interactions with each other. This alters the way that the city must respond to accommodate the people, which stands apart from the way that open, capitalist cities might function. The level of control socially, affects the specificity of the urban landscape to control physically. Thus, over time, the way in which the city of Havana functions on the urban scale can be interpreted by the historical evolution of the city politically and economically.

Pre-Revolution Tourism (1950s)

Following the Second World War, and much American economic prosperity, the first major boom in Cuban tourism began. In the mid 1970s, Cuba began to reinvest in a domestic tourism effort in order to provide Cubans with the proper amenities for their own domestic travel within their country. The government believed “leisure time to be a basic human right and made domestic tourism one of the cornerstones of social development” (McGlynn 2). By allowing Cubans to travel and gain more knowledge of their country, they would become more invested in it and be more agreeable to helping it abiding by set regulations of the government. The government hoped to emphasize the benefits of the revolutionary party that Cuba belonged to thereby increasing international tourism facilities were turned into public facilities, fully accessible to domestic tourists. In the early 1960s foreign tourism to Cuba dropped drastically, bottoming out at a few thousand, most of who were “invited by the authorities on the basis of friendship or solidarity” (Hinch 216). The American visitors that once made up a majority of Havana’s tourists, now were not only blocked by new rebel policy, but also by the US embargo—which forbade Americans (before the largest international tourist group visiting Cuba at 87%) to visit Cuba and spend money in their economy (Hinch 216). In the 1960s the government began investing in domestic tourism effort in order to provide Cubans with the proper amenities for their own domestic travel within their country. The government believed “leisure time to be a basic human right and made domestic tourism one of the cornerstones of social development” (McGlynn 2).

The number of hotel rooms in the Havana grew from 3,000 in 1952 to 5,500 in 1958, making it the single largest tourist destination in the region in 1957, Havana accounted for twenty-one percent of all visitors to the Caribbean, with eighty-six percent of these visitors coming from the United States (Michalowski 560). The identity of Havana at this time had a large focus on the leisure of the sun and sandy beaches and loose restrictions of casinos and brothels; “tourism was about pleasure” (McGlynn 1). Well off Americans, companies, and mob organizations enjoyed the close proximity of Havana to the States, and used it as a location to relax and conduct business, with limited regulation. Prostitution, gambling, and organized crime were common and open within the city, and the growing tourism industry became entwined and dependent on these ‘commodities’ as a draw for foreign investment (Hinch 215). Unfortunately, during this time, too much of the tourism sector became controlled by foreign entities, so that foreigners would visit Cuba as tourists and spend money at foreign owned establishments, “thereby resulting in large leakages of tourism earnings from the Cuban economy” (Hinch 216). Havana became merely a stage for this outside activity. The infrastructure and resources of the city were consumed, but no monetary or social compensation was given back to the city. Consequently, in this stage of Havana’s development, “tourism had a destructive side” that exploited the city’s resources for earnings from the Cuban economy (Hinch 216).

In the mid 1970s, Cuba began to reinvest in the international tourism industry, in order to diversify their economy and bring in foreign currency (Michalowski 560). This tourism began to increase drastically into the 1980s, by 1987 310,000 tourists visited the country, exceeding the pre-revolution numbers (Hinch 217). One of the most important evolutions in this new tourism structure, was the change in where the tourists were coming from before the revolution. Before the revolution, the United States had been the main contributor of tourists, but now Americans were banned from travel to the city. Consequently, in this stage of Havana’s development, “tourism had a destructive side” that exploited the city’s resources for earnings from the Cuban economy (Hinch 216). The “tourist industry” was focused on creating a people-centered society based on justice and the socioeconomic principles of reciprocity and equitable wealth distribution, combating the previous ideals of consumerism imported with American tourists (McGlynn 1). Already accounting for a relatively substantial amount of revenue for Cuba at the time— even though other industries were still the primary focus of the economy—it was not necessarily the rebel’s intention to cut off the tourist sector; they had originally planned to “establish this center in the very heart of Havana, at the core of the tourism infrastructure, but, however, hindered these intentions and soon after Castro took power, he destroyed the Casinos and began creating a more moral city (Hinch 216). Havana began moving away from a city governed by the needs and whims of the foreign tourists deregulated by the government, and focused on the collective relationship between all citizens with government to form a less corrupt system. The rebels determined that: “In this new society, moral rather than material imperatives would motivate citizens, who would then willingly subordinate personal interests to the collective interest” (McGlynn 2). These people would receive food, housing health care, and education as basic human rights of citizenship. The government believed “leisure time to be a basic human right and made domestic tourism one of the cornerstones of social development” (McGlynn 2).

The city’s economic and government became more focused on tourism investment. “There were more than 5000 beggars walking the streets in the city in 1958, many of whom were homeless woman and children” as opposed to the excessive nature of the 272,000 tourists in that same year (McGlynn 1).

The Revolution and Castro (1959)

When Castro’s rebel party seized power of the Cuban government in 1959, the influx of tourists was halted and so then was the “excesses of the tourist industry” (Hinch 216). The government “intended to create a people-centered society based on justice and the socioeconomic principles of reciprocity and equitable wealth distribution,” combating the previous ideals of consumerism imported with American tourists (McGlynn 1). Already accounting for a relatively substantial amount of revenue for Cuba at the time—even though other industries were still the primary focus of the economy—it was not necessarily the rebel’s intention to cut off the tourist sector; they had originally planned to “establish this center in the very heart of Havana, at the core of the tourism infrastructure, but, however, hindered these intentions and soon after Castro took power, he destroyed the Casinos and began creating a more moral city (Hinch 216). Havana began moving away from a city governed by the needs and whims of the foreign tourists deregulated by the government, and focused on the collective relationship between all citizens with government to form a less corrupt system. The rebels determined that: “In this new society, moral rather than material imperatives would motivate citizens, who would then willingly subordinate personal interests to the collective interest” (McGlynn 2). These people would receive food, housing health care, and education as basic human rights of citizenship. The government believed “leisure time to be a basic human right and made domestic tourism one of the cornerstones of social development” (McGlynn 2). By allowing Cubans to travel and gain more knowledge of their country, they would become more invested in it and be more agreeable to helping it abide by set regulations of the government. The government hoped to emphasize the benefits of the revolutionary party that Cuba belonged to thereby increasing international tourism. Tourism facilities were turned into public facilities, fully accessible to domestic tourists. In this new ‘social tourism, much of the costs to citizens was subsidized by the government as they worked to create a close-knit, proud populace (Hinch 217). This emphasis on a new domestic tourism effort in order to provide Cubans with the proper amenities for their own domestic travel within their country. The government believed “leisure time to be a basic human right and made domestic tourism one of the cornerstones of social development” (McGlynn 2).
ing to Cuba legally. This huge lost market posed a difficult barrier in attracting new markets, especially because of the close proximity that Havana and Cuba had shared with the US. This also became a difficult challenge, as Havana was once again forced to compete with other Caribbean cities for tourism dominance. Because of these constraints, the Cuban tourism industry began to set up tactics most specifically with the Canadian and Western Europe markets (Michalowski 560). One of the biggest changes, as opposed to the former tourism industry that ruled in the 1950s, was to Isolate the tourist sector and the local sector as much as possible. However, this dichotomy between tourists and citizens only caused frustration, especially at the local scale—where there was “a growing level of resident frustration as free-spending tourists are given more and more special privileges in the supposedly classless society” (Hinch 218). Even the tourism areas of each sector were separated, by time and place—citizens usually traveled in the summer to areas in the countryside, while foreigners usually traveled the rest of the year to primarily Havana and beach resorts (Hinch 218). Residents started growing increasingly frustrated that tourists were treated like the upper class of their society, which was meant to be equal for all, as they received far greater amenities and were greeted with much higher standards of living than the average citizen. The people felt that this went away from the ideas of their society, and a greater divide was created between the insider and the outsider.

The ‘Special Period’ (1990s)

When the Soviet bloc collapsed in 1989, Cuba lost almost three quarters of its international trade and a tremendous amount of international aid from the Soviets (McGlynn 2). Cuba’s economy began to crumble and even with the government subsidies for food, health care, etc. people in Havana were still ailing from a lack of adequate food and resources. The government even began freezing up government owned land for people to farm, and began encouraging the establishment of popular gardens within the city limits which allowed people to begin producing extra food for their families (Chaplowe 47). In the end, Cuba, and especially Havana, could not rely on manufacturing and industry to survive economically, especially with the US embargo still in place. The government had to turn to the Caribbean mainstay of tourism in order to stabilize its economic structure and bring in the foreign dollar.

“As Fidel Castro explained, ‘We have to develop tourism. It is an important source of foreign currency. We do not like tourism. It has become an economic necessity,’ the goal was to secure hard currency and the resources need to stabilize and maintain the existing social and political structure. Reluctantly, Cuba adopted austerity policies and, based on the pre-1959 experience, reluctantly embraced international tourism, bringing thousands of visitors to the island at the very moment when Cubanos faced economic disas-
ter (McGlynn 2).

By the early 2000s tourism accounted for more than 60 percent of the economic revenue of Cuba, of which tourism Havana makes up as much as 80 percent (Michalowski 561). In the city, the hotel capacity had to be doubled to accommodate this boom and new resorts were built along the coast in Havana to further attract tourists from the competing islands surrounding Cuba (Michalowski 561). Havana had to swiftly update, not only its infrastructure and hotel capacity, but also the living standards of such places in order to meet the expectations of the Westernized tourists that expect the generic, standardized accommodations that they are used to in the more commercialized destination. Even though, the city, ideologically, was far behind the norm of the sterilized tourist destination, the aim became to identify the city as a historic and cultural center that had been untouched by the globalized commercial and capitalistic invasion. The government emphasized spheres of city life that the local government controlled or at least had some curtailment over the connections that are firmly organized by the government’s functions, once again reverted to an unresolved and unclear relationship between locals and tourists, however, unlike the 1950s, the government retained more control over these interactions and enforced more of a social divide between the two, as to avoid corrupting the locals with foreign desires.

Contemporary Controlled Havana Amid the Globalizing World

The heavily regulated nature of Cuba’s socialist society plays a huge role in the way that Havana functions at the global economic scale and at the internalized local scale. Regulations including travel and communications limits on its people have vastly isolated a population of people that is otherwise impressively educated. Likewise, Havana’s isolation of people and economy from its influential world power neighbor of the United States has cut it off from the larger social exchange that the other Caribbean islands have been highly over exposed to. On one hand, this isolation from the standardized, commercialized, highly inter-connected and globalized part of the world can be seen as positive—as the island’s social and cultural standards are not compromised. Also, it has been able to isolate its people, relatively until recently, from the superficial, materialistic desires that has been associated with the capitalist attitude that foreign tourists import. Conversely, Havana’s relative isolation from the neighboring consumerist gi-
ant of the US has stunted its evolution in terms of keeping up with the modern standards of technology and lifestyle—in order to keep it competitive in the Caribbean tourism market. The effects of this seclusion, effectively from the current time directly, can be seen as evidence in Havana, physically, and socially.

...
Current Events via Cuba

2010_Sept 3_ “...our government has extended to 99 years the right of foreign investors to use our land. Pieces of this nation will pass into the hands of those who hold foreign passports; meanwhile local entrepreneurs are granted the use of agricultural land, in usufruct, for a mere ten years. The Official Gazette speaks of the ‘real estate business’ when we all know that land – our land – is not available to Cubans who would like to acquire a small sliver on which to build.”

By YOANI SANCHEZ, GENERATION Y

2010_AUG 11_ “After bypassing the limitations to reach cyberspace, we Cubans see the censorship that grips us from two different sides. One comes from the lack of political will on the part of our government to allow this Island mass access to the web of networks. It shows itself in blogs and filtered portals and in the prohibitive prices for an hour of surfing the WWW. The other – also painful – is that of services that exclude residents in our country under the justification of the anachronistic blockade/embargo.”

By YOANI SANCHEZ, GENERATION Y

2010_AUG 11_ “...a friend of mine recently realized that to be able to enjoy certain attractions in Cuba she needs to first show a passport certifying her status as a foreigner or a Cuban residing overseas... Only foreigners or Cubans residing overseas can ride motor vehicles. Cubans can ride on a beach bicycle or a surf board, but not on anything with an engine.”

By ERNESTO KONALIS CUBA, TRANSLATING CUBA

2010_FEB 3_ “In Cuba there are four kinds of markets and two different types of money to pay for things in them. Every morning the housewives detail in their heads – with a minimum of fuss – a plan for which currency they will use to buy what, in which places... there are sellers who accept both the symbolic tokens they pay our wages in, and the others with a value 24 times greater.”

By YOANI SANCHEZ, GENERATION Y

2009 JUL 17_ “A store on Neptune Street closed yesterday so they wouldn’t have to turn on the air conditioner after exceeding the strict plan of kilowatts consumed. In a five-star hotel they tell the tourists they’re repairing the air conditioner but in reality they turn it off so the meter won’t run so fast.”

By YOANI SANCHEZ, GENERATION Y

2008 AUG 19_ “He’s 28 and works at a pool because his stepfather bought him a job in the tourism industry. His command of English is awful but with the two thousand pesos he paid to the administrator, he didn’t have to prove he could speak it. More than half the bottles of rum and cola he sells at the snack bar he bought himself at the retail price. His colleagues taught him how to sell his own ‘merchandise’ first, over that which the State sells to tourists. Thanks to this trick, on every shift he pockets what a neurosurgeon would earn in a month.”

By YOANI SANCHEZ, GENERATION Y

Current Events via USA and UK

2010_OCT 27_ Assembly Again Urges U.S. to Lift Cuba Embargo

The annual General Assembly resolution calling for the United States to lift its long-standing economic embargo against Cuba passed by the lopsided vote of 187 to 2. Only the United States and Israel opposed the nonbinding measure, the 19th such resolution in a row, while three Pacific island allies of Washington abstained.

By NEIL MacJARRAR, NEW YORK TIMES

2010_OCT 24_ Wife of American Held in Cuba Pleads for His Release and Apologizes to Castro

“A 61-year-old father of two, he was detained last December while traveling in Cuba as part of a semi-covert program of the United States Agency for International Development, the foreign assistance arm of the State Department, aimed at undermining the Cuban government.”

By SHERYL GAY STOLBERG and DAMIEN CARVE, NEW YORK TIMES

2010_OCT 07_ Cutting Costs, Cuba Begins Ending Out Pink Slips

“The new plan is designed to get 800,000 workers out of the public sector by next March and should seek work in the private sector, police training academy. How many of them would go about doing that, listing 178 activities for which the government will grant license starting in October... They may even be able to get loans to do it. The article highlighted that the Central Bank of Cuba was studying how to make small business loans available.”

By ELISABETH MALKIN, NEW YORK TIMES

2010_AUG 16_ U.S. Said to Plan Easing Rules for Travel to Cuba

“Cubans who pay their way by selling goods and make work in the private sector... Friday’s article outlined how many of them could go about doing that, listing 178 activities for which the government will grant licenses starting in October... They may even be able to get loans to do it. The article highlighted that the Central Bank of Cuba was studying how to make small business loans available.”

By CLIFFORD KRAUSS, NEW YORK TIMES

2010_JUN 30_ House Panel Votes to Ease Cuba Travel Restrictions

“The House Agriculture Committee voted Wednesday to reverse a decades-long ban on United States citizens traveling to Cuba and to ease restrictions on the sale of American commodities there... The bill, the Travel Restriction Reform and Export Enhancement Act, must still go through the Foreign Affairs and Financial Services Committees before it can be considered by the full House. Then the Senate would have to act.”

By TEGASHI HIDE TOP, NEW YORK TIMES

2010_FEB 07_ Cuba Plans City Farms to Ease Economy Woes

“Cuba has launched an ambitious project to ring urban areas with thousands of small farms in a bid to reverse the country’s agricultural decline and ease its chronic economic woes. The five-year plan calls for growing fruits and vegetables and raising livestock in four-mile-wide rings around 150 of Cuba’s cities and towns, with the exception of the capital Havana.”

By MARÍA CRUZ JAIME, GUARDIAN

2009_OCT 13_ Obama Opens Door to Cuba, but Only a Crack

“The annual General Assembly resolution calling for the United States to lift its long-standing economic embargo against Cuba passed by the lopsided vote of 187 to 2. Only the United States and Israel opposed the nonbinding measure, the 19th such resolution in a row, while three Pacific island allies of Washington abstained.”

By JAMES C. McKINLEY Jr., NEW YORK TIMES
Current Economic Relations of Cuba with US

Despite the embargo, the US still exports millions of dollars worth of produce and processed food every year, legally. Recently, restrictions regarding remittances were loosened, allowing even more money to be sent from Cubans living in America to their families on the island. This alone has supported the Cuban economy with billions of dollars in recent years alone. This money is in part used to restore tourist areas of the city, once it reaches the government through taxes. A lot of the food imported is used in tourist restaurants and resorts. True in Cuba, but more extreme of a situation in other Caribbean countries, is that the money sent by outsiders essentially is used to create the tourist infrastructures and then when they come to visit they are fed food imported from their own country.


“Surrogate experience and synthetic settings have become the preferred American way of life”.

... but the embargo is still in place
“Normal” Condition

(American Perspective)

Unique Condition in Cuba

Studying the normal conditions of the way the city and space operates in comparison to how Cuba functions uniquely apart from that allows an understanding of how policy in Cuba directly effects space and how people operate within it to be revealed.
National Currency

The buyer has the option to buy whatever, wherever with the local currency. Purchasing power of the individual depends on their personal income.

Multiple Currencies

There are two currencies in Cuba, which divides not only locals and tourists, but the Cubans themselves. Cubans are paid in the Peso, which is worth very little, but can be used at the government ration shops. The Convertible Peso is used most often by tourists, although Cubans working in the tourism sector have easier access to this currency which is worth 24 times more than the peso. This creates a divide where higher valued goods are only available to those with access to this currency.

Multiple Circulating Currencies

Separation of Consumer Spaces/Spacial Divide of Insider/Outsider

- Cuban Peso
- Cuban Convertible Peso
- Cuban Ration Shops
- "Dollar Shops"/Tourist Shops

Grocery Store
Apple Store
Mall
Ration Shop in Havana
Market Driven Space Use

The market drives economic forces for built development to determine how spaces are used and when and where they are constructed. Individuals have an impact on government policy that determines guidelines for space zoning and allocation, but real estate, development and restoration are relatively determined by private, market driven entities.

Policy Determined Space Use

The Cuban government, and more specifically the Office of the Historian within the tourism sector, decides how space is to be used, allocated and restored. Funds for development and construction are essentially coming from one central point and the decision making process for how space is allowed to be used is very controlled and centralized. Individuals outside of government have very little control over the built environment, the spaces they inhabit and how they are allowed to use the space. Currently a large proportion of resources are going into restoring historic building for tourism, with the hope that it will bring in money to then restore spaces for locals.
Facade/Signage as Display

Building exteriors often correlate to the purpose or condition of the interior space and program. In a general condition, especially in the US and other western cultures, the exterior of a home is often used as a tool to display the image or wealth of the people that occupy it. As such, the image portrayed of space reflects how it is occupied and used.

Facade Hiding Interior

With little money for resources for restoration, the exteriors of buildings in Havana are often left crumbling. Individuals focus any improvements of their allocated spaces on the interior, while the dilapidated exteriors hide any indication that they might have extra money or resources. The Office of the Historian focuses restoration efforts on buildings that can be used to attract tourist interest. These buildings become a facade hiding the standards of space that locals experience in a more refined space that is more comfortable for tourists.
Commercialized Markets

Commercial activity is driven by market demand and spaces of exchange are developed based on the needs and wants of the consumer. The range of goods spans from luxury and specialty items to cost efficient, convenience items to meet the scales of consumers within the market.

Informal Markets

The Cuban Government has recently begun allowing people to sell produce that they grow themselves to others. The food in these markets is essential in supplementing the staple items that are provided via government rations. Out of this policy change, new informal spaces of exchange have been formed within the city. Additionally, it gives people incentives to use open space within the city to grow produce.
Advertising is Essential

In capitalist society, advertising is essential in order to compete in the market.

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Advertising Restricted

Advertising and signage in Cuba is very restricted. Businesses are not permitted to advertise within the city and signs identifying businesses are fairly modest. The only billboards that are seen lining highways or in the city often display the likeness of Castro, Che and socialist propaganda. This limits the degree to which spaces can operate and relate to tourists that are used to being drawn to sites and businesses via advertising and visual stimulation within the city.
Hotel

Tourists expect a clean, sterile environment with they pay for a stay in a hotel. An variety of amenities are expected as comforts when one is staying in this rented private space away from their own private space. It is expected that this space be private for the paying individual for their time there.

Casa Particular

The casa particulares are unique to Cuba. They bleed the boundary between not only private and public, but insider and outsider. The government licenses some homes to rent out rooms to tourists based on the social need for more tourist accommodations.
Travel Freedom

Individuals have the ability to travel wherever, whenever based on their disposable income and desire.

Restricted Domestic Tourism

Cubans are now permitted to stay in tourist hotels, although the cost usually does not allow them to do so as leisurely as foreigners. And there are still tourist regions in the country where Cubans are not permitted to go.
Mapping Tourism
Top Tourist Cities in the Caribbean

- Cancun 2,022,000
- Mexico City 2,560,000
- Orlando 2,055,000
- Miami 2,341,000
- Havana 943,000
- Varadero 1,326,000
- Bogota 617,000
- Caracas 391,000
This is the map distributed by Havana's Office of the Historian.

“Nothing appears on the map this is not controlled by the Historian. .. the map is an idealized projection of Habana Vieja intended for tourist consumption. It underscores the extent to which the city’s tourist topography has been successfully segregated from its Cuban geography.”

Mapping the Travel Guide

This map depicts the zones and buildings called out by the Lonely Planet travel guide within the area of Habana Vieja. In relation to the map produced by Havana’s Office of the Historian, you can start to see the overlapping spaces as places that are very popular landmarks and approved by the government agenda. On the other hand, spots unique to this map show more of the touristic desire. The guide describes places unique to the culture and character of Cuba, such as a few casa particulares, that may not fit in with the ideal image being fabricated by the government.

The large zones of undescribed space become the zones of possible higher authenticity. These are the spaces tourists might walk through, but aren’t directed to. They exist within the renovated fabric of the city, but are the spaces that locals, not tourists, inhabit. How can the overlap on these two separate conditions of the city be revealed?
Local [Insider] V S Tourist [Outsider]

Analyzing the way locals and tourists are allowed to function within the space of the city according to policy, the different ways the two groups may use the same space and the threshold condition between spaces for insiders and spaces for outsiders, aims to find the ways space may foster activity outside of the government policy directed ideal of operating within the city.
“A tourist always looks up. They are captivated by the architecture, the stained glass windows, the arches and columns. But when we Cubans walk we look out for the gaps in the sidewalk that would be dangerous to our ankles.”

-Yoani Sanchez

“Here at the proverbial heart of Cuba’s great paradox, seductive beauty sidles up to spectacular decay, as life carries on precariously and capriciously, but always passionately.”

-Lonely Planet
Cubans are not permitted to leave the country, except under very specific circumstances (government official, special visa).

There is a large divide between Cubans that can or cannot afford to travel. It is often too expensive based solely on the minimum given salary and tourism rates are often set according to foreign tourism standards.

There are places throughout the country where foreign tourists are permitted, but Cubans are not (at least not without a significant amount of paperwork which can be rejected according to any authority’s discretion.

This map shows just a handful of places that Cubans are not freely permitted to travel to, some are resort areas, others are nature preserves, but all allow exploration by foreign tourists.

"There are regions in my country where I still cannot enter. At least not unless if I am loaded with official documents, authorizations, guarantees, and recommendation letters."

-Henry Constantin, October 5, 2010
Leisure
Hotel

Access and Space: Hotel Santa Isabel

Access and Use of Lobby
Cubans work in the hotel, serving guests. Locals have access to the internet connected computers, if they can afford it.

Access and Use of Courtyard
The interior spaces are for guests (tourists) only. Because this is one of the more expensive hotels in the city, it is unlikely that the average local would ever be able to afford to be a guest.

Use of Plaza
The use of the plaza could only exclude locals if there was a private event being held, by the hotel or the city, in which everyone has to pay to enter (such as new years events).

Type:
Historic-Urban-Waterfront-Plaza Hotel
Hotel Santa Isabel
Considered one of Havana's finest hotels, as well as one of its oldest (it first began operations in 1857), the Hotel Santa Isabel is housed in the Palacio de los Condes de Sanjovenia, the former city crash pad of a decadent Spanish count. In 1998 this three-story baroque beauty was upgraded to five-star status but, unlike other posh Cuban hotels, the Santa Isabel actually comes close to justifying the billing. The 17 rooms have bundles of historic charm and are kitted out with attractive Spanish colonial furniture as well as paintings by contemporary Cuban artists. No small wonder ex-US president, Jimmy Carter, stayed here during his visit in 2002.
-Lonely Planet 2009
The Government’s “idealized Habana has very little to do with the urban reality experienced by the average Habanero. As such, it is emblematic of the dual economy and dual culture that is sustained in Habana - a city that is comprised of distinctive, if at times overlapping geographies. One city is designed for the tourists while a second is maintained for Habaneros. In the end both geographies are controlled by the Office of the Historian - either through the construction of tourist sites in the first case, or through financing new housing, schools, and social services in the second. While these cities are interdependent (in that the social programming of the second city depends on revenues raised by the tourist city), for the most part they remain culturally distinct.”

Motive: For living standard necessity

Space of Exchange [Where Black Market Manifests]:
Inside Shop, Empty Room
Motive: To buy items not easily accessible (in this case clothespins)

Space of Exchange [Where Black Market Manifests]:
At Threshold Between inside/Outside
Motive: To buy, exchange for item unavailable (in this case, a mattress)

Space of Exchange [Where Black Market Manifests]:

In Street
Motive: To buy "specialty" food items not available with rations (or other items in safe setting)

Space of Exchange [Where Black Market Manifests]:
Within Market
Motive: For repair necessity, wouldn’t be able to buy item legitimately, but necessary for lifestyle

Space of Exchange [Where Black Market Manifests]:
In Alley, Street-Side
Motive: For novelty or tourist desire

Space of Exchange [Where Black Market Manifests]:
Within Private Residence
Motive: For tourist desire

Space of Exchange [Where Black Market Manifests]:
Within Private Residence
Motive: To find something in a central database you would never be able to find via word of mouth.

Space of Exchange [Where Black Market Manifests]: Within Own Private Space or Hotel via Internet

This black market ‘Craigslist’ further segments those Cubans that have extra money and those that do not. It cuts off a certain level of interaction by adding anonymity to the process of exchange. It eliminates any visibility of these activities that are based on social need regardless of policy. It removes the activity from the direct context and conditions that caused this type of exchange to begin with, it separates the cause from the effect.

These activities should remain visible to insiders and outsiders so that the causes are also known and seen. Spaces for not only exchange, but interaction are vital in supporting this kind of activity, especially when it is against the political will.
“... can the unlimited freedom of movement granted by tele-technology render conventional travel obsolete?”

-Diller + Scofidio, Back to the Front: Tourisms of War
“The camera, the ultimate authenticating agent, is but one point in the nexus between tourism and vision. Tourism is dominated by sight; the sightseer travels to see sights... Attractions can be understood as optical devices which frame the sight within a safe, purified visual domain while displacing the unsightly into a blind zone.”

-Diller + Scofidio, Back to the Front: Tourism at War
Cuban Resort: Iberostar Varadero Resort
Varadero, Cuba

- Cafe
- Restaurant
- Conference Rooms
- Sports/Tennis
- Theater
- Conference Rooms
- Casino
- Hotel Room
- Spa
- Bar
- Beach
- Pool
Building as Resort: New York New York Hotel and Casino
Las Vegas, USA

- Hotel Room
- Theater
- Spa
- Casino
- Pool
- Restaurant
- Bars
- Dance Clubs
- Rollercoaster
- Shopping
City as Controlled Resort: 
Habana Vieja
Havana, Cuba

- Museum
- Shopping
- Restaurant
- Market
- Hotel Room
- Shopping
- Bars

City as Controlled Resort: 
Habana Vieja
Havana, Cuba
"Yet, the soil alone is mute without the paper that is needed to name it, explain it, and validate it for the tourist - the elaborate system of texts and artifacts which help to authenticate the 'authentic.' When history is re-produced by the mechanisms of tourism, in the guise of commemoration, then tourism itself becomes a political agent of nationalism..."

-Diller + Scofidio, Back to the Front: Tourisms of War
Who are the different players in the street life of the city of Havana? How can the city be understood via these different groups? And how do they experience the same spaces differently?
Theater of the Street: Interactions between different groups

- Seeking interaction with tourists
- Possibly selling goods or services
- Observing local life
- Desire to know/see more, Experience the ‘authentic’
- Observing interactions between locals/tourists
- Maintaining boundaries between them
- How do the police, locals, and tourists interact within shared space?
- How are they allowed or permitted to interact?
- What are the spacial boundaries?
The phantom public space that exists within the city block acts as a new venue for interaction, away from the surveillance of the police, that can be more free and dynamic. How can these spaces be exploited for potential new understanding or use?
The Government’s “idealized Habana has very little to do with the urban reality experienced by the average Habanero. As such, it is emblematic of the dual economy and dual culture that is sustained in Habana – a city that is comprised of distinctive, if at times overlapping geographies. One city is designed for the tourists while a second is maintained for Habaneros.”

— Lasansky, D. Medina., and Brian McLaren. Architecture and Tourism: Perception, Performance, and Place
Phantom Public Space of Courtyards:
Internal Gathering Spaces of Local Sphere, Hidden Away From Tourists and Surveillance

How can these internal spaces be mapped?
Can this mapping unveil a new city within a city that spawns new connections and modes of interacting?
Coppelia Ice Cream Shop
Open space broken down into smaller spaces to control gathering potential

City Block Post Revolution
Mansions and building units broken down into smaller social housing units

City Block Interation
The primary spaces of gathering on the city streets of Havana revolve around the plazas, streets and the balconies that surround them, this proposal internalizes this otherwise highly controlled interation to allow for new forms of interation that are at a small enough scale to be ignored by the government but allow for new activity.
How can architectural tactics be used to penetrate these internal voids in a similar way that the city street traditionally is? Can a new black market resort emerge internally in these courtyard spaces, away from the watchful eye of the strict government restrictions?
“Presuming that all histories are constructs anyway, what is at stake in rethinking authenticity is the question, whose authenticity? It is not the authentic but rather authentication that needs to be interrogated, that is, ‘the practices by which limits and discriminations are set, and the relativized systems of value which enable them.”

—Diller + Scofidio, Back to the Front: Tourisms of War
Bibliography

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