

BEYOND THE WALLED CITY:
URBAN EXPANSION IN AND AROUND HAVANA, 1828-1909

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ABSTRACT

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Beyond the Walled City: Urban Expansion in and Around Havana, 1828-1909
(Under the Direction of Louis A. Pérez, Jr.)

Beyond the Walled City examines the course of urban expansion in Havana to 1909. It begins with the modernization efforts that led to a critical event in the city's history: demolition of the city walls that had, until then, marked its western edge. While expansion to the west appears to be a logical step in accommodating the growing number of inhabitants within the city, urban growth was also influenced by a growing colonial concern with the urban subcultures of Havana. The presence of criollos, free urban people of color, and an increasing number of urban poor in and around the city, all questioned *habaneros'* ideas of modernity and evoked a fear of barbarity long into the first decades of the twentieth century. My dissertation argues that among the many factors that shaped urban growth in Havana was a long-standing fear of these newly urban *habaneros*, whose presence forced the demographic and physical layout of the city.

During the administration of Captain-General Miguel Tacón (1834-1838), urban planning became a central concern of the city government, as evidenced by the infrastructural developments that gave Havana its present-day design. As the city expanded outside of the walls (*las murallas*) to accommodate a growing middle class, paradigms of power similarly shifted to reflect urban changes. The result was a reconceptualization of how the modern city would be defined, by whom, and who would be allowed access into its perimeter. In this light, urban expansion emerges as a centuries-long attempt to reconcile urban tensions between social and political classes.

The purpose was to arrest the development of those urban subcultures that called into question the image of the city—and by extension the nation—as modern and urban(e).

The century-long concern of city officials with the urban inhabitants reveals that Havana remained a city in which the battle for modernization was waged daily in the developing spaces of the metropolis. *Beyond the Walled City* chronicles this process of urbanization, seeking as well to document the role of habaneros and of memory in the modern design of Havana.

"Yo vengo, porque habanero...habanero, soy yo"

Moneda Dura, Havana, Cuba, 2004

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CHAPTER 1

THE WALLED CITY

“Before anything may be built, the city must be imagined.”

Angel Rama, *The Lettered City*

In the opening chapters of the *Lettered City*, Uruguayan poet and cultural critic Angel Rama describes the formation of an urban intelligentsia with privileged access to state power. He puts forth the idea that the “power brokers” of Spanish America exercised a disproportionate amount of influence through their ability to manipulate colonial symbols of authority to the strict exclusion of their peers.¹ While the network of elites and their relationship to state power changed over time, their urban orientation and their ability to manipulate state government remained constant, thus enabling them to promulgate the metaphorical city in Rama’s text. In this dissertation, my interpretation of the westward expansion of colonial Havana functions as an inversion of Rama’s model. While the *Lettered City* describes an elite group of men and their ability to sustain an exclusive network of power within the metaphorical metropolises of Latin America, my notion of the “walled city” serves to describe instead the forces at play in nineteenth century Havana that

¹ Angel Rama, *The Lettered City*, trans. John Charles Chasteen (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996).

compelled the colonial government to expand the city westward, beyond the physical walls that once encircled it. This process of westward expansion was one which entailed the articulation of a specifically “modern” and colonial urban plan visible in the topographical and social changes which affected Havana throughout its development.

Before the onset of the urban “sprawl” that rendered the city walls obsolete by their 1863 demolition date, urban planning in Havana had been largely guided by the military and economic needs of the colonial government.² During the administration of Captain-General Miguel Tacón (1834-1838), however, urban planning developed into a central concern of the Spanish administration. The infrastructural developments that gave Havana its present-day design were set in place as the city modernized with new roads to connect its different environs and modern, well-planned neighborhoods to accommodate the needs of a growing middle class.³ Physical expansion and modernization, however, had a devastating impact on the everyday lives of the city’s marginal inhabitants. The walls around Havana and a string of legislation forbidding construction near its various military structures created mass housing shortages and limited—or so it appeared during the early nineteenth century—the space available in which the city could expand. Meanwhile, urban density and population growth exacerbated by migration from rural areas pitted residents of the city against one another for the right to claim the spaces and services of Havana.

The challenges posed by the various interest groups of the developing nineteenth-century metropolis mirror many of the present-day concerns facing city administrators in

² Carlos Venegas, *La Habana entre dos siglos*, ed. Elvia Rosa Castro and Concepción Otero, *Arquitectura cubana: metamorfosis, pensamiento y crítica* (La Habana: Artecubano Ediciones, Consejo Nacional de las Artes Plásticas, 2002), 23.

³ Mario Coyula, Joseph L. Scarpaci, and Robert Segre, *Havana: Two Faces of the Antillean Metropolis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 32-37.

Havana. The evolution of a distinctly urban, *habanero* sub-culture and the spatialization of poverty are issues that not only illuminate the forces that shaped the topography and culture of the city during its initial stages of development, but they offer an historical explanation for the current challenges of urbanization. For example, the recent waves of rural migrants to urban areas across Cuba face similarly disparaging reactions as those experienced by rural migrants during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Reactions were exacerbated by the economic crisis of the 1990s when the collapse of the Soviet Union crippled the Cuban countryside and forced a growth in the population of Havana and its surrounding areas and overwhelmed already strained city resources. Contemporary migrants bore much of the blame for the further strain on resources and the increased tensions within the city; they were dubbed “*palestinos*” in reference to their unsettled lives and blamed for the demise of Havana’s urban culture.⁴

Approaches to the challenges posed by rapid urban growth have varied between the different government administrations in Cuba. To deal with problems of over-concentration, the colonial government between 1833 and 1898 sought to beautify and expand Havana’s infrastructure in the hopes of creating urban spaces that would maximize the modern appeal of the city, thereby downplaying its cramped inner quarters where crime and poverty abounded. In contrast, between 1899 and 1909, government administrations spatialized

⁴ As in other parts of Latin America, recent rural to urban migration in Havana has declined from the decades prior to the 1980s, when urban migration typically meant rapid growth rates for the capital city. Instead, the more common trend has been for rural migration to increase the size of secondary cities closer to the home base of migrants, or for migration to occur internationally to major cities throughout Latin America and the United States, often skipping the intermediary step of movement from the countryside to provincial towns and then on to large urban centers. The recent population increases of capital cities such as Havana therefore derive from natural rather than migratory increases, with the exception of the years following economic crisis such as what occurred in Havana. Yet the stigma of rural migrants continues to plague those who make their way to the capital city. For a discussion of recent migration trends and patterns in Latin America, see Jorge E. Hardy, *Introduction*, ed. Richard M. Morse and Jorge E. Hardy, *Rethinking the Latin American City* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992).

poverty and instituted a “*política de orden*” to better regulate urban growth, an approach facilitated by the political influence that the United States exerted over the island. There are echoes of both policies in the current government approach to urbanization in Havana. Since the triumph of the Revolution of 1959, the government of Fidel Castro has alternately followed similar policies. It implemented a series of reforms to counteract the potentially destabilizing effects of the rapid increase in urban growth that followed the political transition to Socialism and the economic crisis of the 1990s. To avoid the pitfalls of mass migration and urban problems such as homelessness, job scarcity, and crime, the government embarked upon a strict policy of control and regulation similar to those experienced in Havana during different eras of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Despite the long history of government administrations whose policies have illustrated a nation at odds with the direction in which Havana evolves, the historiography surrounding urbanization has served to reinforce Cuban national narratives. Following the revolution of 1959, an emerging school of academics argued for an understanding of Cuban history that emphasized the Cuban struggle for independence as one culminating not in 1898, when Spain was defeated by the joint forces of the U.S. and Cuban armies, or in 1902, when the United States transferred power of the island to a Cuban administration, but rather in 1959, when a triumphant July 26 Movement marched into Havana.⁵ Similarly influenced by this school of thought, urban historians argue that the different periods of Cuban history are embedded in the topography of the city, illustrated in the architectural and spatial

⁵ See, for example, Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998) and Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Cuba Between Reform and Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). In these works, Pérez argues that the events leading to the revolution of 1959 and the administration of Fidel Castro can be best understood as a culmination of the Cuban struggle for independence. The events taking place after Fidel Castro took power were therefore influenced by the historical relationship between the United States and Cuba.

developments of Havana from the time of its founding to the current era of the Castro administration.⁶ The evolution of Cuba from a military outpost to the “Ever Faithful Isle,” to its transformation into a bourgeoisie republic, is indeed reflected in the different environs of the modern city of Havana.⁷ The military structures and at the center of the city are evidence of its military origins, while the eighteenth-century colonial architecture financed by sugar production is an indication of the growing historical importance of the sugar harvest. In the plush neighborhoods surrounding the city proper, the presence of manicured homes and lawns built during the Republican era and fashioned in the “City Beautiful” and “Garden City” styles popularized by architect Frederick Law Olmstead in the United States are physical reminders of the historical connection between the United States and Cuba. These urban narratives emphasize the history of the city as one intricately connected to a rampant modernization that exacerbated social inequalities—and which were not addressed until the triumph of the revolution of 1959 when a new era of architectural development and housing regulations began. Not fully addressed within the historical narratives of urban topography, however, is the equally long history of *invisibility* within the city of Havana. While the plush neighborhoods that surround the core city make it easy to extricate the history of the Cuban

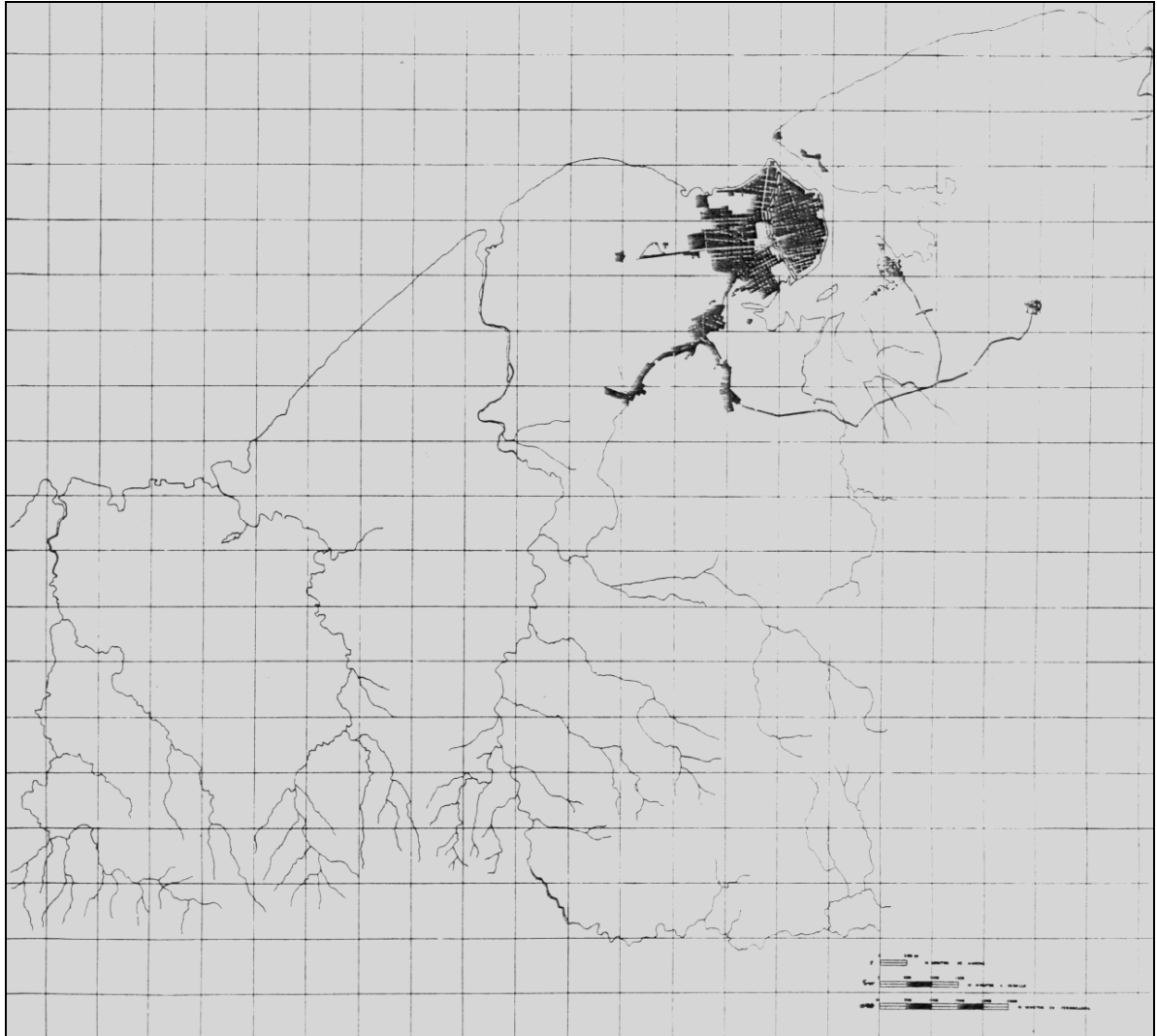
⁶ See, for example, Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de La Habana* (La Habana: Editorial del Consejo Nacional de Cultura, 1963), Pedro Martínez Inclán, *La Habana actual* (La Habana: Imprenta P. Fernández y Cia, 1925), Manuel Pérez Beato, *Habana antigua* (La Habana: Imprenta Seoane y Fernández, 1937), Carlos Venegas, *La urbanización de las murallas: dependencia y modernidad* (La Habana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1990). The recent study by Coyula, Scarpaci, and Segre, *Havana: Two Faces of the Antillean Metropolis*, is the latest contribution to the narrative tradition of extricating from the topography of Havana the history of the Cuban nation.

⁷ The 1982 decision by UNESCO to designate all 143 hectares of the original walled city (as well as its military structures and a few developments that were added outside of the walls during the nineteenth century) as a World Historic Site has increased world interest in Havana’s architecture and restoration efforts. The UNESCO designation is arguably an arbitrary one, since over 2,000 hectares actually encompass historically relevant sites and buildings. The 1982 decision has nonetheless increased awareness of the nation’s social and political history as it is reflected in the various architectural structures and city spaces. See Mario Coyula and Jill Hamberg, “Understanding Slums: Case Studies for the 2003 Global Report,” (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2003).

bourgeoisie, they likewise relate the tale of the city's urban poor.⁸ Between the inner quarters of Havana, the lavish architecture of the colonial era and the plush neighborhoods surrounding the city, there remain facades of the units that once served to house the urban poor and the visible remnants of the signs over the struggle for urban space.

While the nature of physical expansion in Havana during the different periods of Cuban history is easily visible in topographical analysis, other factors affecting urban growth are more nuanced. (See Maps 1.1-1.3) During the time period addressed in this dissertation, for example, the expansion of the city was limited by various factors. First and foremost was the geographic limitation of the bodies of water that surrounded Havana on three of its borders to the north, south, and east. Then, too, was the physical limitations imposed first by the city walls to the west, and then by the growth of an urban underclass and rural settlements that dotted its outskirts. (See Map 1.4) These settlements trapped the growing *criollo* middle classes between the primarily Spanish and cramped inner circle of the city and the urban periphery in which rural migrants and other “undesirables” were gathering. As a result, expansion efforts were set in motion to free the desirable spaces of the city for its middle-class inhabitants. Expansion and increased government regulation was fueled by the growing concern during the late colonial era that the lower-class inhabitants of Havana were a threat to the evolution of a modern city. During the transition from colony to republic, that concern reflected Cuba's tenuous independence as the country fell under the strict control of the United States. The modernization discourse that initially fueled animosity towards the urban “lower classes” during the colonial era was thus gradually transformed into a discourse of *civilización*. The emphasis on “civilization” reflected the goals of the new administration in

⁸ I am using the term “core city” to designate the 143 hectares that made up the perimeter of the walled city, which corresponds to the UNESCO designation of the area currently referred to as “Old Havana.”

Map 1.1:**Urban Development in Havana, 1750-1850**

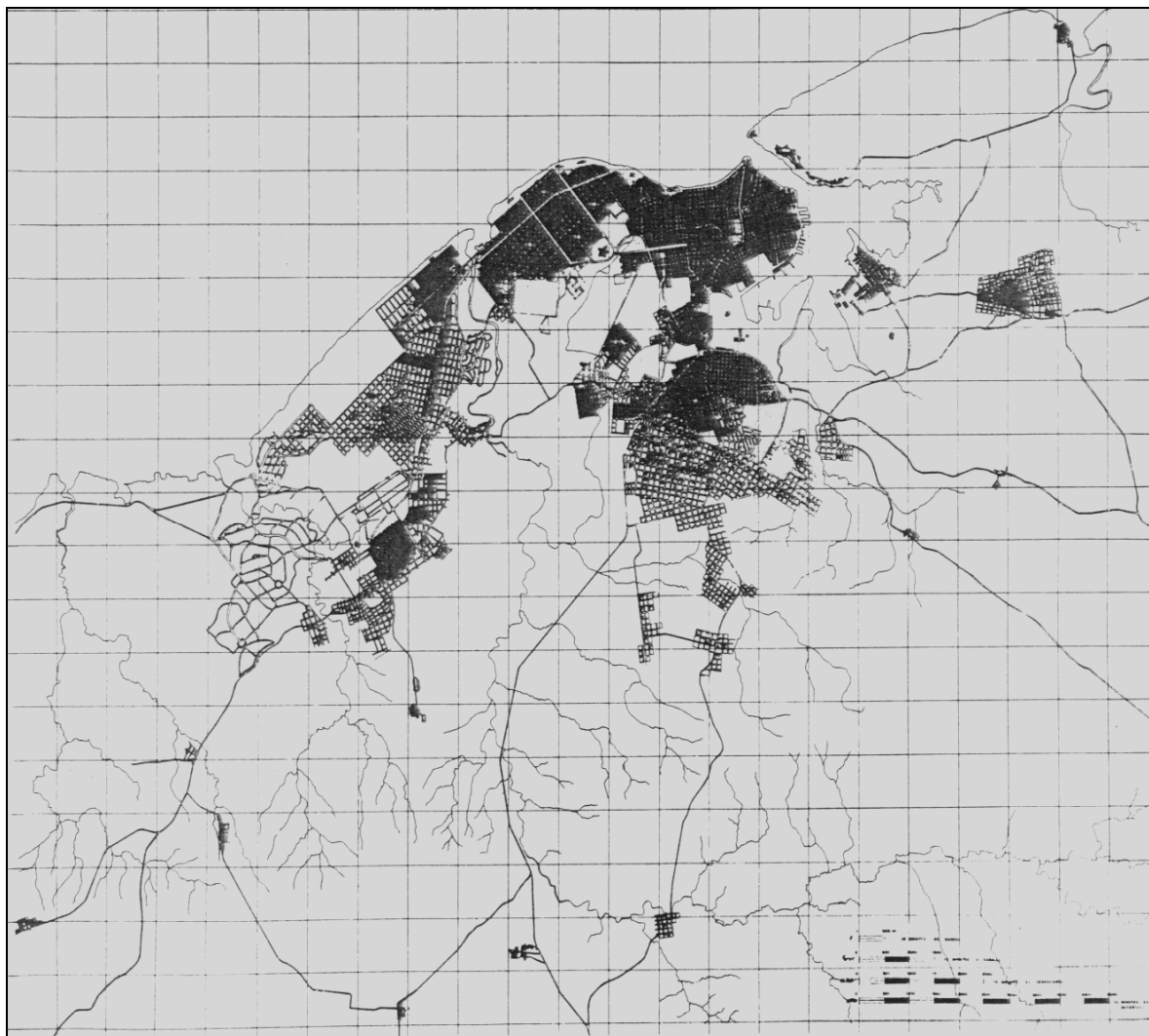
Town Planning and Associates, “Desarrollo histórico de La Habana, 1750-1850” in *Plan piloto de La Habana, Directivos generales y diseños preliminares*, (La Habana: Town Planning and Associates, 1959). University of Miami, Florida, Cuban Heritage Collection.

Map 1.2**Urban Development in Havana, 1850-1899**

Town Planning and Associates, “Desarrollo histórico de La Habana, 1850-1899” in *Plan piloto de La Habana, Directivos generales y diseños preliminares*, (La Habana: Town Planning and Associates, 1959). University of Miami, Florida, Cuban Heritage Collection.

Map 1.3

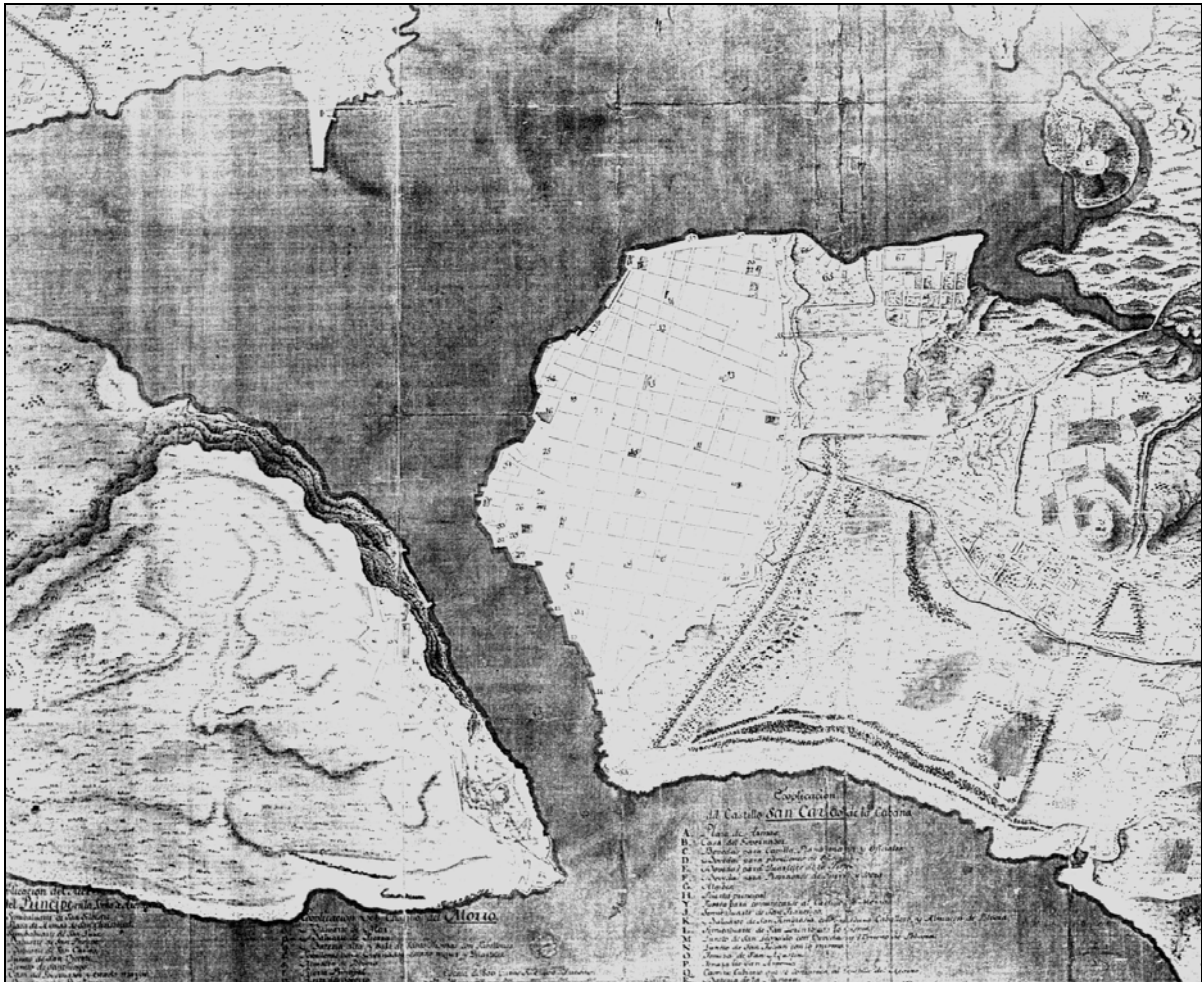
Urban Development in Havana, 1899-1924



Town Planning and Associates, “Desarrollo histórico de La Habana, 1899-1924” in *Plan piloto de La Habana, Directivos generales y diseños preliminares*, (La Habana: Town Planning and Associates, 1959). University of Miami, Florida, Cuban Heritage Collection.

Map 1.4

Map of Havana, 1776



Luis Huet, “Ciudad y bahia de La Habana, 1776,” in *Cien planos de La Habana en los archivos españoles* (Madrid: Dirección General de Arquitectura y Vivienda, Ministerio de Obras Públicas y Urbanismo, EPES Industrias Gráfica, S.L., 1985), 63.

the post-colonial era that forged the First Republic. In this light, the westward expansion of the city emerges not only as the next logical step in the process of urbanization, but as a centuries-long attempt to separate social classes and arrest the visibility of an emerging urban subculture that threatened the potential to create a modern and urbane Havana.⁹ Similar arguments have emerged for other urban areas of Latin America. Edward R. Quiles, for example, argues that low-income shanties are tolerated so long as they do not encroach upon the availability of land, after which government policy usually shifts from one of tolerance to one of exclusion. As occurred in Havana, the justification to exclude members of the urban population falls under the rubric of “modernization” and “beautification,” a discourse that was similarly woven under the administration of Miguel Tacón.

The process of urban expansion involved not only the push-and pull of expansion, but also the manipulation of signs and meanings as they were used to delineate and distinguish neighborhoods, peoples, and places in the amalgamated core city.¹⁰ Thus, in my study of the process of urban expansion in Havana, I am purposefully stretching Rama’s analysis of the physical versus metaphorical aspects of cities. In order to examine the formation of class-specific neighborhoods in areas of the city where previously none existed, I am exploring the idea that long after the demolition date of the city walls, metaphorical walls continued to encircle Havana—an idea sustained by the description that exists to this day of neighborhoods as either lying in the *intramuros* or *extramuros*, or, quite literally, as lying either within or without the area where the ancient city walls once stood. The continued reference to the *intramuros* and *extramuros* over a century after the physical walls were

⁹ Edward R. Quiles, *Medio ambiente urbano en Puerto Rico*, ed. Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (New York: Verso, 1989), 151-172.

¹⁰ The city walls, for example, served alternating and opposing purposes, at times designating the upper-class neighborhoods of the colonial elite, and at other times connoting the crowded spaces of the urban poor.

demolished (and even longer still since they had outgrown their usefulness) suggests their continued existence in the lives of habaneros, at least in so far as the symbolic demarcation of space is concerned. The inner quarters of the old city, before it was ceded to Havana's popular inhabitants, was marked by government structures and private homes financed by sugar revenues, whereas the extramuros housed working-class neighborhoods and migrant settlements. Ironically, over the course of a century the meaning of the intra and extramuros was gradually inverted as each section of the city took over the others' function. The process of urbanization and the reasons behind the westward expansion of the city were by no means insignificant factors in the inversion of these signs. In this study, one of my concerns is the formulation and exercise of power in the city, but I am specifically interested in examining colonial and Republican notions of inclusivity and exclusivity embedded in the modern topography of Havana and represented in part by the use of the terms intramuros and extramuros.

The symbolic division of Havana into two metropolises, namely through the idea that there was a simultaneous development of two cities, one "Antillean" or "colonial" and the other "modern," is a concept that is by now familiar in studies of Havana. The recent collaborative work of Mario Coyula, Joseph L. Scarpaci, and Roberto Segre chronicles the history of the city through its architecture while developing the idea that Havana thrived as an urban model precisely because of its ability to sustain both the old and the new and thus create the uniquely urban culture visible to this day.¹¹ Other studies of the urbanization and development of Havana employ similar metaphors to explain the eclectic style of the city. From Cuban novelist Cirilio Villaverde to writer Alejo Carpentier (who first described modern Havana as a place in which elements of the new and modern were artificially

¹¹ See Coyula, Scarpaci, and Segre, *Havana: Two Faces of the Antillean Metropolis* .

superimposed upon its inherently “provincial” nature), to contemporary academics such as Carlos Venegas and Eliana Cárdenas, the idea of simultaneous change and continuity are similar.¹² The description of the city is one in which history is embedded in the architectural layers of the city and visible through topographical analysis.

My work is heavily indebted to these topographical and architectural studies for their consideration of space and geography as well as their comfort with the use of symbol and metaphor. I am nonetheless acutely aware, however, that cities do not merely “develop” so much as they *are* developed, and this process of development implicates actors and actions, official and otherwise. My dissertation is therefore also an effort to examine the attempts made by marginal inhabitants to rise above gentrification efforts and the symbolic walls that often relegated them to specific areas of the city during the different periods of expansion. The result, I argue, was a tug-of-war between city officials, urban associations, and inhabitants of all social classes that was exacerbated by the introduction of “modernization” as an ideology and “*civilización*” as the official discourse of the nation as the city government tightened its control over urban inhabitants.

Just as people and actions are implicated in the expansion of Havana, I am also aware that development and urbanization can never fully lie within the grasp of either city inhabitants or government officials. Mike Davis, in his groundbreaking study of Los Angeles, chronicles that city’s history and the attempts made by various sectors of the metropolis to control the trajectory of its development.¹³ Ultimately, their failure in Los

¹² Venegas, *La Habana entre dos siglos*, Carlos Venegas and Eliana Cárdenas, *En la búsqueda de una arquitectura nacional*, ed. Elvia Rosa Castro and Concepción Otero, *Arquitectura cubana: metamorfosis, pensamiento y crítica* (La Habana: Artecubano Ediciones, Consejo Nacional de las Artes Plásticas, 2002), 80-91.

¹³ Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992).

Angeles lay in the failure of city government and specific associations to anticipate or control the individual appropriation of culture and the path that the ever-expanding city would embark upon. My attempt in this dissertation to historicize Havana and its inhabitants is acutely aware of the tension between both concepts of pro-active urban development and that development which lays just outside the grasp and control of city officials and inhabitants alike.

In the recent historiography of Latin American cities, studies have grappled with the various issues of urban development. In Mexican Studies in particular, the growth of the city has become a central issue concerning historians. The work of Diane E. Davis and Anne Rubenstein specifically takes on the issue of the urban poor within the growth of the conglomerate metropolis. Davis offers an explanation for the inability of the urban working classes to integrate themselves into organized city politics or associations (a process that similarly failed to occur in Havana), by noting that conflicting interests among labor organizations created competition for city funds and resources, dividing the working poor along class and trade lines and rendering them ineffectual in local politics.¹⁴ Where Davis relies on a social history of Mexico City, Anne Rubenstein provides a cultural understanding of the urban poor and their ability to not only navigate but also shape the existing structures of the city. In the aftermath of the Revolution of 1910 and in the midst of rapidly changing demographics, Mexico City was a space in which popular culture, through the mass

¹⁴ Diane Davis, *Urban Leviathan: Mexico City in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991). Davis further notes that political associations, labor unions, and community organizations achieved only limited gains in harnessing the political potential of the working poor, and that they served the more significant purpose of mediating urban conflict and deflecting anger away from the central government, thus allowing the Mexico City to thrive.

production of pulp fiction, serial novels and dime store comics, provided new arrivals to the city with “manuals” on how to negotiate urban life.¹⁵

The importance of cultural analysis is central to my dissertation, especially in my attempt to emphasize the primacy of internal actors in a geographic location so affected by the presence, both physical and symbolic, of the United States. The work of Louis A. Pérez, Jr. serves as a model of cultural analysis which factors in the influence of the United States while simultaneously broadening the discussion of Cuba’s internal politics. Thus, factoring in an understanding of U.S. hegemony serves to broaden the understanding of the Cuban nation rather than have that understanding limited by the overwhelming presence of Cuba’s northern neighbor.¹⁶ Because my dissertation deals with what would have been described as an urban “lower-class” during a period of Cuban history in which class and color were interrelated,¹⁷ the inhabitants of Havana who are implicated in the pages of my study are often Cubans of color. For an understanding of issues of race, the works of Ada Ferrer, Alejandro de la Fuente, and Aline Helg have guided me through the debates surrounding racial politics, made increasingly complicated by the cultural and racial influence that the United States exerted over Cuba during its critical moments of nation-building.¹⁸ From Cuba, the work of canonical scholars such as Fernando Ortíz and Alberto Arredondo, and the

¹⁵ Anne Rubenstein, *Bad Language, Naked Ladies, and Other Threats to the Nation: A Political History of Comic Books* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998).

¹⁶ Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *On Becoming Cuban: Culture, Identity and Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

¹⁷ I do, however, wish to acknowledge those existing studies which reveal that color and class were not categories to be easily conflated. See, for example, Alejandro de la Fuente, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), for a discussion of an increasingly influential black middle class in Republican Cuba.

¹⁸ Ibid. , Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), Aline Helg, *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

more recent scholarship of Isabel and Jorge Castellanos and Tomás Fernández Robaina, have grounded my understanding of how racial politics are understood in Cuba.¹⁹

I have taken much of my theoretical inspiration for this dissertation from the expanding field of urban studies. New issues such as the re-consideration of space and geography have become central means of understanding urban histories. The lived environment of Latin American cities has been thus theorized by recent scholars to reveal the varied uses and meanings of city spaces, most notably (for the purpose of my dissertation) by treating lived and built environments as performative spaces and zones of conflict. In his study of urban areas and the rural migration they attract, Raymond Williams reveals cities to be windows into the “double condition” of humankind.²⁰ In Havana, the “activation of difference” that Latin American writers have explored accounts for the transformation of urban space into zones of conflict as interest groups vie for space and resources. Furthermore, the idea that the city can be a performative space in which ideas of gender, race, and nationality are tested draws a parallel with the work of contemporary scholars such as Liz Meléndez, who examines the regeneration of Puerto Rican traditions in unusual spaces—such as shopping malls—to makeup for the loss of traditional spaces that served as

¹⁹ Alberto Arredondo, *El negro en Cuba, ensayo* (La Habana: Editorial "Alfa", 1939), Jorge Castellanos and Isabel Castellanos, *Cultura afrocubana* (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1988), Tomás Fernández Robaina, *Bibliografía sobre estudios afro-americanos* (La Habana: Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, Departamento de Hemeroteca e Información de Humanidades, 1968), Tomás Fernández Robaina, *Cultura afrocubana* (La Habana: Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, 1994), Tomás Fernández Robaina, *El negro en Cuba, 1902-1958 : apuntes para la historia de la lucha contra la discriminación racial* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1990), Fernando Ortiz, *Los negros brujos* (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1973), Fernando Ortiz, *Los negros curros* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1995).

²⁰ David Carrasco, "Latin American Cityscapes: Calabashes of Fate," *ReVista: Harvard Review of Latin America* (2003). See also Raymond Williams, *City and Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973) A similar sentiment has long been echoed by Latin American creative writers, such as Carlos Fuentes and Gabriel García-Marquez, who examine the human toll of urban living. In his work, Fuentes explains that the city can be a place of unacknowledged multiplicities and differences, and, more importantly, a place where these can be activated.

popular gathering places.²¹ In Havana, not only did the unused spaces of the city become battlegrounds for different groups, but recreational spaces claimed by the middle and upper classes came under strict competition. The tradition of opera and theater, for example, was enjoyed by all classes of habaneros in its new incarnation as popular bufo performances. This new use of the once-elite tradition of theater developed not only as part of an overtly political, pro-independence movement, but as a space where ideas of race and nationality, based on the experiences of an habanero urban underclass, could be tested and promulgated.²²

Besides allowing for the transformation of culture, the environment of the city can also serve to transform understandings among marginal and working class inhabitants of their relationship to local government, a process that occurred at a faster rate in the continuously changing political landscape of Havana, where impoverishment rates continued to climb as the city developed. Guillermo Geisse theorizes impoverishment and urban inhabitants' relationship to poverty by differentiating between "poverty *in* the city" and "poverty *of* the city." As he explains it, the difference lies in the expectations of urban inhabitants.²³ Whereas poverty in the city is manifested in similar terms as that in the countryside, i.e., in high rates of unemployment, low wages, and precarious health conditions, poverty *of* the city

²¹ Liz Meléndez, "Social Space in San Juan: Plaza, the Center of Everything," *ReVista: Harvard Review of Latin America* Winter (2003).

²² In my analysis of habanero race performance in Chapter Three, I use Michael Taussig's theoretical work along with Homi Bhabha's work on mimicry to facilitate my interpretation of the on-stage performances based on popular "character types" specific to Havana's marginal neighborhood and criminal underworld. Taussig suggests that through mimesis, the performer can achieve distance from the imitated while reenacting another's perception of himself. Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity* (New York: Routledge, 1993). For a discussion of the theoretical purposes of mimicry, see also Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

²³ See Guillermo Geisse "Urban Alternatives for dealing with the Crisis" in *Rethinking the Latin American City*, (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1992). Guillermo Geisse, *Urban Alternatives for Dealing with the Crisis, Rethinking the Latin American City* (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1992).

occurs when inhabitants are denied access to resources and services that have consistently been a part of the urban environment and the rights of city dwellers, such as housing, water and power, and to some extent, transportation and communication—and important factor leading to the breakdown of the urbanization project on the eve of the most prosperous era of Havana's history

Urbanization as a dystopic subject —albeit one whose breakdown generates new possibilities for urban living—is perhaps most prevalent in the critical writing of borderlands theorists. The work of Gloria Anzaldúa is a critical tool in my analysis of the array of competing forces found in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Havana. Specifically, I am interested in the explication of what Anzaldúa terms a "topography of displacement."²⁴ Seemingly ironic, I am using this theoretical framework to analyze a geographical area with the most natural of borders: Cuba is surrounded by water, and Havana itself is a coastal city. Yet I argue that the popular-class inhabitants of Havana underwent a similar process of dislocation and displacement as the inhabitants of many of today's border cities: the climbing growth rate that followed Cuban independence was largely due to the economic opportunities created by the presence of the United States, which provided an economic and cultural incentive for relocation. Newcomers, however, were faced with an array of barriers to overcome such as the inability to attain proper housing or steady employment, and found themselves alienated from the most visible of the city's inhabitants. Even long after arrival, they remained part of a growing "third culture," or "border culture," that existed in increasing polarization from the "legitimate inhabitants," i.e., those in power, of Havana. My attraction to border theory also lies in its Gramscian ability to facilitate an understanding of non-traditional efforts to invert hegemonic structures. In this light, the implications of the re-

²⁴ Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987).

appropriation of city space in Havana and the usage of such terms as “intramuros” and “extramuros” are laden with connotations that invert the original, exclusive meanings that the founders of Latin American cities (as with Rama’s *letrados*) envisioned for the metropolises of the western hemisphere.

Havana within the Network of Latin American Metropolises

The early metropolises of fifteenth and sixteenth-century Latin America were designed to display European notions of progress and civilization. The Laws of the Indies introduced the importance of order and European hierarchies by standardizing the grid pattern that all newly founded cities, Havana included, were required to follow.²⁵ (See Map 1.5) The architectural design and spatial lay-out of most cities reinforced the emphasis on order and communicated the idea that urban space should “reproduce and confirm the desired social order”²⁶—an idea perpetuated by the popular perception of the chaotic existence imagined for the indigenous inhabitants of Latin America. Not surprisingly, in areas of the region where urban models pre-dated western colonization, such as in the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán, European models of order were superimposed on pre-existing ones with the effect of eradicating all traces of urban civilizations.²⁷ In newly founded areas that lacked the urban population of the Mexico City valley, however, the city was built to serve as a contrast

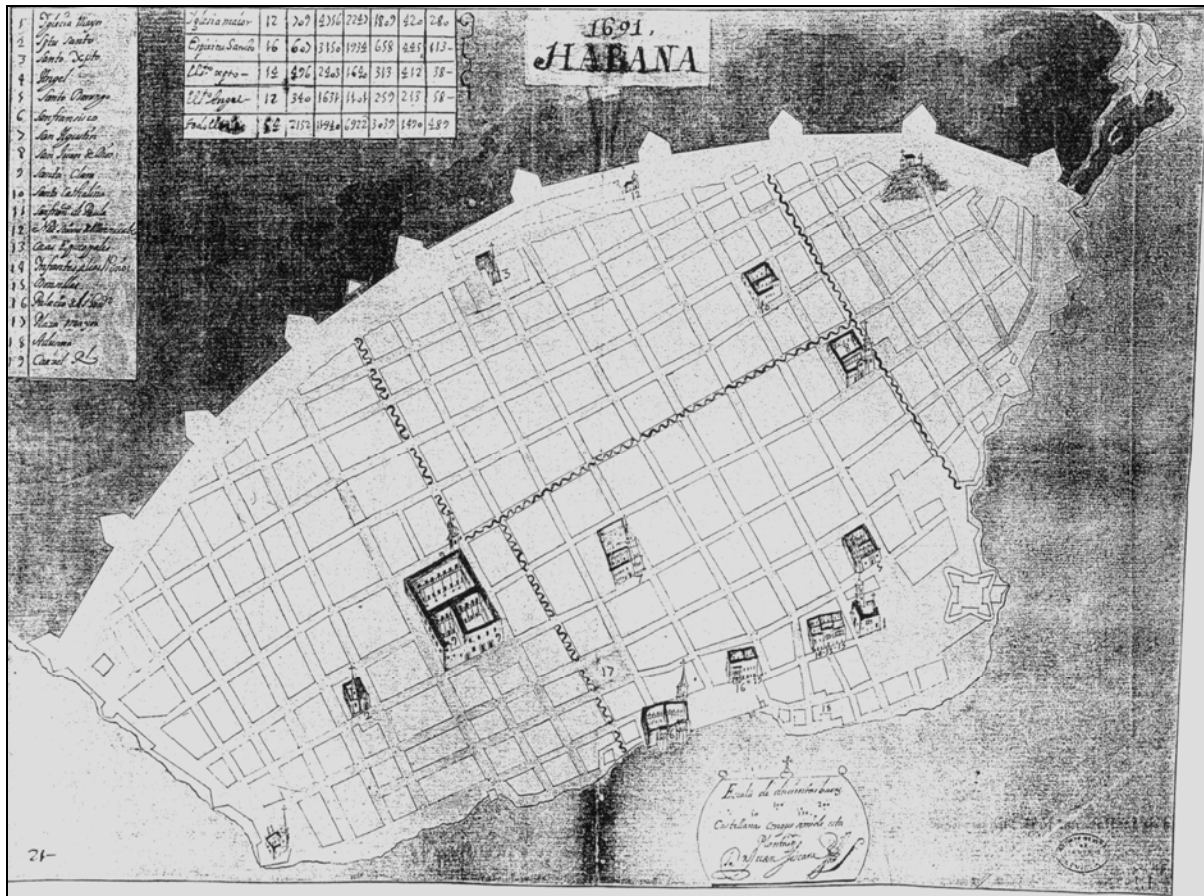
²⁵ Havana was nonetheless built on an irregular grid pattern of narrow streets, something that was stipulated by the *Código Indiano* of the Laws of the Indies, which required that in hot climates streets should be narrow in order to block the heat of the mid-day sun. Joaquín E. Weiss, *La arquitectura colonial cubana* (La Habana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1979).

²⁶ Rama, *The Lettered City*, 5. For a discussion of the influence of the psychological influence of the physical lay out spaces, see also Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003). Yi-Fu Tuan articulates a similar position as Rama when he notes that not only cities, but architectural developments as well, are meant to reflect ideals of order and hierarchy.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 2.

Map 1.5

Havana Grid, 1691



Juan de Siscara, “Ciudad de La Habana, 1691,” in *Cien planos de La Habana en los archivos españoles* (Madrid: Dirección General de Arquitectura y Vivienda, Ministerio de Obras Públicas y Urbanismo, EPES Industrias Gráfica, S.L., 1985), 15.

to the lawlessness and barbarity associated with rural areas inhabited by indigenous peoples, highlighting the notion of the city as a place of European civilization.²⁸

In contrast to many Latin American cities, for Havana it was not “civilization” but militarization that served as the organizing ideology of the city in 1514, especially as it gained prominence and shed its designation as a port-city designed to increase Spanish wealth.²⁹ Its strategic location in the Caribbean basin and the Gulf of Mexico provided Spain with ready access to Spanish America, facilitating contact between Europe and its colonies (most importantly Mexico City, from which the bulk of Spanish colonial wealth emerged). Indeed, Havana played a key role in the development of trans-Atlantic commerce throughout the sixteenth century. A drawback to this role emerged as its growing importance in world commerce made the city increasingly susceptible to outside attack, thus making security an increasing concern for the colonial government. As the economy and the city grew, Havana fanned outwards into the rural tracts of land that surrounded the city to the south and east. As Havana expanded the colonial government was forced to treat expansion as an issue that could potentially jeopardize the safety of the city. The growing population in neighboring rural areas had begun to open pathways that stretched from areas west of Havana all the way to the coast in order to facilitate internal travel.³⁰ In the case of an invasion, however, these pathways would have provided easy access into the city, making it difficult to repel an attack.

²⁸ Rama provides the classic example of Domingo Sarmiento and *Facundo*, which as late as 1845 juxtaposed the civilizing forces of the city with the barbarity of the countryside.

²⁹ There is disagreement among scholars as to the original founding date of Havana. Manuel Pérez-Beato and Esteban Pichardo both agree on a founding date of 1514, whereas Julio Le Riverend places it closer to 1515. The 1514 or 1515 founding date, however, is for the city that was located northwest of where Old Havana now stands. The location of Havana was changed twice due to military and safety concerns, before finally settling on the present site in 1519. Julio Brusome Le Riverend, *La Habana, espacio y vida* (La Habana: Editorial MAPFRE, 1992), Pérez Beato, *Habana antigua*, Esteban Pichardo y Tapia, *Diccionario provincial casi razonado de voces y frases cubanas* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1985).

³⁰ Le Riverend, *La Habana, espacio y vida*, 64.

The colonial government responded by attempting to close access into Havana via any route except through the heavily guarded bay that flanked the city to the east. Such was the fear of an attack that by the end of the sixteenth century, talks of *amurallamiento*, or enclosing the city that had hereto consisted of two scattered barrios, were begun.³¹

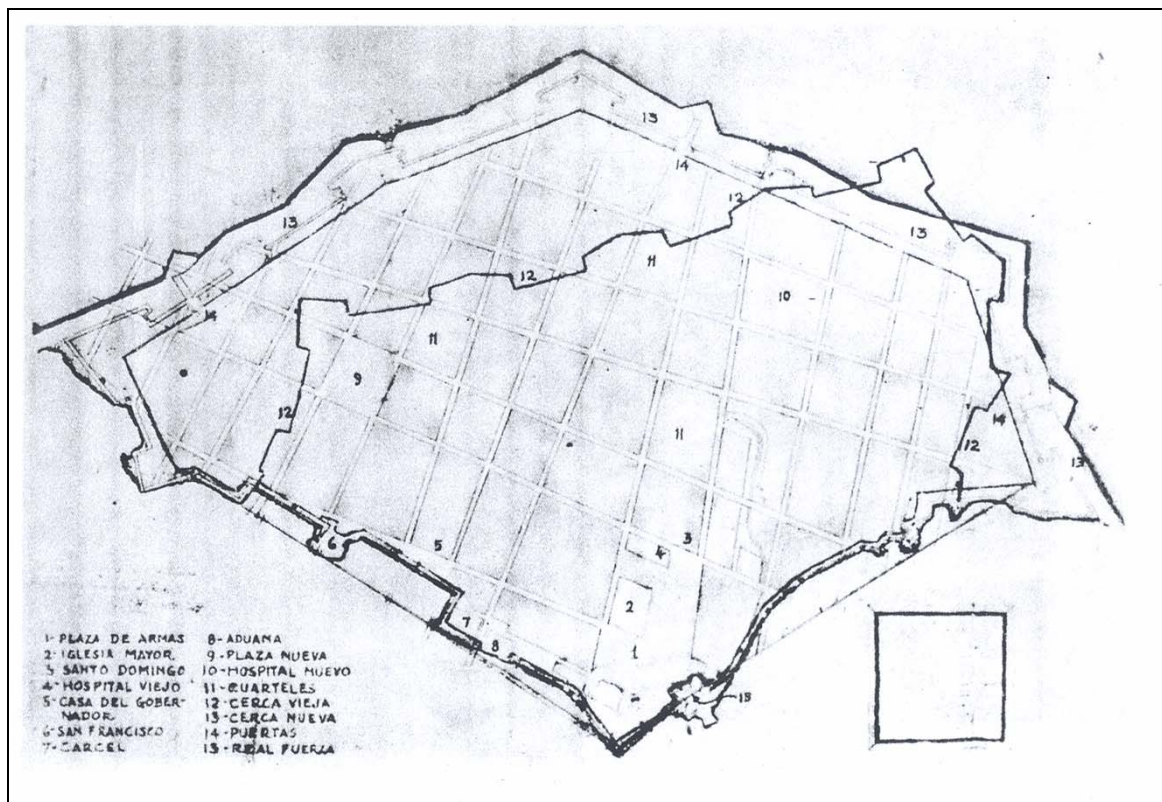
The point in time when Havana was imagined as a walled space is a critical moment for its evolution as a “city.” Prior to this, the city existed only as a series of clustered dwellings near the bay. Its population was divided into two distinct barrios, one located near the Plaza de la Catedral and the other at La Punta, on the northern side of the bay. So divided were the two neighborhoods that residents were forced to construct makeshift bridges to connect the two neighborhoods, physically exemplifying the distinctiveness of the two areas.³² Cristóbal de Roda’s 1603 sketch of the city, which amounts to the earliest map of Havana in existence, was also the first attempt to imagine Havana as a unified entity, or as a coherent space that mirrored the earlier attempts made by Havana residents to unite the two neighborhoods via the bridge that connected Campeche and La Punta. The idea of *exteriority* in Havana, however, or of a city existing outside of the official city and its boundaries, also begins at this same moment that Roda imagined Havana as an enclosed physical space, when *amurallamiento* was first conceived of. Thus, the idea promulgated by Cuban historiography that Havana has always existed as a city in which two distinct metropolises exist (one Antillean, the other modern, one national and the other criollo,) can be traced back to the literal origins of the city itself. (See Map 1.6)

³¹ Fear of an outside invasion was exacerbated by the 1558 attack by Jacques de Sores, in which the city was captured. Walls around the city would have provided reinforcement to the elaborate system of forts that served as defense system for Havana.

³² Weiss, *La arquitectura colonial cubana* .

Map 1.6

Plan de Roda, 1603. The original plan for the wall is indicated by Line 12 on the drawing, while Line 13 indicates the actual area that was encircled by las murallas.



Cristóbal de Roda, "Plan de Roda, 1603," in *Cien planos de La Habana en los archivos españoles* (Madrid: Dirección General de Arquitectura y Vivienda, Ministerio de Obras Públicas y Urbanismo, EPES Industrias Gráfica, S.L., 1985), 99.

The process leading to construction of the walls and the unification of the city was a long one. The initial debate began as early as 1572 when defense talks led to consideration of proposals to barricade access into the area of Havana with walls. Governor Pedro Menéndez de Avilés bypassed royal authority and took matters into his own hands by blocking the roads leading from the city into the Cuban countryside in order to protect it from the possibility of an outside invasion. Unfortunately, his actions caused transport blockages into Havana and the roads were subsequently reopened. By 1582, a similar attempt to safeguard the city was made by Governor Gabriel Luján when he barricaded access into all major streets. This time, however, doors that could be closed and locked were installed at the barricaded entrances in order to allow the flow of transport.³³ As amurallamiento became an impending reality, colonial administrators in Havana wrote imploring letters to the Spanish Crown arguing both sides of the issue.³⁴ By 1604, the *Junta de Guerra* had recommended construction of the walls to prevent any future invasions of the city, and the 1603 Plan de Roda (the first city plan in existence) shows the commissioned sketches of the city with a wall encircling its perimeter.³⁵ The walls were to encircle the barrios of Campeche and La Punta that made up the city of Havana. They were to stand four feet in width and eight feet in stature. Ironically, however, Roda was among those opposing construction of the walls, citing the high cost of construction and the low level of inhabitants that would benefit from amurallamiento. To counter this claim, the inhabitants of Havana were to contribute to the

³³ Ibid, 145.

³⁴ Ibid, 145.

³⁵ Roda, however, describes the structure around Havana as a *cerca*, rather than a *muralla*. Two structures enclose Havana in Roda's sketches—a *cerca vieja* and *cerca nueva*. The rapid pace of demographic growth could well explain the drawing of the second wall as Roda was forced to reconsider his plan due to rapid population growth by the time the walls were ready to be built in 1670.

construction effort by providing money and slaves, a plan that failed to materialize and which subsequently halted this first effort at construction.

By 1655 construction efforts resumed under the administration of Governor Juan Montaña Blázquez with promises anew that habaneros would foot part of the bill for the project. Under this new proposal, the Crown committed 20,000 pesos annually from colonial coffers in Mexico to help finance the construction effort. Soon after the plan was approved, however, the Governor of Havana died, and with him, the construction project that he had been underwriting. A royal decree in 1656 officially suspended construction.

It was not until 1674 that construction of the walls was actualized. Under the threat of an outside invasion, the Crown agreed to resume construction efforts and brought in engineer Juan de Ciscara to direct the almost one-century-old project. In 1674, construction was begun on the south side of the city. The walls measured ten meters in height and covered a perimeter of 5,770 Cuban *varas*.³⁶ The estimated time frame for completion of the project was three years.

Prior to amurallamiento, the population of the city of Havana has been described in Cuban historiography as a descript mixture of social classes. The geographical constraints on either side of it—water to the east and undeveloped marsh to the west and south—encouraged the mixing of its residents. As residential dwellings were constructed, they followed a pattern of growth that initially went north and then, as the city continued to expand beyond the first three barrios of Campeche, La Punta, and La Cienega, expanded westward and towards the south, without heavy concern for the designation of

³⁶ The walls stood almost thirty-three feet high. Although vara measurements varied across region, Cuban vara measurements place a single vara at approximately 33.38 inches, which would have made the perimeter that the walls covered approximately 16, 053.10 feet.

neighborhoods.³⁷ The result was an integrated, if disordered, city. On a visit to Havana in 1545, the Spanish Governor of Cuba Juanes Dávila described it as a city “*mal trazada y ordenada*” (badly planned and disorganized).³⁸ The battle over city space, however, was one that began long before amurallamiento became a reality. A system of racial, ethnic, and social segregation was made visible in the peripheral settlements that *indios* and *mestizos* were obligated to inhabit, as well as in the specific neighborhoods of free peoples of African descent.³⁹ By 1557, the city was facing a proposal to expel free blacks from Havana, and by 1589, a measure was introduced proposing to relegate *indios* and *mestizos* to Guanabacoa, an area outside of the city and across the bay.

By the time that construction of *las murallas* (the city walls) began, Havana was also experiencing many of the negative effects of urban concentration.⁴⁰ Epidemics of yellow fever and smallpox ravaged the city from 1649 to 1654, and again from 1677 to 1693. Peripheral neighborhoods became “official” outgrowths of the city as inhabitants settled in these areas and established church parishes and institutions of everyday living that defined these areas as official neighborhoods.⁴¹ While marginal inhabitants were settling on the southern outskirts of the city near the site where the walls were being constructed (both

³⁷ Weiss, *La arquitectura colonial cubana*, 24 and 146.

³⁸ Le Riverend, *La Habana, espacio y vida*, 45.

³⁹ Ibid. 47-50. For a neighborhood by neighborhood breakdown of racial, economic, and social characteristics of early Havana, see Pérez Beato, *Habana antigua*.

⁴⁰ The date of when construction the walls actually began varies between 1674 and 1675. The build date cited by Weiss is 1674 whereas that cited by Julio Le Riverend is 1675.

⁴¹ Carlos Venegas, *Cuba y sus pueblos: censos y mapas de los siglos XVIII y XIX* (La Habana: Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo de la Cultura Cubana Juan Marinello, 2002), 22. At the end of the 17th century, the governor authorized peasants to establish households around church parishes and thus establish new barrios. See also Leví Marrero, *Cuba: economía y sociedad* (Rio Piedra, Puerto Rico: Editorial San Juan, 1972), 6, 43-45.

within and outside of the walls), the residents of the intramuros, composed largely of those affiliated with the colonial government, were fleeing from the “disordered” city center and towards areas of the city to the east and south.

As urban populations of both rich and poor fanned outwards from the city center, they spread into previously unsettled rural areas. Expansion of the city into these areas created a long-standing division between urban and rural habaneros that construction of the walls exacerbated. Once the walls were completed in the latter half of the eighteenth century,⁴² the distinction between “urban” and “rural” was heightened by increasing population density and land scarcity that pushed inhabitants towards the barrios outside of the walls. Historian Sherry Johnson has described the population pressure during the eighteenth century as a force emanating outward from the city and colliding with a similar population pressure emanating inward from the countryside, creating a “pincer effect” on the area of land immediately next to the city walls and indirectly intensifying the distinction between the concepts of “urban” and “rural.”⁴³ As rural migrants displaced by large-scale sugar cultivation arrived in Havana in increasing numbers, the distinction would cause tensions to flare among habaneros. By the mid eighteenth century, too, regulations that allowed habaneros to settle on ecclesiastic land around church parishes—and thus sustain the Church

⁴² The project as it was planned was not completed in its entirety. The walls stood at their most complete in 1740, at which time the sprawling population outside of the walled area was already calling into question to the utility of the walls.

⁴³ Sherry Johnson, “La Guerra Contra los Habitantes de los Arrabales’: Changing Patterns of Land Use and Land Tenancy in and around Havana, 1763-1800,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 77, no. 2 (1997). The effects of the city walls on the organization of the city and the demand for space during the end of the eighteenth century are well documented in Johnson’s study. Decreasing land availability and a prohibition making it illegal to build near military structures created housing shortages and skyrocketing rent prices.

with parcel rent, increased the amount of land being utilized around the core city, creating distinct neighborhoods within the walled space.⁴⁴

It was in the midst of this urban transformation and rapid population increase that construction of the city walls began and lasted for almost a century. Once built, they provided a physical yet deceptive beginning and ending to Havana. During the eighteenth century they also served the purpose of providing both a physical and symbolic divide between the different inhabitants of Havana. By the late eighteenth century, when the city had outgrown the military need for the walls and was rapidly expanding outside of its boundaries and talk of demolition was underway, the symbolic role of “las murallas” as markers of difference had been established in the popular imaginary. It is immediately following this time period where my dissertation picks up; when the changing demographics of Havana and the uses of city space caused a radical re-conceptualization of urban life by both government officials and city inhabitants. The resulting modernization project was a reactionary attempt to steer Havana into an urban and urbane trajectory that lasted well into the twentieth century.

Terminology and Organization

I would like to offer an explanation for my choice of terminology in designating categories of race. After long discussions with friends and colleagues, I have decided to use the term “black” along with “peoples of African descent” and “Cubans of African descent,” to describe habaneros with African ancestry. I am, however, aware of the problems with this and any other term I could have chosen to use as a designation of race, especially given

⁴⁴ The neighborhoods consisted of Jesús del Monte, San Miguel del Padrón, El Cano, Managua, and Quemados. Venegas, *Cuba y sus pueblos: censos y mapas de los siglos XVIII y XIX*, 22.

Cuba's intricately complicated system of racial classification, both then and now. I have opted to use these terms in both accord and disagreement with the colonial government's own way classifying its subjects, and at times with only an admittedly limited understanding of how the individuals in these pages would have classified themselves. Wherever possible and appropriate I have made distinctions within my use of categories, such as by using the terms *mulatto* and *pardo*. Throughout this dissertation, I have also made distinctions along color and class lines, as color and class were two of the factors mediating racial classification for government authorities during the late colonial period and well into the early Republic.

I have opted not to use the term "Afro-Cuban" given the scholarly reservations in both Cuba and the United States that this term does not serve to illuminate the racial system in place at the time. To describe Cubans of African descent in the colonial period especially, the term "Afro-Cuban" is particularly problematic in that it implies a dual sense of nationality that was non-existent. Not only did the Cuban nation not yet exist, but more importantly, both African and Cuban "nationalities" were mediated by several factors that served to either strengthen or sever kinship bonds between would-be allies. Cuban participation in the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the late abolition of the institution of slavery forced racial classifications for blacks in Cuba to denote not only free or slave status, but geographic origins in Africa as well as the date of arrival and extent of assimilation.⁴⁵ A person of African descent classified as a *bozal*, for example, was vastly different and shared

⁴⁵ Rebecca J. Scott, "Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Cuba: A View from the Sugar District of Cienfuegos, 1886-1909," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 78, no. 4 (1998). Beginning with the 1870 Moret Law which freed children and the elderly, the institution of slavery was abolished in gradual steps until 1888, when abolition became final. The late abolition of slavery and illegal trafficking of slaves, however, resulted in large populations of both slaves and free people of color with varying degrees of assimilation.

little in common with a *catedrático*, as both would have had vastly different stakes in the “nations” of Africa and Cuba.⁴⁶

Finally, a note on organization. I have organized *Beyond the Walled City* into five chapters, each one written to advance a chronological and thematic understanding of the different dimensions of urban expansion in Havana. The first chapter, “The Walled City,” serves as an introduction to Havana and the organizing ideology upon which the city was founded. The implications (both real and metaphorical) of creating a walled space are examined, as well as their impact on the uses of space in and around the city during the initial stages of urban growth.

Chapter Two, “Una política del orden: Urban Expansion Around Havana to 1838,” presents an overview of the developments in and around Havana which led to expansion outside of the city walls. Describing this period of Havana's history, Cuban writer Cirilio Villaverde wrote that Havana stood suspended between the forces of “light and darkness.”⁴⁷ The disconnect between peninsulares and criollos, wealthy habaneros and those eking out an existence on the urban periphery, as well as the contradiction between colonial visions of urbanity and the daily needs of habaneros, all contributed to Villaverde's assessment of the contradictory space in which Havana stood. Development outside of the city walls was thus marked by competing interests and the colonial government that attempted to claim the area

⁴⁶ “Bozal” was the common term used to describe slaves that had recently arrived via the slave trade. The term implied no assimilation, including little or no knowledge of the Spanish language. The name of a bozal often communicated his status as such, since last names were given to denote tribal origins. The term was synonymous with the term *negro de nación* until the latter came to connote a criminal, urban underworld element not associated with the bozal. A *catedrático* (literally, a “professor”) on the other hand, was the pejorative term used to describe urban blacks whose misuse of the Spanish language positioned them as socially ridiculous.

⁴⁷ By the time Havana was written into literature by Alejo Carpentier, the same city that Villaverde described as struggling between the forces of light and dark was represented as having lost its battle with modernization and was subsequently transformed into a symbolic “city of shadows” in Carpentier's work. See Alejo Carpentier, *La ciudad de las columnas* (Barcelona: Editorial Lumen, 1970), 5.

for specific uses and sectors of the urban population. Consequently, several of Havana's extramuros barrios became hotbeds of spatial conflict on which the direction of early nineteenth century Havana was written. It was not until 1834, under the direction of one of its most notorious governors, that the trajectory of Havana was finally settled. Between 1834 and 1838, the city underwent unprecedented building, road and infrastructural developments that built upon already existing efforts to expand the city westward. It was during this short time span that the space outside of the city walls was transformed into a "desirable" area and the city walls rendered obsolete.

In these first two chapters I argue that expansion beyond the city walls represented a push toward the infrastructural and social advancements that modernization seemed to imply, such as such as hygienic streets, modern transportation and the division of social classes. It also represented a symbolic attempt to liberate high society from the presence of an urban popular class that threatened its modern appeal. In this light, Villaverde's reference to the "darkness" of the core city of Havana can be read as a reference to the undercurrent of criminality that shrouded the walled city and which threatened to expose the project of urban modernity. Expanding Havana also meant that its existing physical boundaries needed to be redrawn into largely rural territory, thereby creating a tension between urban and rural elements that similarly threatened the demise of the modern city of the Tacón era. The expansion of Havana therefore required that a new plan be envisioned, one that was both modern and urban(e) and that excluded, spatially and symbolically, the "unwanted" elements of the city.

Chapter Three, " 'La ciudad antigua y la ciudad nueva,': Topographies of Displacement, 1838-1868" looks at the development of race performance in Havana as a

critique of urban disorder between 1838 and 1868. The evolution and popularity of race performance in Havana coincides with the period in which the city experienced its most rapid rate of growth and demographic change. It was also the period in which legislation governing the physical, social, and political environment of the city was at its most stringent as the city government attempted to create one cohesive and modern metropolis that would join the intramuros and extramuros. It did so by passing a series of stringent legislation aimed at social control, a project that was similarly mirrored in the habaneros public sphere through race performance.

This chapter considers that the evolution and dissemination of popular “character-types” (drawn largely from the strata of Havana’s urban under classes) were in part a backlash to the presence of a population increasingly dissatisfied with the pace and direction of urban growth in Havana. I focus on the evolution of raced characters first created for the specific entertainment of habaneros and later “picked up” in the plays and performances of the Cuban *teatro bufo*, a popular theater style typically associated with the separatist movement in the historiography of both the Cuban literary arts and the struggle for independence.⁴⁸ While the genre was certainly imbued with proto-nationalist sentiment, I argue that the time in which racial representation flourished in Havana, along with the specificity of the urban locale on which the genre relied, make it a distinctly habanero phenomenon, with equally important local, as well as national, implications.⁴⁹ Its purpose in

⁴⁸ Vera M. Kutzinski, *Sugar's Secrets: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), Jill Meredith Lane, "Anticolonial Blackface: The Cuban Teatro Bufo and the Arts of Racial Impersonation, 1840-1895" (Dissertation, New York University, 2000), Rine Leal, *Teatro bufo: siglo XIX: antología, selección y prólogo de Rine Leal* (La Habana: Editorial Arte y Literatura, 1975).

⁴⁹ The historiographical conflation of Cuba with Havana in the historiography has often resulted in the extrapolation of national implications for events and phenomena that were of a largely local character. While blackface representation in writing and performance during the mid nineteenth century certainly evolved to

Havana was to assuage a political as well as social fear regarding the status of free people of color in the city at a time when the political situation of Cuba was showing signs of distress. The double-sided project of social control thus reassured habaneros that the city being created would reaffirm racial hierarchies in the public realm.

Chapter Four, "In Between Spaces: The Disruption of the Colonial Urban Project in Havana, 1863-1896" examines the effects of the independence struggle on the topography of Havana. It traces the development of new neighborhoods and policies, including the criminalization of certain activities, to the political developments occurring throughout the island. As an initial reaction to the struggle for independence, the colonial government in Havana focused their attention away from the development of the city, allowing the criollo elite to take the initiative in urban development. While the subsequent redefinition of urban values more accurately reflected the emerging power brokers of Havana, it nonetheless failed to produce the modernization results that the urban administrations hoped had for. Ironically, while the legislative developments of earlier decades had prepared the city for the emergence of "modern" neighborhoods such as El Vedado and Cerro, the expected results in urban development failed to materialize. Rather, what development did occur in Havana reflected the political divisions of the island and the increased political tensions among habaneros.

Chapter Five, "Urban Guajiros: The Transformation of Havana, 1896-1909" examines the demographic and administrative changes that occurred in Havana from the beginning of the "*Reconcentración*" through the end of the second U.S. intervention in Cuba. In order to explain the urban trajectory upon which post-colonial Havana embarked, and the reason for its failure, I break up the traditional periodization that begins with independence or

reflect a national, pro-independence sentiment, its origins as habanero street theater in juxtaposition to the middle class operas popularized under the Tacón era reflect as well a local concern for the evolution of the city.

the North American administration on the island. Instead, I am choosing to begin with the mass relocations of rural people to the outskirts of major metropolitan areas. The reconcentración policy was a result of the 1896 decision of Spanish General Valeriano Weyler to fight the insurgency by eliminating their support base in the Cuban countryside. Along with the war and the general impoverishment of the countryside, the move brought thousands of indigents into Havana, where their presence confirmed the failure of the colonial project while raising questions about the inherent nature of both city and nation.⁵⁰

The epilogue of the dissertation, “Trajectories of Change” looks at the social transformations that took place in Havana under the administration of the United States and during the brief Republican interlude. It specifically focuses on the effects of the raised expectations of habaneros following Cuba's independence from Spain. Despite the explosion of public works projects initiated by the U.S. administration, the city nonetheless experienced an unprecedented impoverishment. *Viviendas*, *solares*, and *ciudadelas* evolved as low-income housing units for the influx of workers who arrived daily into the city in the post-independence era. By 1902, when Cuba was released from under a U.S. military occupation, there were over 2,000 such tenements housing nearly one third of the total population of the city.⁵¹ While the presence of the urban housing projects undermined the notion of a civilized nation, they also played an important role in reinforcing the idea of Havana as a modern city, since the spatialization of poverty meant that it could be officially recognized and regulated. The mixing of social classes and the uncontrollable peripheral growth that had previously undermined Cuban ideals of modernity were thus brought tightly under control through the

⁵⁰ Ironically, this process was taking place at the same time that the independence struggle was gaining momentum and the “criollo spirit”—composed in part from the symbols and images of the Cuban countryside—were being deployed as the new markers of Cuban identity.

⁵¹ Venegas, *La Habana entre dos siglos*, 27.

strict regulation of urban shantytowns, signaling the direction in which urbanization would once again be directed.

The North American administration in post-colonial Cuba invented a new discourse and a new rhetoric to lobby for the modernization of Havana that was seemingly divorced from any association with the colonial past. It instead strategically employed the memory of colonialism to redirect the same project of social transformation. While modernization had once implied a shared advancement among city inhabitants, and indeed had helped to discredit the colonial government in the wake of independence, poverty in and *of* the city similarly increased under the North American and early Republican administrations, discrediting the new administration with unmet expectations and transforming the city into a dystopia of Dicksonian proportions.

Hence, the culmination of the urban project was one precipitated by the failure of the city administration's to fulfill the expectations of its residents. Whether colonial, North American, or Republican, the urban project was a similar project rearticulated to meet the political demands of the era and the social expectations of Havana residents. The population of habaneros it excluded, however, were those who, given the changing political context of the island, were nonetheless able to affect social change in the city. Thus, as the urban project begun with the administration of Miguel Tacón underwent its various transformations, the "network of elites" able to broker the urban project similarly changed, allowing the vision of Havana to be redefined according to the urban context. As notion of city and urbanity changed, however, the constant which remained throughout the rearticulation of the urban project was the notion of a city itself, upon whose topography histories of urbanity would be written.

CHAPTER 2

‘UNA POLÍTICA DEL ORDEN:’ URBAN EXPANSION AROUND HAVANA TO 1838

“Una ciudad de luz y sombras.”

Cirilo Villaverde, *Cecilia Valdés*

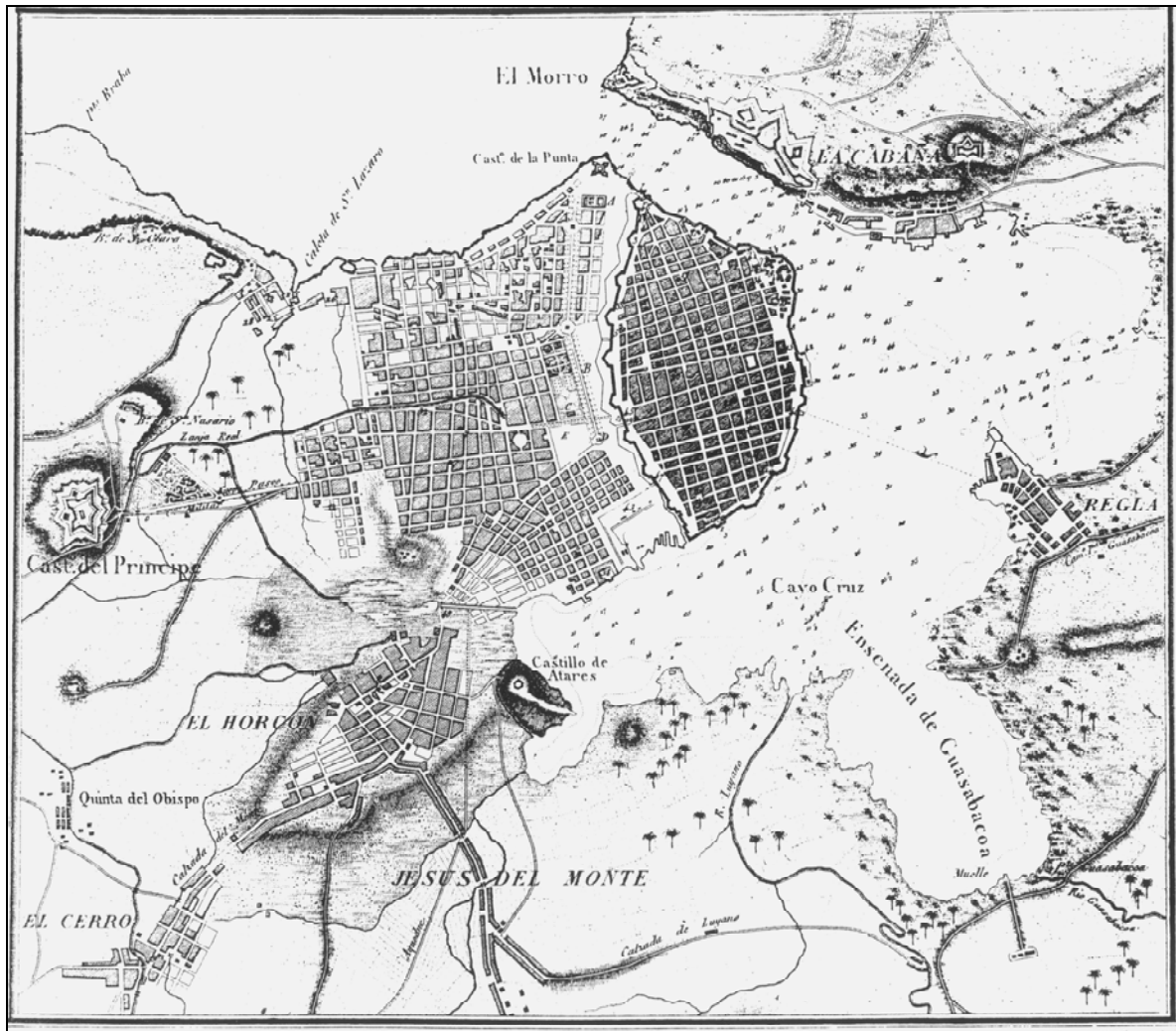
On February 11, 1828, a fire burned in the outskirts of Havana. From midday until the early hours of the night, the blaze spread easily among the wood and *guano*⁵² homes in the neighborhood of Jesús María, one of seven barrios located just outside of the city walls. (See Map 2.1) The alert system that notified *habaneros* of the flames was sounded and residents from the different neighborhoods subsequently made their way to Jesús María, armed with supplies to help combat the flames themselves. Once Captain-General Francisco Dionisio Vives and representatives of the city government were informed that the blaze continued to spread and was drawing dangerously near to the walled city of Havana, they too arrived in the extramuros. The fire was extinguished before it reached the city, but not before it had effectively destroyed the working-class neighborhood of the extramuros. When it was over, four hundred and fifty homes were in ruins and hundreds of residents on the outskirts of the city were newly homeless.⁵³

⁵² The leaves of the Cuban guano palm were used as an inexpensive building material in and around Havana.

⁵³ S.M., "Incendio acaecido en el barrio de Jesús María el día 11 de febrero de este año," (La Habana: Oficina del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1828). University of Florida, Gainesville, Rare Book Collection.

Map 2.1:

Havana and its barrios extramuros, 1828



Town Planning and Associates, "Plan de La Habana Vieja, 1828," in *Planes pilotos de La Habana* (La Habana: Town Planning and Associates, 1959). University of Miami, Cuban Heritage Collection.

Fundraising efforts on behalf of the residents began shortly after the devastating event. The Committee responsible for overseeing urban issues outside of Havana, the *Comisión de Estramuros*, spearheaded the relief effort. Its members, who were the representatives of the neighborhoods of the extramuros, mobilized donation drives to rebuild the neighborhood. They took charge of finding temporary shelter for the residents of Jesús María and sought the aid of local charities. Religious organizations also did their part and provided residents with daily food and shelter. And individual donors from the city, such as Cláudio Martínez de Pinillos, Juan José Díaz de Espada y Landa, and Bernabé de Corres, made monetary gifts and donated the proceeds of lotteries they organized to help the victims of the fire. The response that the event elicited from city officials, while at odds with that of the residents and organizations of Havana, was nonetheless equally strategic. In the wake of the fire, Governor Vives proposed a plan to rebuild the barrio according to a new set of regulations that would standardize and regulate the neighborhood, erasing its impromptu origins and divorcing it from its association with an urban “lower class.” On the practical level of westward expansion beyond the walls, the regulation of the extramuros was necessary in order to justify its development as a livable space for residents of the intramuros. Fires in Havana, for example, were a constant threat for the urban population. The dense living conditions and overpopulation that existed within the city walls exacerbated their potential for destruction, whereas the potentiality of space in the extramuros—if regulated to eradicate potential hazards such as the guano and wooden homes of the poor—could yield a modern and urbane Havana, albeit outside of las murallas. Vives’ proposal is indicative of the actions that allowed city residents to escape the cramped inner quarters of the intramuros. The result was not only urban expansion, but the literal shift of the city

westward and into a space that could be transformed to coincide with the emerging vision of a modern Havana.

The fire of 1828 and the subsequent attempt to regulate the extramuros came at the heels of several social, political, and demographic changes that allowed city residents and government officials alike to consider westward expansion beyond the city walls. A new system of defense had displaced the traditional militarization, exacerbating land scarcity and urban density in and around the city. The expansion of large-scale sugar cultivation in the early nineteenth-century and the growth of commerce and industry created lucrative business opportunities that in turn financed public-works projects within the city and its surrounding areas. Sugar profits, for example, had already begun to finance the construction of a distinctly colonial architecture (the first the city had seen) that helped lessen the association of Havana with a Spanish port designed to increase the wealth of Spain and transformed the city into a bustling commercial center. From the port in Havana, for example, sugar exportation more than quadrupled between 1786 and 1822, the formative years in which land-use patterns around the city underwent their most drastic transformation.⁵⁴ In this emerging context, the walls around Havana not only encumbered the physical growth of the city, but diminished the space available for housing and development just as urban density and profits were increasing. As residents from the intramuros pushed west into areas of the extramuros that had previously been of little value for the colonial government, they forced a radical re-conceptualization of this space that foreshadowed the changes made to the city layout during the mid nineteenth-century.

⁵⁴ Prior to 1763, sugar exports leaving out of the port of Havana that were recorded by the customs house had not yet reached even 31,000 *arrobas*. *Guía del comercio de La Habana para el año de 1823*, (La Habana: Oficina de D. Pedro Nolasco Palmer é hijo, 1823), 250. University of Florida, Gainesville, Rare Book Collection.

Reorganization of Havana and the Extramuros, 1762-1828

The first of several changes setting the stage for westward expansion in Havana occurred during the late eighteenth century. The military ideology that once served as the organizing impetus for a walled space peaked and waned during the latter half of the century, ushered in by the 1762 attack on the city by the British naval fleet. The assault and subsequent capture of Havana—precisely what the walls had been built to prevent—exposed the failure of the existing system of defense and was largely responsible for the shift in military strategy that facilitated expansion outside of the walls.⁵⁵ After an eleven-month occupation of the city, the British signed the Treaty of Paris, returning Havana to Spain in exchange for Florida. Engineer Silvestre Abarca was subsequently hired by the Crown to design a new system of defense that would help deter future assaults.⁵⁶ Large tracts of land in what had previously been strategic defense areas (prior to 1762)—adjacent to the city walls or other military structures—were confiscated without restitution from landowners in

⁵⁵ The first defense system consisted of the fortress built almost during the early founding of the city. They consisted of three main forts: La Fuerza Nueva located at the entrance of the bay, built between 1558 and 1577; Tres Reyes del Morro built between 1589 and 1610; and San Salvador de la Punta built between 1589 and 1600. The fortresses system was supplemented by the Plaza de Armas, the square designed around the administration and defense of the city.

⁵⁶ The new plan consisted of adding two more forts, Castillo de Atarés and Príncipe, extending the Campo de Marte, building military hospitals, and constructing additional military barracks to house more units. The Bourbon Reforms in Spain, however, had previously caused a reconceptualization of land use in Havana prior to this shift in military ideology. In 1754, Spanish monarch Carlos III issued a series of measures instituting that instituted new regulations for land tenure and which centralized control, thereby ensuring that all available land was either being used for the military effort or to maximize profits for the Crown (similar reforms had been issued in the past, but all had met with little success). See Johnson, "La Guerra Contra los Habitantes de los Arrabales: Changing Patterns of Land Use and Land Tenancy in and around Havana, 1763-1800," 185. The measures had the effect of increasing the scarcity, and therefore the value of land, causing housing shortages and forcing inhabitants to look outside of the walls for housing. Prior to 1754 competition for land had been low and gaining access and title to areas that were not in use in and around the city was a relatively easy process. There were, however, several measures enacted under the Bourbon Reforms that foreshadowed the increase in the value of land prior to the British invasion. As early as November 1729, a royal decree prohibited the *cabildo's* ability to concede urban *solares* (vacant lots) and *tierras campestres* (rural land) to residents. By February 1739, the *cabildo's* power to distribute agrarian land had been taken away altogether by another royal decree. And by 1754 when the new reforms were issued, authority to grant land rested solely within the *audiencia*. The result was an increased difficulty for the urban inhabitants of Havana to find a place to live in (or around) Havana.

order to ensure the safety of the city. To aid the militarization effort the Spanish Crown issued royal decrees in 1784, 1788, and 1790 that allotted a total of 290,000 *duros* to the military effort in Havana (compared with a total of only 146,000 *duros* for the fortification of Santiago de Cuba).⁵⁷ The prioritization of the military effort in Havana contributed to the diminishing availability of land at the same time that the fortification effort created an abundance of new jobs; more, actually, than there were men available to fill them (or space available to house them).

Repercussions from the militarization of the city can be best described as having a “domino effect” on the diminishing availability of land within the walls and the rapid urbanization of the extramuros. The number of jobs that the militarization project created and the prosperous environment attracted newcomers not only from the surrounding islands, but from areas in Spain from which Havana had thus far seen little immigration.⁵⁸ Conscripted soldiers from the military effort, too, often stayed and settled in the city once their assignments were over. The population increase exacerbated population density in and around Havana, where inhabitants doubled between 1763 and 1780. The 1791 census placed the population of Havana and its extramuros barrios at 44,337 people, not counting military recruits and foreign visitors. By 1810, the population had more than doubled at 96,114, all residing in and around the city.⁵⁹ While land confiscations and the increased defense effort

⁵⁷ Alexander de Humboldt, *Ensayo político sobre la isla de Cuba*, trans. D.J.B. de V.Y.M., 2 ed. (Paris: Librería de Lecointe, 1836).

⁵⁸ The growth of commerce and industry provided an incentive for foreign immigration. As industries in Havana grew and their counterparts in Spain faltered, Havana saw an influx of Spanish immigration from the country’s various regions, as well as from places such as England and France, increasing the numbers of immigrants already residing in Havana.

⁵⁹ Population increase in and around Havana coincides with demographic growth throughout Spanish America, where population growth increased from 3,336,000 to 6,122,00 inhabitants between 1742 and 1810.

had impacted or displaced many of the city's residents, those benefiting from militarization were landowners and the city elite. After 1779, once land restitution was instituted for confiscated lands, they were able to profit by selling or renting their property at exorbitant prices during a period of land shortage and increased urban density.

As the population numbers increased, the ethnic composition of the city and its surrounding areas also shifted. In 1791, the population classified simply as "white" in the census had outnumbered the population of slave and free people of color fifty-two to forty-seven percent in Havana and the extramuros, but by 1810, "whites" were in the minority. The number of people categorized as white had registered a seventy-three percent increase in the twenty one years between the two census counts, while the slave population in and around the city registered an increase of 165 percent. The largest increase, however, was noted in the population of free people of color, which increased by an astonishing 171 percent.⁶⁰ While population increase affected housing within the walls, it also had a dramatic effect on the extramuros, as new neighborhoods composed primarily of free people of color were relegated to areas outside of the walls. The population in this area quadrupled in the generation after 1780, where most of the neighborhoods were composed of "non-white" inhabitants and where people of color outnumbered whites in most instances.⁶¹

Once created, the correlation between the extramuros and people of color extended to include a specific class category. The relationship between racial demographics and an urban underclass was reinforced by a colonial ban issued by the Marqués de la Torre in 1776. The new regulation prohibited residents of the intramuros from constructing any future residential

⁶⁰ Humboldt, *Ensayo político sobre la isla de Cuba*, 23.

⁶¹ Of the seven extramuros neighborhoods, by 1810 Jesús María and La Salud were the most racially diverse. In La Salud, the people of color outnumbered whites 16,729 to 11,690, and in Jesús María, 8,242 to 3,363. Ibid.

structures from guano, a relatively inexpensive building material popular with urban inhabitants.⁶² The potential impact of the colonial ban was low among residents of the intramuros, since by the middle of the eighteenth century most intramuro homes were constructed of *teja*, (or else they were made *de alto*).⁶³ The regulation requiring the use of more expensive building materials would have instead deterred new working-class or marginal inhabitants from settling in Havana proper, relegating them to areas outside of the walls and thus reinforcing the class characteristics of the extramuro neighborhoods.

Although the regulations of the late eighteenth century were meant to target the intramuros and the military structures surrounding the city, it was the living areas outside of the walls that were the most affected; and by association, the large urban underclass that had until then resided in the extramuros. Under the new military plan designed by Abarca, construction near defense structures was prohibited, including in the areas adjacent to the city walls and in the wide open spaces of the Campo de Marte, the military field that lay immediately west of the walls. In 1764, the plan to refortify the city prohibited construction closer than 1,500 varas to any military structure, an increase from the 300-vara prohibition previously in place. The prohibition effectively displaced the squatter settlements that had appeared in the areas adjacent to the walls where residents who were unable to afford rent prices in Havana had constructed makeshift homes of relatively inexpensive materials (such as guano).

⁶² Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Winds of Change: Hurricanes and the Transformation of Nineteenth-Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 112.

⁶³ Of the 3,497 homes counted in Havana in 1756, 3,024 were made of "*teja*," while 181 were made "*de alto*." The remainder would presumably have been made of a combination of guano and other, inexpensive building materials. "Indicadores urbanos tomados de la visita pastoral de Morell de Santa Cruz, 1756-1757," reprinted in Venegas, *Cuba y sus pueblos: censos y mapas de los siglos XVIII y XIX*, 135.

The shift in land use around Havana was not without response from those residents that militarization had displaced. As late as 1772, eight years after the original prohibitions were issued, squatter settlements were still developing along the outskirts of the military field, and residents were petitioning the Spanish Crown for special permission to build in these areas. The royal government was persuaded to grant a few petitions for temporary housing units to be built in the area of Tallapiedra, next to the Havana port.⁶⁴ But while a few permits were granted, most housing units near military areas were illegally built. Following what we can only assume was the widespread violation of the new ordinances, the prohibitions against construction were re-issued in 1773 and 1779. By 1788, noncompliance had encouraged the colonial government to institute a fine of twenty-five ducats and a sentence of six months of hard labor for anyone who “constructed, rented, or was caught bringing materials for the construction of illegal houses” into the Campo de Marte.⁶⁵

The tension over urban space would prompt Alexander de Humboldt to describe the city as one engaged in a virtual tug-of-war over the accessible areas of the extramuros that lay closest to the walls. In fact, the struggle over the extramuros intensified to the point that intramuro residents considered an appeal to the Crown to have a moat constructed to surround Havana’s military structures and keep squatters at bay, a measure that if successful would have all but turned the city of Havana into a well-fortified island.⁶⁶ While no such proposal was ever carried out, by 1799 a moat *was* built to surround the military field and further deter illegal housing construction. At this point, all illegally built homes (as well as

⁶⁴ Ibid, 203.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 204.

⁶⁶ Humboldt, *Ensayo político sobre la isla de Cuba*, 105.

those that had been legally constructed) in the immediate vicinity of the Campo de Marte were destroyed. Squatters, however, responded by simply transferring their makeshift homes to a new location on the south side of the Camino Real, shifting the marginal character of the extramuros further to the south of the walled city near the area where the barrio of Jesús María developed and where new squatter settlements were now clustered in full visibility next to the royal arsenal.

The ubiquitous and persistent presence of the urban poor in areas of the extramuros spurred the colonial government's development of a "*política del orden urbano*,"⁶⁷ with which to govern the disorganized city and its surrounding areas. As early as 1765, a policy of apprehending vagrants was instituted under the jurisdiction of the newly organized *Capitanes de Partido*, royal officials in charge of the different districts of Cuba who answered directly to the Captain General and whose office was created as part of the new reorganization of the city. The legal mandate stated that vagrants in the city would be apprehended and delivered to government officials, where they would subsequently be made to labor on one of the public works projects underway. By instituting such measures, the colonial government hoped to diminish the appeal of vagrancy and remove the "bad example" for others to follow.⁶⁸ By 1769, it had effectively established a bounty system that provided anyone who apprehended deserters, vagabonds, and "*viciosos*" (depraved persons) within the city with a reward of eight ducats (gold coins). If the culprit was apprehended in the arrabales surrounding the city, the reward rose to twelve *reales*, and rose again to twenty-

⁶⁷ This is a process proposed by Cuban historian Carlos Venegas, in Venegas, *La urbanización de las murallas: dependencia y modernidad*, 12.

⁶⁸ Havana, Cuba, Laws, Statutes. *Instrucción que observen los Capitanes de Partido de la jurisdicción de La Habana responsables al Capitán General*. Manuscript Form. University of Florida, Gainesville, Rare Book Collection.

four reales for anyone who was apprehended beyond the city limits, in the suburbs or throughout the island.⁶⁹ The lower reward for the apprehension of vagabonds within the city could well be interpreted as a result of the higher number of vagrants within its limits in relation to the other areas of the island. Forced conscription upon being mistaken for vagrants—or simply apprehended for the reward they would bring—was a constant threat hanging over the daily lives of the urban poor. Rising rent prices and the resulting high rate of rental turnover further left residents vulnerable to being mistaken for vagrants and forced to labor on one of Havana's new fortifications.

The overcrowded and increasingly perilous conditions of mid eighteenth-century Havana overshadowed many of the reservations colonial officials or intramuro residents may have held about the viability of developing the extramuros into an habanero space. The limited availability of recreational opportunities within the walled city provided its residents with an excuse to use the area outside of the walls as a respite from the cramped conditions of the city.⁷⁰ As construction of the walls was ending during the middle of the eighteenth century, residents of the intramuros had taken to the wide *calzadas* (avenues) that stretched from the western Puerta de Tierra well into areas of the extramuros and put them to use as promenades. The royal shipyard that had been relocated to the extramuros in 1734 was also subsequently transformed into a sightseeing attraction for habaneros.

Despite the physical conditions that prepared the extramuros to be incorporated into the city of Havana, city officials had yet to overcome its association with an urban underclass in order for the area to appear an appealing prospect for development. In order for expansion

⁶⁹ Ibid, 205.

⁷⁰ Venegas, *La urbanización de las murallas: dependencia y modernidad*, 9-12.

to appeal to the elite and middle-class inhabitants within Havana, it was necessary for the area outside of the city walls to not only be deemed desirable but that it be symbolically incorporated into the city—in other words, that it span the physical division that the city walls had imposed. The flurry of reforms that followed the 1762 British occupation accomplished this task through the systematic organization of both the intramuros and the extramuros. In 1763, the Spanish monarchy introduced a plan to urbanize the city proper, which was approved six years later.⁷¹ It divided the intramuros into various *barrios* and *cuarteles*, (districts), with each neighborhood being assigned a *comisario de barrio* (neighborhood inspector) who was in charge of an individual district.⁷² Prior to 1760, the city had consisted of only two districts, Campeche and La Punta, but by 1783 it had been subdivided into eight separate areas. The new intramuro neighborhoods of *Estrella*, *Montserrat*, *Dragones* and *Angel* developed in the area of La Punta, while Campeche on the southern end of the city now consisted of the *barrios* of *Santa Teresa*, *San Francisco*, *Paula* and *San Isidro*.⁷³

Incorporation of the extramuros into the city of Havana soon followed the reorganization of the walled city. When the first census was taken by the Marqués de la Torre between 1774 and 1775, the total population of Havana numbered 51,307 and included inhabitants living outside of the walls. Until then, these extramuros residents had been counted separately from their counterparts residing within the walled city in government

⁷¹ Venegas, *Cuba y sus pueblos: censos y mapas de los siglos XVIII y XIX*, 43. The 1769 plan for the urbanization of Havana was the first to reconsider the layout of the city since the Laws of the Indies.

⁷² Ibid, 42.

⁷³ Coyula, Scarpaci, and Segre, *Havana: Two Faces of the Antillean Metropolis*, 3, Antoni Kapcia, *Havana: The Making of Cuban Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 33, 60, Le Riverend, *La Habana, espacio y vida*.

records.⁷⁴ The decision to count the extramuros as part of the Havana proper was in line with the 1807 decision (just in time to affect the census of 1810) that officially declared “los arrabales” part of the legal urban body and which allowed the outlying neighborhoods to be further subdivided into official barrios. By the time of the 1817 census,⁷⁵ officials were no longer counting only the population of the intramuros. The population of Havana at this later date now officially consisted of those residing within and outside of the city walls.⁷⁶

Accordingly, colonial officials extended their administration—and authority—to the outlying neighborhoods of Havana. Under the administration of the Marqués de la Torre, the first Plan of Public Works was implemented and affected the administration of both areas. The plan consisted of a series of city-wide measures to beautify the city and its surrounding areas. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, it implemented a system through which it could begin to look after the daily up-keep of Havana. In 1771, for example, it created a regular schedule for the cleaning of city streets. It also undertook a project of systematically numbering homes and naming the individual streets that had previously snaked their way anonymously throughout the city. A system of public lighting was also instituted in 1773. And the colonial government oversaw the building of public fountains throughout Havana and the extramuros in 1787, with no ostensible purpose other than beautifying areas of the

⁷⁴ Le Riverend, *La Habana, espacio y vida* .

⁷⁵ By 1774, following the push for order amidst a dangerously growing disorder, the Marqués de la Torre undertook the first official census, and a Real Cédula further ordered that the census be taken every year thereafter.

⁷⁶ Venegas, *Cuba y sus pueblos: censos y mapas de los siglos XVIII y XIX* , 66-68. In the census of 1817, however, a new category of differentiation was invented to take the place of what had existed between the intramuros and extramuros. The census was careful to exclude those people residing in the outlying and largely rural *cercanías* that remained hereto unaccounted for. At this juncture of Havana’s urban history, just as the walls were losing their capacity to delineate an official beginning or end to the city of Havana, new markers were emerging to differentiate between the “legitimate” inhabitants of Havana and those without access or rights to the city.

city. Not insignificantly, the measures also had the “unintended consequence” of effectively bolstering the colonial government’s legitimacy among city inhabitants, both within and outside of the walls.

Beautification efforts soon had their desired effect as habaneros responded in kind. When the *Parroquial Mayor* was relocated to the site of the Jesuit Church⁷⁷ the move attracted wealthy landowners who constructed a number of new homes in the surrounding areas of Havana. It was during this era that the architecture of Havana typically associated with the intramuros of the colonial era first emerged, financed in part by sugar revenues as the economy expanded. The *portal* that would come to exemplify nineteenth-century architecture, for example, made its first appearance in the new buildings and the wealthy homes then under construction.⁷⁸

Perhaps the most important project (for the future of the extramuros, that is) to emerge from the Plan of Public Works was the construction in 1772 of the Alameda de Extramuros, located to the west of the wall at Tierra.⁷⁹ The wide avenue would be popularized as a promenade for the middle classes and represented a critical step in the transformation of the extramuros into a middle class and elite space. In the promenades of the extramuros, intramuro residents were able to engage in the recreational and social activities lacking within the walls but essential to the creation of an urban(e) culture in Havana. The irony of finding this space in the extramuros was not lost on habaneros, as these spaces were carefully policed and sectioned off from the dangers of the general

⁷⁷ Today it is the site of the Cathedral of Havana.

⁷⁸ Le Riverend, *La Habana, espacio y vida*, 88.

⁷⁹ The Alameda de Extramuros would later be called the Paseo Isabel II, the Paseo del Prado, and today, the Paseo de Martí.

populace, thereby lending the area outside of the walls an air of prestige and modernity previously non-existent.

A new genre of illustration emerged during the early nineteenth century that depicted the new social opportunities afforded by the promenades. Paintings, lithographs, and watercolors illustrated popular congregating areas of the city, intra and extramuros, as well as its important structures. The doors on the south side of the city, at Monserrate, for example, as well as the paseos of Havana were the popular subjects of artist Federico Mialhe's work. (See Figures 2.2 and 2.3) In the most well recognized illustrations, the spaces of the extramuros repeatedly project the new modernizing ideology of the colonial government. The Paseo de Isabel II, for example, is shown as the new thoroughfare leading out to the sea, perfectly landscaped and geometrically ordered to coincide with the population of habaneros who made use of its space. (See Figure 2.4) In another early nineteenth-century illustration, the painting *Vista del paseo extramuros de La Habana* by Hippolyte Garneray shows the same paseo under its previous designation as the Alameda de Extramuros.⁸⁰ (See Figure 2.5) The space is similarly one of affluence, where the elite women painted by Garneray are able to engage in the recreational activities of the city (albeit only with an escort). In *volantes* (carriages typical to late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Cuba) the painting depicts them driving along the promenade as they are chauffeured by elegantly dressed black drivers. Elaborating on the same theme, artist James Gray Saunders illustrates the *Paseo Militar*, built decades later under the administration of Tacón between 1834 and 1836 and located

Figure 2.2:

Puertas de Monserrate

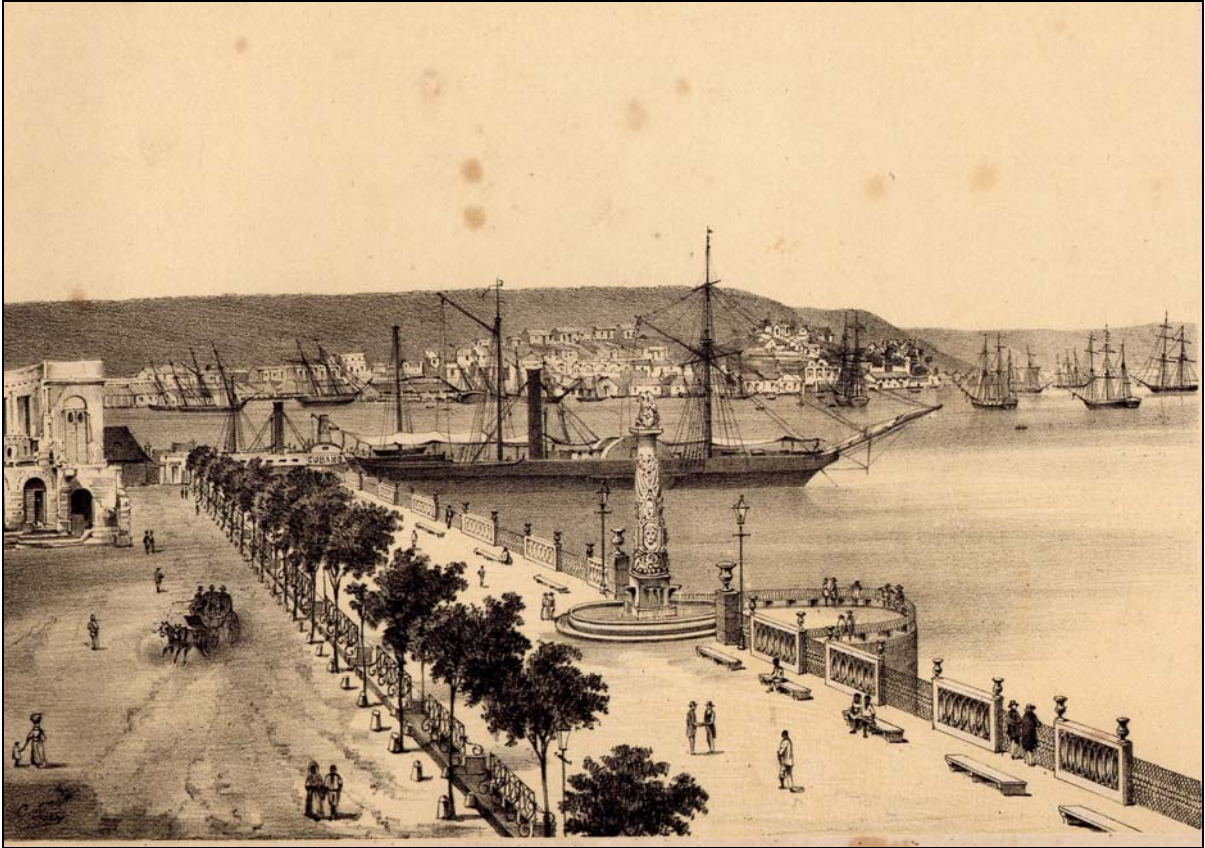
⁸⁰ Hippolyte Garneray, "Vista del paseo extramuros de La Habana," (La Habana: Permanent Collection, Museo de Bellas Artes).



“Puertas de Monserrate,” by Federico Mialhe, 1848, in *Album pintoresco de la isla de Cuba* (La Habana: B. May & Compania, 1853). University of Florida, Gainesville, Rare Book Collection.

Figure 2.3:

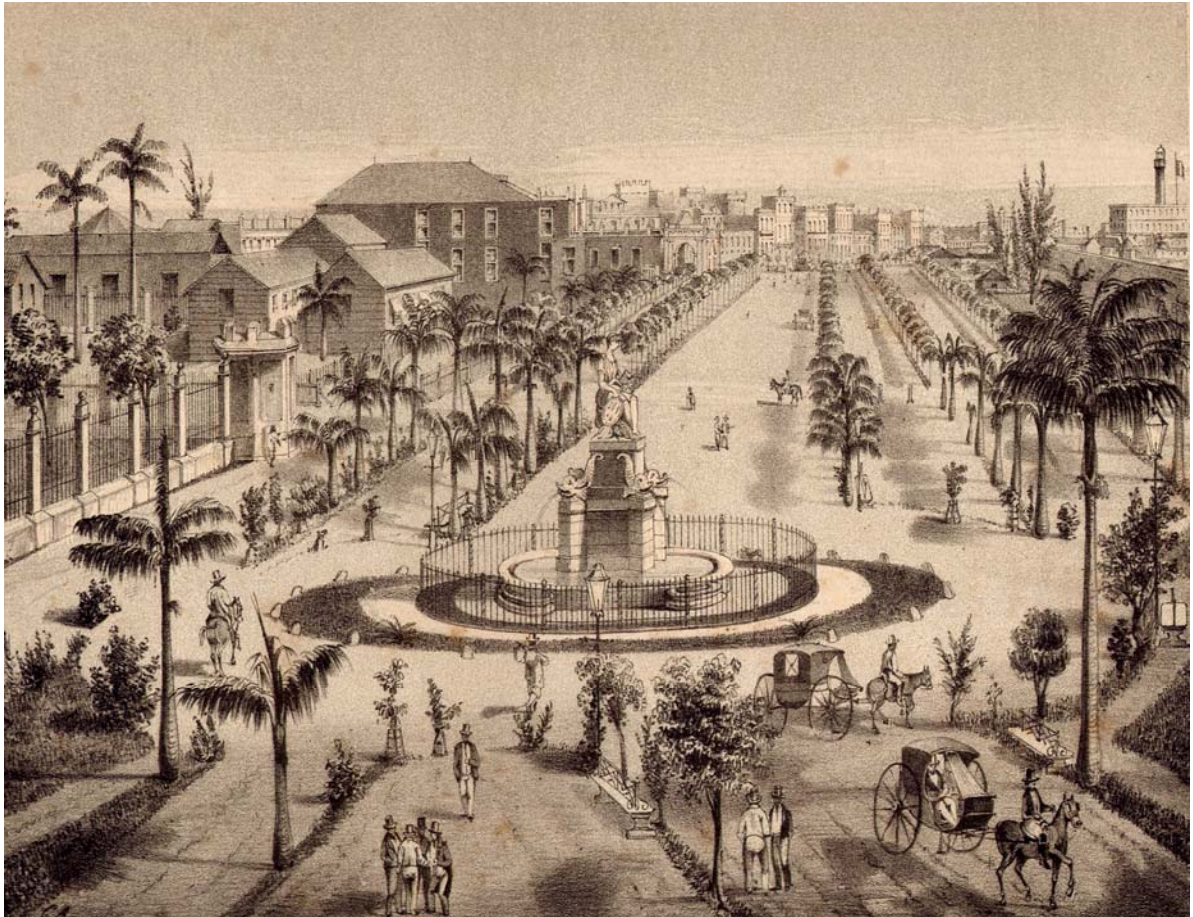
Alameda de Paula, Havana Extramuros



“Alameda de Paula,” by Federico Mialhe, in *Album pintoresco de la isla de Cuba* (La Habana: B. May & Compania, 1853). University of Florida, Gainesville, Rare Book Collection.

Figure 2.4:

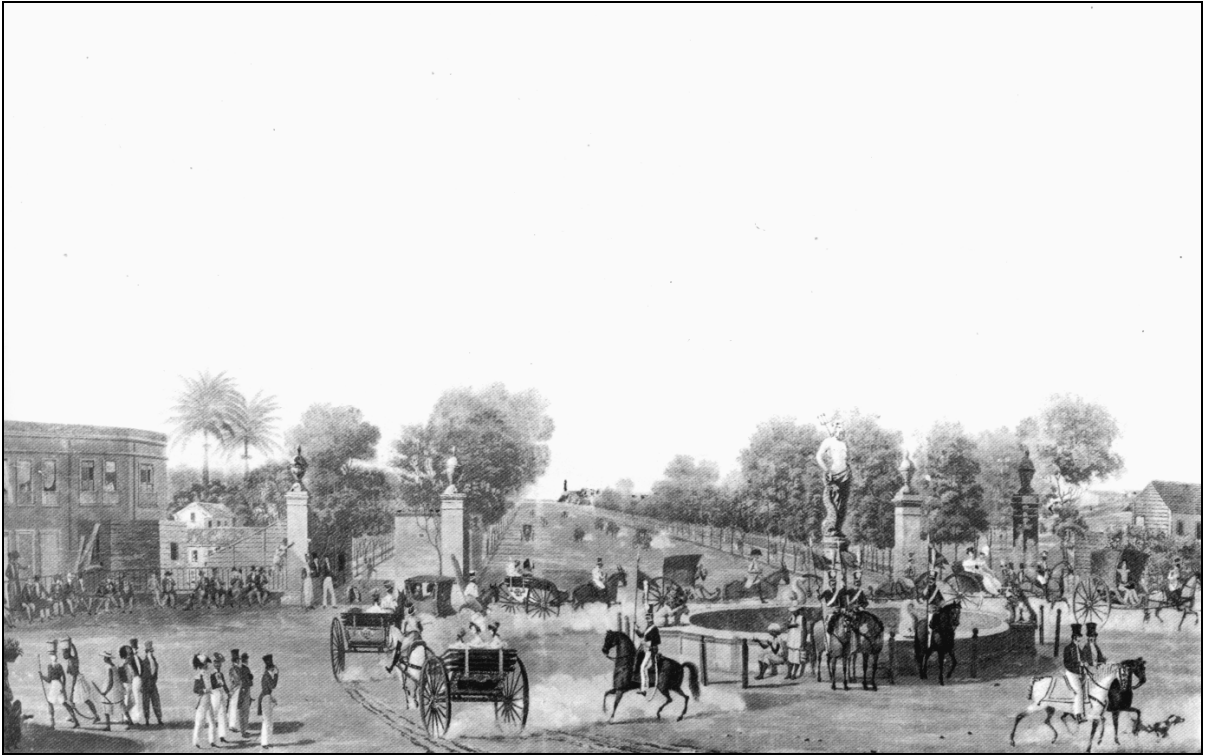
Paseo de Isabel II



“Paseo de Isabel II,” in *Album pintoresco de la isla de Cuba* (La Habana: B. May & Compañia, 1853). University of Florida, Gainesville, Rare Book Collection.

Figure 2.5

Vista del Paseo Extramuros de La Habana



Hippolyte Garneray, "Vista del Paseo Extramuros de La Habana," reproduced in *Pintura Española y Cubana y litografías y grabados cubanos del siglo xix, Colección del Museo Nacional de La Habana*, (La Habana: Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos, 1983), 77.

immediately outside of the city walls (adjacent to the newly rebuilt Campo de Marte).⁸¹ In his lithograph, the position of women in the extramuros has expanded to include participation in the recreational activity of evening promenades without the restriction or relative security afforded by either the carriage or its chauffeur. Here, women are able to walk directly along the promenade. While the new paseo represents a potentially liberating space for middle-class and elite women, it has the opposite effect on the movement of people of color, regardless of their slave or free status. In Garneray's depiction, there are only two categories available for blacks to inhabit if they are present on the scene. The first is of the necessarily elegant servant in whose care the women have been entrusted. The attire of the chauffeur is a colonial marker of both his status and extent of assimilation, and therefore detracts from the danger that he would have otherwise represented.⁸² The other position is that of the very real categories created by slavery. In Garneray's painting, the other black man on the scene is appropriately depicted in shackles, his movement having been completely circumscribed by the iron shackles around his legs. Unlike in Garneray's portrait of the promenade, however, in the later depiction of these spaces people of color have been erased entirely from the extramuros scene.

While the new spaces of the extramuros present a modern and ordered view of Havana, they often do so in stark juxtaposition to the representation of another popular gathering space—that of the visibly cramped and disordered spaces of the intramuros⁸³).

⁸¹ James Gray Saunders, "Vista del paseo militar," (La Habana: Museo de Bellas Artes, Permanent Collection).

⁸² Kutzinski, *Sugar's Secrets: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism*, argues that in popular mid nineteenth-century representation of black men, these were often portrayed as inhabiting emasculating spaces (for example, that of a household servant). Kutzinski argues that through such artistic depictions, the white population was thus reassured that blacks—and black men especially—posed no danger to the status quo.

⁸³ The spaces of the intramuros most commonly depicted in this light were the city squares of the walled city, which became increasingly associated with either the Spanish elite or the new, poverty-ridden arrivals to the

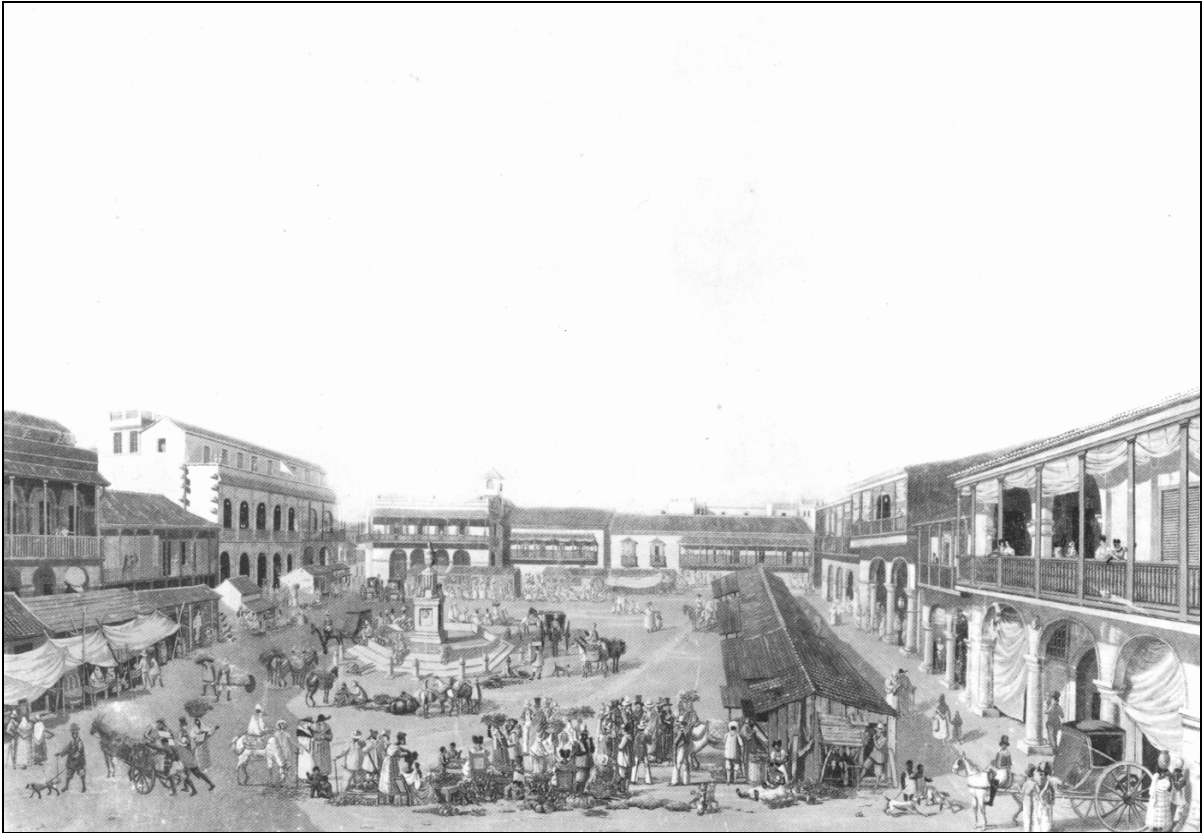
Artistic depictions of the intramuros present an inverted image of the liberation afforded by the extramuros paseos (to the elite and middle classes). The images illustrate the transformation of the intramuros from an elite colonial space into an area notable for the failure of the same politics of order that the colonial government had attempted to promote in the city and its outlying territories. Garneray also painted the everyday activities that took place in the bustling town squares of the intramuros. His work entitled “*Vista de la plaza o mercado principe de La Habana*,” shows the intramuro plazas to be cauldrons of social and racial mixture.⁸⁴ (See Figure 2.6) In the painting, the well-kept square is surrounded by the homes and buildings of the colonial elite, crafted in the newly emerging architecture style of the colonial era. From the balconies of these buildings young Spanish women sit, dressed demurely in *mantillas* as they peer onto the scene unfolding below them where well-dressed white men and a few women stroll past rows of makeshift wooden huts congregated in the middle of the square (these were perhaps drawn to be or resemble the wooden *barracones* that existed at this time near the port, where slaves were housed before auctions took place). At the center of the square sit rows of young black women outside of the wooden structures, all in a row, and comb each others hair while chatting with one another. All around the square are black vendors who push box carts loaded with wares for sale.

city. Increasingly, the negative representation afforded the city squares extended to include many of the spaces associated with Spanish colonialism. The *valla de gallos* (cockfighting ring), for example, would be removed from the repertoire of “decent” recreational activities open to the general populace with the advent of independence. In *criollo* representation, this would become transformed into a distinctly Spanish and barbaric pastime. See Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban: Culture, Identity and Politics*, for a discussion of other recreational activities that were created in opposition to Spanish colonialism. For example, Pérez argues that the Cuban national pastime of baseball gained popularity during the colonial era precisely because it was seen as a “civilized” activity in direct opposition to the more Spanish and “barbaric” forms of recreation, such as the bullfight or the cockfight.

⁸⁴ Hippolyte Garneray, “Vista de la plaza o mercado principe de La Habana,” (La Habana: Museo de Bellas Artes, Permanent Collection).

Figure 2.6

Vista de la Plaza Vieja o Mercado Principal de La Habana



Hippolyte Garneray, "Vista de la Plaza Vieja o Mercado Principal de La Habana," reproduced in *Pintura Española y Cubana y litografías y grabados cubanos del siglo xix*, Colección del Museo Nacional de La Habana, (La Habana: Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos, 1983), 79.

The scene illustrated by Garneray is a socially diverse one, where segregation is more gendered than it is social or even racial within the confined spaces of the square. Arguably, however, it is not only public decorum which relegates the young Spanish women to the outskirts of the square (and of the painting), but also the abundance of people of color of both genders and of both slave and free status, the perception of whom we can infer from the restriction of the young women perched on the balconies.⁸⁵ Unlike their counterparts in the extramuros promenades, these women are confined to the margins of habanero social space. Like the extramuros illustrations, the social space that people of color inhabit is in direct opposition to that of the Spanish elite women. In this depiction, it is to the black slave women whom inhabit the positive—albeit problematic—spaces of the canvas.

In the historiography surrounding the urbanization of Havana, the walled city has traditionally enjoyed a reputation as a space of possibility that ended once demolition of the walls opened the extramuros to urban development. Such a possibility, however, was not enjoyed unilaterally. It did not exist for the Spanish women of the intramuros during an era when the pre-cursors of anti-colonialism were making themselves visible in popular spaces, nor was unilateral possibility afforded to the black slave women that enjoyed the freer space of all in the painting, since real possibility was circumspected by physical bondage.

The previous genre of illustrations was created on the heels of the social and demographic transformations that shook Havana and which significantly altered the use of urban space. During the decades of the early nineteenth century, when the city still had not recovered from the urban dislocation of the decades prior, the intramuros was undergoing its

⁸⁵ For young Spanish women of upper-class status, the “symbiosis of social classes,” that habaneros were privy to was limited by the custom of having family honor rest intrinsically connected to the bodies of women, resulting in a very limited mobility for women of this class.

own transformation from an elite Spanish space to one in which disorder reigned. The ships that regularly entered the harbor, for example, while the source of much of Havana's revenue, were also the source of the colonial government's concern over climbing crime rates. Unruly throngs of sailors disembarked and overran Havana when their ships docked in the harbor, making out-of-doors excursions after nightfall a dangerous activity. The gates to the city were closed nightly at nine in order to deter crime, much to no avail.⁸⁶ As the importance of Havana and its shipping harbor grew, not only was the city transformed into a refuge for crime and criminality, but it experienced many of the other negative side effects of urban growth.

The port itself posed another reason for concern, as it also provided "undesirables" of another type with key access into the city. By the early nineteenth century, the city government had designed an elaborate system to contain unwanted elements outside of Havana that was reminiscent of the much earlier move to construct walls in order to safeguard the city from an outside invasion. For example, as urban density within the intramuros increased, outbreaks of yellow fever were a constant concern for public health officials, often originating from infected ships and their crew.⁸⁷ Ships coming from areas where outbreaks of the virus had occurred or those that were suspected of carrying the disease were denied entrance into the port or else quarantined for the duration of the incubation period. Ships carrying those already sick were asked to circle the bay twice in

⁸⁶ The gates had been strategically placed in two locations; the gate at La Punta was located in the northern side of the city in order to communicate with the fort bearing the same name, while the Puerta de Tierra was located next to the city center, at the site where the paths that lead from the city center to "el monte" (rural areas) converged. These paths would eventually become major calzadas (traditional thoroughfares) of greater Havana.

⁸⁷ Outbreaks of yellow fever were a constant source of concern for both colonial officials and residents of the city during the nineteenth century. Ironically, the city lay out and the architecture of the intramuros actually facilitated its spread, as the narrow streets and the upward stretching buildings blocked the sun and created a damp, dark environment in which the virus could thrive. Urban density only made the problem worse.

order to alert the authorities that they were carrying infected onboard. Officials would then pick up and safely transport the sick to the hospital across the bay before an outbreak in the city could occur.⁸⁸

Ironically, concern over the containment of yellow fever during the early nineteenth century mirrored the efforts that had been undertaken decades earlier to ensure the military safety of the city. Instead of being concerned with marauding bands of pirates gaining access into the city, however, attention was now focused on other, more subtle forms of invasion that could potentially threaten the safety—and sustainability—of the city. And like the military changes that were implemented decades earlier in order to ensure its safety, government efforts aimed at preventing an outbreak of yellow fever centered on containing the virus outside of the city walls, were it could do less damage, rather than making significant changes to the existing infrastructure of the city.

The unhygienic condition of Havana was also a source of concern for reasons other than the spread of crime or disease. More than simply threatening the safety and welfare of habaneros, the unhygienic conditions of the city called into question its self-image as a modern and urbane city. During the first decades of the nineteenth century, Humboldt described Havana as a metropolis whose filth and unhygienic appearance was unparalleled in all of Spanish America.⁸⁹ While this acknowledgement signaled a shortcoming in the colonial government's ability to properly maintain the city, Humboldt nevertheless alluded to the space where the colonial government might find its potential source of redemption. In

⁸⁸ Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Fondo Junta Superior de Sanidad, Legajo 11, No. 122, "Reglamento de la casa de salud establecida en el muelle de porras, 1820", Charles Belot, *The Yellow Fever at Havana, its Nature and its Treatment* (Savannah, Georgia: Morning News Steam Printing House, 1878). University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, School of Public Health Library.

⁸⁹ Humboldt, *Ensayo político sobre la isla de Cuba*, 10.

the clearing of land to the west of the walls and in the colonial government's trajectory of extramuro westward expansion, he noted that *la civilización hace progreso* (civilization is making progress)—that is, making progress directly into the wide open spaces of the extramuros and into the awaiting areas inhabited by the urban and rural underclasses.⁹⁰

The transformation and fall of the intramuros from a decidedly Spanish, colonial, and elite space into one in which lower-class habaneros and disorder reigned came at the chagrin of colonial officials, as the primary location of all major commercial, business, government, and military interests were still located within the walls. Merchants, shop owners, notaries, judges, military officials, and even the *hacendado* proprietors of *cafetales* and *ingenios* (coffee and sugar mills) made their residence in the intramuros during the early decades of the nineteenth century. Of the more than four hundred registered business and government officials in 1823, less than seven percent resided outside of the walled city. Of these, most were the hacendados whose obligations regularly took them into the extramuros or the rural *campo* (countryside).⁹¹

As the intramuros was becoming a space of increasingly questionable repute, the extramuros, on the other hand, was being transformed into the recreational area of this colonial constituency that still lived, worked, and conducted daily business within the walls.⁹² In order for the extramuros to become a viable recreational space, the dominance of the intramuros dictated that extramuro development take place in areas accessible to the

⁹⁰ Ibid, 13.

⁹¹ *Guía del comercio de La Habana para el año de 1823*, 26-47.

⁹² Approximately 4,489,030 pesos in commerce entered the walled city on weekly basis through the gates at Tierra. This figure includes goods for consumption such as raw materials, foodstuffs, and manufactured goods, but excludes any goods marked for export. *Guía del comercio de La Habana para el año de 1823*, 248-249.

walled city. The new recreational areas were therefore built in locales adjacent to the walled city while remaining, significantly, separate spaces distinctly *outside* of the walls.

With the physical development of the recreational extramuros already begun, the colonial government signaled the beginning of a symbolic triumph over residents residing in areas adjacent to the walled city. It was not, however, a clear victory for the middle or upper classes, themselves increasingly divided between the interests of peninsular-born habaneros and a growing, affluent class of *criollos*. The “política del orden,” that was first introduced with the series of measures and public-works projects in 1763 under the administration of the Conde de Ricla also served to now tighten control over the physical spaces surrounding the city proper. Thus, while the newly developed spaces of the extramuros provided affluent residents with an exclusive space for middle-class recreation, it also allowed the colonial government to extend its “política del orden” to the classes of habaneros now finding new uses for the extramuros. In fact, by 1777, a comprehensive decree detailing the Marqués de la Torres’s plan for public order was unveiled which included tightening control over the new *criollo* elite.

The impetus behind tightening control over the middle classes may have stemmed from the potential danger that a new, developing class of affluent habaneros could pose should a separatist movement gain momentum in Cuba. The danger of this possibility was fueled not only by the independence movement of the United States (which was eventually supported by Spanish monarch Carlos III), but by the independence struggles sweeping across Latin America and the Caribbean.⁹³ The Havana police report for 1811 noted that an

⁹³ The nineteenth century was a century of independence for most of Latin America. Cuban independence, however, was late in coming, as the country was the last to gain its freedom from Spain in 1898. However, while the separatist movement in Cuba first gained momentum in areas of the Oriente countryside, there was nonetheless a visible opposition to colonial rule in the city of Havana. Acts classified as “criminal” in the

anti-colonial coalition of “malcontents” led by criollos (and to a lesser extent, Iberian-born Spaniards) was an increasing danger in the city of Havana, and that an effort should be made to more tightly control the possibility of an anti-colonial movement via the stricter enforcement of laws.⁹⁴ Towards this end, the colonial government put forth a report regarding the work needed to be done in order to maintain the public order in light of the potential threat that this class of habaneros could pose, including establishing a more rigorous system of policing areas of the walled city as well as its surrounding neighborhoods.⁹⁵

Concern over the status and activities of criollos and the potential of anti-colonial movement in and around Havana, however, came from authorities in the higher echelons of the colonial government. The concern of city government officials, on the other hand, revolved around controlling the urban “riff-raff” and the rural inhabitants of the extramuros, much with the same goal of preempting activities and individuals that would threaten the public order of the city. Whereas the colonial government worked towards the stricter enforcement of existing laws, the city government in turn organized what were, in effect, a series of bounty-hunting expeditions into the extramuros in order to control its residents. The goal of the five *cuadrillas* (or squadrons, each employing between six and thirty workers) of deputized individuals was to patrol the different areas of the extramuros under the direction of its two captains, José Gavilán and Andrés Visiedo. Like the royal decrees that had

colonial records often contain elements of the proto-nationalist, as they react against colonial measures or specifically target members of the colonial system. In many of the records for Havana, for example, we see concern over the possibility of a separatist struggle only at the highest levels of the Spanish echelons, while at the local level concern revolved around petty criminality.

⁹⁴ The resulting report to the Captain General went on to specifically note that existing regulations should be tightened for criollos throughout the island, and not just in Havana, where these concerns seemed to be the greatest.

⁹⁵ “*Informe de la diputación de policía al excelentísimo Señor Presidente Gobernador y Capitán General, del estado de sus tareas y providencias que deben adoptarse para conservar la publica tranquilidad,*” (La Habana: Impresores del Gobierno y de la Real Sociedad Patriótica Oficina de Arazoa y Soler, 1816). University of Miami, Cuban Heritage Collection.

attempted to control vagrancy almost a half century earlier at the outset of urban reorganization, the colonial government offered members of *cuadrillas* a monetary reward for the apprehension of undesirables. At this later date, however, the definition of these included not only vagrants and the unemployed, but criminals fleeing prosecution and anyone whose activities posed a threat to public order. *Cuadrilleros* earned 100 pesos for each individual they captured who was subsequently sentenced to jail, and 1,000 pesos if that person was sentenced to death. The importance of the job was such that *cuadrilleros* even enjoyed a measure of life and disability insurance. Should they be injured “in the line of duty” with an injury that resulted in a physical disability they would be compensated with 1,000 pesos (they earned a salary of 30 pesos monthly). In the case of death their beneficiaries were entitled to 1,500 pesos.⁹⁶ The increased policing of the *extramuros* signaled that the colonial triumph over the area of the *extramuros* was a limited one; the far-reaching corners of the suburbs were still viewed with the same suspicion that had dominated the area before the military reorganization of the Havana had caused drastic demographic and political transformations.

As a result, tension in and around the city was such that not only were populations of *habaneros* divided between those first displaced by militarization and then by the expanding public-works projects and the wealthier *habaneros* now using those spaces, or even between the political divisions between *criollos* and *peninsulares*, but also another phenomenon occurring simultaneously. That is, the parallel development of two cities themselves—the first colonial and the other modern—each with its own constituency and each increasingly associated with the *extramuros* and *intramuros*, respectively. The political topography of

⁹⁶ “*Informe de la diputación de policía al excelentísimo Señor Presidente Gobernador y Capitán General, del estado de sus tareas y providencias que deben adoptarse para conservar la publica tranquilidad,*” 6.

Havana, however, was such that space was limited to sustain one cohesive city. Indeed, that had been one of the driving forces behind the project to incorporate the extramuros into the official city of Havana.

The emerging class of affluent criollos found themselves wedged in the in-between spaces of these two parallel cities increasingly alienated from one another. The first space was the once-elite but now disorganized colonial center (especially as criollos became an increasing presence around Havana). The other was the urban periphery that now extended west beyond the new developments of the extramuros, where an urban underclass resided in areas immediately adjacent to the walls, and where a rural population from nearby cercanias was growing. All three were populations subject to the policing of the colonial government in Havana. The development of a “third city-space” that lay between the urban periphery and the intramuros, therefore, implicated all of the populations that extended outside of the colonial walled city. It implicated as well the development of space claimed by at least four constituencies of habaneros; the colonial government, who had first developed the area in order to reinforce colonial rule, the urban and rural underclasses whose historical claim to the area by no means mitigated their displacement, and criollos, who now urgently needed it in order to legitimize their own claim to Havana. The policing of this area by the colonial administration reinforces the idea that while the extramuros had been put to a new use entertaining the middle and elite classes, it was by no means a spatial transformation that was complete, or one that would be easily sustained given the elasticity of the urban periphery and its ability to continuously recreate urban space.

In the political topography of the early nineteenth century, the tension over space and housing had by no means diminished with the reorganization of the city that followed the

British occupation. In the years that followed its reorganization, the subsequent administrators of Havana inherited the conditions that had begun to prepare the city and its inhabitants for the struggle over westward expansion.⁹⁷ It is during this period that we see the final inversion of the extramuros into an area adequate for urban growth and the simultaneous—indeed, necessary—association of the intramuros with an increasingly disorderly “lower-class” that set the stage for the urbanization project of the early nineteenth century that was most clearly articulated during the administration of General Miguel Tacón.

Shifting the City West, 1828-1838

Despite the colonial government’s repeated attempts to organize and develop the city, in the early decades of the nineteenth century Havana still appeared a neglected environment, although the remedy for such a malady was clearly articulated as extramuros development. Writing in the early 1840s, the Countess of Merlin urged Captain General O’Donell to reform the laws that governed the island and develop the symbols that defined it, alluding to the idea that to do otherwise in the capital city would exacerbate the idea that the entire island existed without a proper sense of history.⁹⁸ The Countess, like many of the affluent who resided within the intramuros, also had a clear vision of the areas where the honing of national symbols and urban development should occur; she noted, for example, that post-Tacón development of the extramuro barrios of Jesús María and La Salud, where elegant *quintas* now took the place of *bohios*, gave the city an air of new and “flowering”

⁹⁷ See Edwin R. Quiles and David Harvey for a theoretical discusión of “modernization” as a discourse used by those in power to displace the urban underclass from desired areas. Quiles, *Medio ambiente urbano en Puerto Rico*.

⁹⁸ Countess of Merlin, *La Havana par madame La Comtesse Merlin*, vol. I (Paris: Librairie D’Amyot, 1844), ii, 351.

grandeur.⁹⁹ The area immediately west of the walls thus held the potential to not only serve as a temporary respite from the cramped quarters of the intramuros, but to permanently release the city from that which confined it. Given its proximity to the center of colonial activity and its ability to accommodate affluent criollos increasingly out of place in the cramped colonial center, its value was rapidly increasing. Already, the alamedas and paseos surrounding the city had proved a great success in attracting an affluent crowd away from the dense intramuros. And as outbreaks of yellow fever and malaria continued to escalate at alarming rates, intramuro residents increasingly looked outwards to find a cleaner, purer area to inhabit. In the letters which she wrote to acquaintances back home in Paris while she visited family in Havana, the Countess of Merlin describes the intramuros as a space from which habaneros must continually seek the respite of the “clean air of the countryside.”¹⁰⁰

The move to depict the area outside of the walls as picturesque and laden with a pastoral tranquility (in stark contrast to depiction of the intramuros) is also illustrated through popular descriptions of the city. In the work of the habanero writer Cirilo Villaverde, the juxtaposition of urban and rural illustrates the evolving character of both the extramuros and intramuros. In his masterpiece novel of *Cecilia Valdés*, first written in 1839 and then revised in 1882 but set in the Havana of the 1830s, he associates the *zonas campestres* (countryside), including the extramuros, with the peripheral character of Isabel, the sweet, virginal criolla in whom redemption from the impurity of the city may be found.¹⁰¹ In contrast, Cecilia Valdés,

⁹⁹ Ibid, 284-285.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 312.

¹⁰¹ Cirilo Villaverde, *Cecilia Valdes ó la loma del angel* (Caracas, Venezuela: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1981). She is, in essence, the prototype from which the new class of criollos will draw upon in order to create a distinctly Cuban character—the noble guajiro—to serve as a symbol of Cuban difference to Spain. Ironically, habaneros’ experience with guajiros had been a somewhat limited experience: from the nearby rural centers, more and more migrants were relocating to the core city or settling on the outskirts of the city, and finding themselves

the protagonist for whom the novel is entitled, inhabits a markedly distinct space as a mulatta who travels freely between the colonial center and the decidedly “darker” urban periphery. As the symbolic connection between the unsustainable elite colonial city of the intramuros¹⁰² and the more sinister one of its extramuros colonial subjects, Cecilia also represents the possibility of a third space to connect the previous two. As a mediating zone, however, the possibility of a third space (i.e. the fabled “second city” of Havana) which is neither Spanish nor colonial, nor urban and lower-class, must be necessarily forged between the colonial center and the urban periphery and embody the criollo characteristics of Isabel.¹⁰³ (Fashioning a new space in areas that were previously elite or marginal was a process that like Cecilia herself, was the product of a uniquely criollo invention, and one that for Havana was only feasible with demolition of the walls. This factor would go on to carry heavy symbolic weight with the criollo supporters of demolition in the decades to come.)

Colonial concern over the danger of the extramuros, then—and the potential downfall of colonial Havana that the opening of the extramuros signaled—was not completely unfounded. Suspicion over the extent and nature of possibility that the extramuros represented is evident in the discourse that surrounded construction of the walls and dates back to the founding of the city itself. This concern was one of the driving forces behind amurallamiento, and was part of the same suspicion that fueled such measures as the 1816

increasingly at odds with established residents. It was also an experience fraught with contradictions: guajiros’ acclaimed positioning in the habanero symbolic sphere was increasingly at odds with their positioning in the habanero public sphere, especially as a separatist struggle develops and guajiros are relocated to the outskirts of Havana. See Chapter Four.

¹⁰² In *Cecilia Valdes*, Villaverde’s emphasis is in creating a distinction between the “elite” city of the intramuros, which he associates with colonial rule, and dangerous extramuros. Villaverde’s description of the colonial government’s interest in maintaining an elite radius within the intramuros, in the midst of the disintegration of the rest of the intramuro and extramuros city, nonetheless functions as a critique of this ‘elite’ but unsustainable space.

¹⁰³ Jorge Romero Leon, *Retórica de imaginación urbana: la ciudad y sus sujetos en Cecilia Valdes y Quincas Borba* (Caracas, Venezuela: Editorial Torino, 1997).

bounty-hunting expeditions to neutralize the dangers (at this date defined differently) of the zones that lay immediately west of the colonial government's authority. Ironically, although the historiography of the walled city has made much of its potential as a space of possibility within the colonial landscape, at this critical juncture of urban expansion (as development was occurring) it was the extramuros which contained the greatest prospect of possibility (and registered the most danger to the colonial authorities) for those seeking to remain outside of the colonial government's reach.

On the other hand, instead of containing danger to the areas outside of the city, the city walls served to contain its residents within a perimeter of impossibility, circumspected by both a physical impediment to urban expansion as well as a metaphorical one. The metaphorical impediment was slowly being chipped away as extramuros development began and the paseos and alamedas served to beautify and make the areas outside of the walls more attractive. In effect, westward development before demolition of the walls contained two competing agendas. The first was the (yet again) symbolic reinforcement of colonial rule *vís a* *vís* the expansion of a new, modern city outside of the walls, while the second was the potential creation of a criollo third space residing in the new, modern spaces of the city.

The push by the colonial government to standardize the neighborhood of Jesús María that would so dramatically impact the lives of the urban underclass in the wake of the 1828 fire came at the heels of the process of intra and extramuros inversion, when criollos were an increasing factor in city politics, and at the end of the demographic transformations occurring in and around Havana. Fifty-two years after the Marqués de la Torre had prompted a demographic reorganization of the city and its extramuros neighborhoods with the ban on guano construction, Governor Vives was now proposing yet another measure that would

have a dramatic impact on the everyday lives of the primarily working-class, urban, and non-white residents of Jesús María. By 1810, the neighborhood had expanded to contain approximately 11,605 residents, making it the second largest barrio of the extramuros, second only to the neighborhood of La Salud, the largest enclave of predominately working-class and non-white habaneros residing outside of the city walls.¹⁰⁴

While the fire of 1828 destroyed most of the homes of Jesús María's residents and created a large indigent population, efforts to rebuild in the wake of the fire were nonetheless articulated through former residents' testimonies. The proposal by Vives, however, prohibited such efforts and went so far as to propose that the remaining homes be demolished in order to standardize the neighborhood and bring it up to code with the rest of Havana and the new developments of the extramuros. In effect, the order to prohibit rebuilding created an instant population of indigents that, given the existing intramuro restrictions on building structures, relegated them further into the urban periphery.¹⁰⁵ The move also created a population of urban squatters, as many of the residents of Jesús María simply relocated elsewhere along the walls on makeshift, illegal homes and lots.

While the colonial government's actions with relation to Jesús María may have been unpopular with residents of the former neighborhood, they did not come as a great surprise to many, who chose to openly criticize the colonial authorities. During the fire that destroyed their neighborhood, several of the residents of Jesús María sharply noted the lethargic response of colonial officials during the first critical hours of the blaze. In a poem eulogizing the event and its casualties, one resident complained that colonial officials should have been

¹⁰⁴ Humboldt, *Ensayo político sobre la isla de Cuba*, 17-18.

¹⁰⁵ Juan M. Chailloux Cardona, "Síntesis histórico de la vivienda popular: los horrores del solar habanero" (Universidad de la Habana, 1945).

quicker to arrive to assess the destruction of the situation.¹⁰⁶ The suspicious origins of the fire and the response of city officials and neighborhood residents to one another illustrates the larger phenomenon unfolding within the politics of nineteenth-century urban expansion as marked by the tensions of two influential habanero constituencies, the colonial government and affluent criollos, which stood to drastically impact the available space of the lower classes.

The fire that destroyed Jesús María in 1828 was by no means the first of its kind to affect the working-class and marginal enclaves of the extramuros. Jesús María had suffered damages from several others; for example in 1825, and before that in 1802. At the height of the “space wars” occurring around Havana, fire had been a constant threat affecting many of the extramuros neighborhoods, spreading easily among guano homes and more prevalent in the area perhaps due to the lack of building restrictions such as those that existed within the intramuros which prohibited guano construction. Other neighborhoods, however, situated in equally advantageous areas outside of the walls suffered similar fates during the first decades of the nineteenth century. In 1802, La Salud, located next to the military installations adjacent to the city walls, was almost entirely destroyed by fire.¹⁰⁷ Only eight years later, however, the neighborhood had regained most of its inhabitants and had been rebuilt to become the largest barrio outside of Havana with 28,419 inhabitants (in 1810, Havana proper was approximated at 42,805 residents), most of whom made up the city’s urban underclasses.¹⁰⁸ In light of the fire and subsequent rebuilding in La Salud, the ordinances

¹⁰⁶ S. M. “Incendio acaecido en el barrio de Jesús María el día 11 de febrero de este año,” 4.

¹⁰⁷ Humboldt, *Ensayo político sobre la isla de Cuba*, 15.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 17-18.

proposed by Vives may have stemmed from a fear that Jesús María would embark upon a similar path, permanently altering the potential for the westward trajectory of an urbane Havana. What the new ordinances against rebuilding represented was a strategic move to order the extramuros, taken in light of the new developments that had already proved successful in initiating the westward expansion of the city.

The drive to order urban life was visible in other spheres of Cuban life. Between 1818 and 1868, the accountability of the colonial government increased with meticulous records of the island's residents. For example, census records, statistics, and maps that carefully recorded individual areas of the country and its inhabitants boomed in production.¹⁰⁹ This, too, was the era in which the quintessential Cuban writers, thinkers and philosophers boomed—criollos especially, and in Havana mostly. Men like Saco and Del Monte in philosophy, whereas in cartography Garneray, LaPonte, and Landaluze, and in the literary arts Plácido, Villaverde and Heredia all articulated an overarching “Cuban condition” that pitted the suagar and urban oligarchies with an urban rhetoric of expansion and development. This “golden age” of careful notation also allowed the colonial government to regulate and more carefully extend its authority over the different aspects of Cuban life.

Miguel Tacón and Order in Havana

During the administration of Miguel Tacón (1834-1838), several measures were enacted that stood to uniquely affect urban life in Havana. First, steps were taken to counter the negative view of the intramuros and revitalize it into the elite area it had once been. For example, despite deteriorating conditions, in 1823 the primary residences of most military and government officials were located in the intramuros but by 1834, many of these were

¹⁰⁹ Venegas, *Cuba y sus pueblos: censos y mapas de los siglos XVIII y XIX*, 86.

fleeing into the open spaces of the extramuros. Responding to this crisis, the Tacón administration openly and publicly criticized the trend towards extramuro migration. To counter it, three new buildings were constructed to house military and government officials within the walled city, thereby ensuring that the center of colonial authority would be kept intact.¹¹⁰

Measures to not only beautify, as the Marqués de La Torre had done, but *modernize* the intramuro city of Havana soon followed. With modernization defined in western, U.S. standards, Tacón proceeded to tackle the issues of hygiene and sanitation as two of the most important components of modernization. A new trash collection schedule was implemented to deter residents from dumping their waste in the open spaces of the city. And the open-air markets and slaughterhouses of the city, responsible for much of the perishable waste in Havana, were now subject to new legislation. Slaughterhouses were not only made standard to comply with the new legislation, but “slaughterhouse experts” were brought in from the United States to provide hygiene consultations. New, more hygienic and modern markets were created including that of Cristina, Santo Cristo, and the famous Plaza de Tacón. In this latter one, all private vendors were united under one market and forced to rent their space from the city, allowing the colonial government to not only more easily regulate the vendors, but extract a tidy profit for the colonial coffers as well.¹¹¹ Whereas the mercados of the

¹¹⁰ *Relación del Gobierno Superior y Capitanía General de la Isla de Cuba, estendida por el Teniente General D. Tacón* (La Habana: Gobierno Superior y Capitanía General de la Isla de Cuba, 1838), 20. University of Florida, Gainesville, Rare Book Collection.

¹¹¹ Even mule parking lots were created so that vendors traveling into the city to sell their wares would have a safe place to lodge their animals while paying a small price.

intramuros had produced a revenue of about 8,712 pesos annually prior to 1834, these now provided the colonial government with a “liquid rent” of 45,900 pesos.¹¹²

Havana's hospitals were also a constant source of concern for the colonial authorities. Of the two, San Juan de Dios and the Hospital Militar de San Ambrosio, San Juan de Dios provided little refuge for the city's poorest residents. In a report to the Tacón administration, one of Havana's doctors enumerated the conditions of the institution, including a lack of beds, overcrowding, poor staffing, and bad ventilation, which actually contributed to the spread of disease within the hospital. During a meeting of the *Real Junta Superior de Medicina y Cirugía* (Royal Assembly of Medicine and Surgery) the year following Doctor Beltrán's account of San Juan de Dios, the Tacón administration enacted measure to alleviate the problem, drastically reducing the number of deaths taking place at San Juan de Dios by nearly fifty percent during the span of four years.¹¹³

Tacón's measure to renovate Havana extended beyond hygiene, sanitation and the more intangible elements of modernization. Infrastructural changes to the city lay out were also an important aspect of Tacón's urban plan. City streets, for example, were one of the primary targets of modernization, as many of these within the intramuros existed without paving. After the season's first rains, a mixture of mud and rock would be carried away from the city and into the harbor, where authorities were concerned that the yearly deposits would accumulate at the bottom of the harbor and hinder the flow of ships into the port. A more immediate concern, however, revolved around hygiene. During the rainy season, water and mud would collect in individual streets and flood these, a condition exacerbated by

¹¹² *Relacion del Gobierno Superior y Capitanía General de la Isla de Cuba estendida por el Teniente General D. Tacón*, 13-14. University of Florida, Gainesville, Rare Book Collection.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, 20-21.

residential drainage systems that drained collected water into city streets. The lack of sewers resulted in potential health hazards to existing residents, as raw sewage and bacteria accumulated and residents were forced to wade in this if traveling afoot.¹¹⁴ To correct these conditions, the director of the new engineering corps, Félix Lemaury was hired to oversee the building of a Havana sewer system and the paving of streets, for both the intramuros and the extramuros. At the end of the project, 3,270 varas of sewers had been constructed, with the colonial government expending 100,000 pesos for the project and Havana residents contributing 16,000 pesos to the effort. The result was a reduction of sixteen percent in the number of deaths caused by bacterial illnesses in and around the city between 1835 and 1837.

Another issue only tangentially related to the hygienic condition of Havana but certainly related to its symbolic dimensions, was the issue of urban density. To combat the daily congestion of carriages at the city gates of Monserrate on the southern side of the city, a new gate leading to the paseos of the extramuros was installed. And a new promenade was also built. The Paseo de Tacón was inaugurated in 1836 and built, according to Tacón, to provide residents of the intramuros with an area in which they could "breathe in the clean and pure air of the countryside" without going too far out from the capital city. Significantly, the site was developed not as a continuation of the criollo spaces that had been built decades earlier, but rather as a foil to them. It was, according to Tacón, the transformation of a space that had been previously "pintoresco" (picturesque, or full of *local* color), into a space that would harmoniously become part of a new *urban* landscape, rather than provide residents with a rural respite from the city (as it did with the promenades built under the Marqués de la Torre and depicted in *Cecilia Valdes*). The new promenade was developed complete not only with the trees and greenery that one might expect of the Cuban countryside, but with the

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 10-13.

modern decorations to adorn its visage, such as fountains and plazas. The Paseo de Tacón thus served a multi faceted purpose in spurring the development and construction of a modern and urbane Havana. First and foremost, it functioned as a practical means of communication between the intramuros and the military fort at the Castillo del Príncipe, providing easy communication between the two areas.

As part of this process, Tacón also undertook the development of the marshy area around the paseo and, because access to the promenade was difficult given the terrain that surrounded it and the walled city, resorted to a development plan for these areas as well, establishing the blue print for the modern Havana roads such as San Luis Gonzaga, the first of these to be developed in order to provide habaneros with easy access to the paseo. The more symbolic significance of the project, however, lies in the fact that whereas the paseos of decades prior had recreated the perimeter of the walled city, strolling in the same direction as the city walls, the Paseo de Tacón instead directed its foot traffic elsewhere into areas of the extramuros.

On the heels of the infrastructural and symbolic changes that defined the urban project in Havana, the colonial government implemented the 1837 Building Ordinances that outlined the proper plan by which to direct the city onto its trajectory of urban development. Composed of 467 article, the building ordinances were the first set of legislation aimed at standardizing not only the city of Havana, but its extramuro neighborhoods as well. They not only established public highways and similar infrastructural advancements, but went so far as to propose the forced expropriation of land in areas best suited to urban development.

By the end of the Tacón administration in 1838, government expenditures on public works projects had reached 2,087,520 pesos.¹¹⁵ And amazingly, the number of square varas of street that were built numbered 173,500. Once the physical and infrastructural changes to the city lay out were complete, Tacón issued a series of decrees aimed at adjusting the behavior of both habaneros and their city government to correspond with the new, recently built modern city of Havana. In a move that was reminiscent of the Marqués de la Torre's decades prior, Tacón re-issued the *Bandos del Buen Gobierno*, which reinforced the nightly curfew and stipulated the hour in which habaneros were required to close their doors and retire indoors.¹¹⁶ To ensure compliance with the new city measures, a *Cuerpo de Serenos* (Nightwatchman Corps) composed of four brigades was created to guard against crime in the city, dispatched nightly into its different environs. He also assigned a police inspector to each Havana cuartel and uniformed soldiers to replace what he saw as a corrupt police force under the previous system of comisarios de barrio and tenientes created by the Marqués de La Torre. They were dispatched throughout the city to help combat the 12,000 men "*sin bienes ni ocupación honesta [que] se mantienen en la capital*," (without means or honest labor that reside in the capital),¹¹⁷ one of the new key markers of criminality in and around Havana.

Concern with the deterioration of the moral character of Cubans—in the form of vagrancy—was an issue of great concern to the colonial government during the political

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 6-8.

¹¹⁶ Miguel Tacón, *Correspondencia reservada del Capitan General Don Miguel Tacón con el gobierno de Madrid: 1834-1836* (La Habana: Censejo Nacional de Cultura, 1963). Colección Cubana, Biblioteca Nacional José Martí.

¹¹⁷ *Relacion del Gobierno Superior y Capitanía General de la Isla de Cuba estendida por el Teniente General D. Tacón*, 4.

administrations that preceded Tacón. Vagrancy was the issue used to illustrate the type of social conditions that prevailed among Cubans which kept the island from the social advancements and modernity proposed by the colonial government. In Havana especially, such was the concern with morality that in 1829, the *Sociedad Patriótica de La Habana* put out a call asking that Cuba's foremost intellectuals address the moral conditions of the island, with special attention to vagrancy, and recommend steps to eradicate the condition. Cuban intellectual José Antonio Saco answered the call with his essay *La vagancia en Cuba* (1832),¹¹⁸ in which he takes Havana as the case study to examine the root causes of vagrancy and in which he also recommends a series of measures for the colonial government to implement. Saco concluded that it was the social and cultural institutions of the island at the base of vagrant behavior (such as gambling; lotteries, billiards, dice, etc.), which had the potential to impoverish the population and lead them towards a life of vice. While his conclusions are notably marked by colonial notions of cultural capital, it is his recommendations for the eradication of vagrancy that most clearly convey a specifically urban notion of progress and modernity. In his essay, Saco uses vagrancy to advocate for the construction of public works projects in Havana; he argue that one of the primary problems enticing the rural population of Cuba into a life of vice and vagrancy was the lack of Havana infrastructure to support the influx of people. Specifically, he found that the lack of roads connecting the core city and the rural areas in the extramuros and beyond prevented the rural population from developing the initiative needed to cultivate agricultural products for small-scale production. The lack of markets in which to sell their goods, he argued, kept the rural

¹¹⁸ José Antonio Saco, *La vagancia en Cuba* (La Habana: Ministerio de Educación, Dirección de Cultura, 1946).

population lethargic and meant that those who did venture into urban areas did so without any means of support. According to Saco:

if there were roads... many people might occupy themselves with the transport of agriculture, and since the numbers of these would grow with the construction of those [roads], there would necessarily be more employment. If there were roads, the men who did not find comfort in one place, and for which same reason are a burden to society, might relocate quickly and without great cost to another place where they might be offered jobs.¹¹⁹

Among the other recommendations proposed by Saco was construction of an orphanage for children and charity homes that would protect habaneros from vagrants and beggars seeking to take advantage of their good will. Both institutions, however, were already in existence in Havana; the Casa de Beneficiencia oversaw both of these functions for the city. The only recommendation, then, left to implement in the city was expansion of its infrastructure, something that the Sociedad Patriótica approved of enough as to award Saco first prize for his essay.¹²⁰ Eventually, his insistence that the colonial government take responsibility for its responsibility in the social conditions of the island would get him into trouble with the administration of Tacón. Once he came out publicly against the illegal slave trade, and gave his support to the *Academia Cubana de Literatura*, a criollo and anti-slave institution of the literary arts, he went into exile and left the island in July 1834. Ironically, despite his persecution by the colonial government, his views on vagrancy went hand in hand

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 57.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 58.

with the policies of Tacón: only six months into the administration of Tacón, a new bando was issued that defined exactly who, and what, constituted a vagrant.

The further development of the extramuros, beyond its uses for pleasure or recreation, soon followed the extension of the new colonial order into these “outlaw” areas.

Specifically, the people and institutions that now fell outside of the scheme of urbane modernity articulated for the intramuros were regulated to areas outside of the walls. Most visibly, perhaps, was the new jail that was relocated from within the *Casa de Gobierno* in the intramuros, to outside of the walls at the foot of the port. The new location was able to house 2,000 inmates were properly divided according to gender, class, and race. Significant to the urbanization of Havana, too, inmates were used in work programs that drastically decreased the cost of public works projects around the city.¹²¹

The new jail was not, however, the only institution transplanted into the extramuros. The city's insane asylum was also moved to the foot of the Paseo de Extramuros, the first paseo to define the area of the extramuros adjacent to the walled city as an elite, criollo space of recreation. Ironically, the insane asylum now stood in full visibility of the Alameda's promenading affluent habaneros, as did the space where public executions were held (although according to official figures, the number of these actually decreased during Tacón's four-year administration). For the growing affluent class of Havana's criollos, the symbolic dimensions behind the colonial government's decision to move three of the city's most powerful spaces of colonial authority to the potentially “elite” extramuros could not have been easily lost.

¹²¹ Public-works expenses were kept at a minimum because of the use of forced labor, such as from convicts, as well as cimarrones and former slaves. Also, he instituted a series of fifty-peso fines for violating the new public order ordinances, such as by bathing in the sea, having loose animals in the Havana streets. Those who could not pay the fine were forced to labor on the public-works projects.

In case colonial accountability was not enough to procure the sought after response from habaneros, however, more stringent measures were also at the disposal of law enforcement officials. Tacón (re)created the bounty hunting expeditions reminiscent of the time when space was at its premium around Havana and its extramuros neighborhoods. Residents were also encouraged to become active participants in safeguarding public order, going so far as to encourage these to apprehend criminals and petty thieves.¹²² The measures introduced by Tacón to reduce crime and criminal activity in and around Havana, however had the desired effect of restoring colonial rule with habaneros, be they criollo or peninsular. When asked about crime and safety in Havana, for example, the Merlin family responded by affirming that only since Tacón had violent crime around the city ceased to exist almost completely, especially that which with increasing boldness was conducted in broad daylight.¹²³

Like the introduction of new measures, the movement of select institutions into areas of the extramuros represented not only the reinforcement of colonial rule, but also the start of new possibilities for the spaces which were opened. In contrast to the colonial intramuros, for example, the extramuros was increasingly a space where both criollos and peninsulares struggled to define, and one whose potential danger was not lost on colonial authorities.

Conclusion

¹²² Ibid, 7.

¹²³ Countess of Merlin, *La Havana par madame La Comtesse Merlin*, 349.

The early nineteenth century project of urbanization in Havana was as contradictory and tension-ridden as Villaverde's description of Havana as a city of "light and shadow."¹²⁴ The metaphorical struggle between light and darkness that Villaverde alludes to in *Cecilia Valdes* accurately evokes the precipice on which Havana was poised during this part of the nineteenth century: caught in a space somewhere between colonial and modern, *criollo* and Spanish, as well as marginality and affluence.

For city officials, imagining the city as encompassing the area outside of the walls involved the re-conceptualization of the space available in the extramuros, hereto inhabited by the lower classes emblematic of Villaverde's "darkness," and the transformation of urban space. By the end of the administration of Tacón, however, Havana had effectively ceded to the forces of modernization, seemingly answering Villaverde's question as to the direction—light or dark—in which Havana would evolve. The transformation of the city from dark to light was one that was imagined most profoundly during the critical years of Tacón, and although the condition that prepared the city for westward expansion occurred in the decades prior to the Generals' administration, they were capitalized on by his administration. Unprecedented building, road and infrastructural developments, rapidly expanding to the south and west, paved the way for urbanization outside of the walls at the same moment when the various uses of the walls—military, social, and symbolic—were rendered obsolete.

¹²⁴ There were two publications of the novel *Cecilia Valdés*. The first, published in 1839, was twenty five pages in length. The second, published as a second volume to the first in 1879, was a significantly longer undertaking and written largely while Cirilio Villaverde was in exile in the United States. This second novel evokes a city colored by the memory of exile. Here, I am referring to the first publication of the novel.

CHAPTER THREE

‘LA CIUDAD ANTIGUA Y LA CIUDAD NUEVA’:

TOPOGRAPHIES OF DISPLACEMENT, 1839-1868

The renovation of the geometric plan that is quickly underway... will mark the three or four main highways that will interlink *la ciudad antigua* with *la ciudad nueva*.¹²⁵

Ordenanzas de construcción para la ciudad de La Habana,
Gobernador Superior Civil de La Habana, Antonio Mantilla, 1861

The numerous public works projects undertaken by Captain General Miguel Tacón significantly altered the topography of Havana. Between 1834 and 1838, his administration oversaw the completion of eighteen new projects in and around the city. Some were practical measures, such as the new construction of doors to *las murallas*, the construction of sewers, and the opening of new *mercados*. Other measures were undertaken simply for the beautification of the city, such as the construction of fountains in high-density pedestrian areas. Still others, however, instilled in habaneros a symbolic sense for the power and reach of the colonial administration. The new jail located in full view of the *paseos* and its crowds of strolling *criollos*, for example, reminded these of the control that the colonial government was prepared to exercise over Havana and its residents. Similarly, new construction ventures far into areas of the extramuros effectively “claimed” these areas for the development

¹²⁵ Gobierno y Capitanía General, *Ordenanzas de construcción para la ciudad de La Habana* (La Habana: Imprenta del Gobierno y Capitanía General por S.M., 1866), 11.

projects of the colonial government and the upwardly mobile residents of the city, dispersing the indigent population even farther into the city outskirts and its rural surroundings.

To read the records left behind by the city administrators, urban planners, doctors, and architects of the mid nineteenth century, however, is to question the efficacy of the urban developments made under the administration of Tacón. In 1861, the Civil Governor of Havana Antonio Mantilla made the following statement regarding the conditions which prevailed in the city. He described Havana as:

A widespread settlement, irregular and without any fixed boundaries; long streets, tortuous and uneven, and of multiple widths, lacking pavement and without borders, in its major parts: entire neighborhoods without design, without sewers, with drains spouting infected waters onto public highways and turning them into stinking and unhealthy swamps; plazas without regularity, without trees, without *portales* here, or with *portales* there... wooden houses, deformed, dirty, and in ruins, next to new buildings, elegant and even grand, give, in effect, to he who steps onto this ground for the first time, a very different idea from the one formed of *la culta y opulenta Habana*.¹²⁶

Mantilla's speech, printed in the introduction to the 1861 *Ordenanzas de construcción para la ciudad de La Habana*, went on to further assign blame for the ever-deteriorating ideal of "*la culta y opulenta Habana*" to the city administrations who came before him. One year

¹²⁶ Ibid. , 7-8.

earlier in an address to the city council, Dr. Nicolás José Gutiérrez had cited “the lack of hygiene measures that were not thought of or taken into consideration at the outset of public works projects, and that were not later implemented as preventative measures when the population began to grow,” as the culprit behind the unsanitary conditions that abounded within Havana.¹²⁷ The lack of foresight in the initiation of public works projects, he claimed, was the reason behind the outbreaks of disease that devastated the city on an almost yearly basis.¹²⁸ When describing the poor conditions of Havana, Mantilla also alluded to the same lack of proper planning. He went on to note that the poor planning had resulted in a form of social “anarchy” as far as the environment of the city was concerned which the current city administrators were being forced to address in order to transform the city into one of modern proportions.¹²⁹

The rhetoric of city administrators, however, did not dismiss the advancements made by Tacón. Rather, they denigrated the manner in which the public works projects had isolated different portions of the city from a modern vision of Havana, leaving in its wake

¹²⁷ Nicolás José Gutiérrez, “Moción sobre los mercados habaneros, 25 de marzo de 1860,” in *Cuadernos de historia de la salud pública*, 67 (1984), 68.

¹²⁸ A contemporary of Gutiérrez, Dr. Charles Belot was also engaged in disease prevention in Havana. Much like Gutiérrez, Belot also blamed lax hygiene and sanitation as the reason behind the outbreaks of disease in the city. Interestingly, however, both doctors fixate upon the lack of government foresight in preventing disease and blame the city administration for perpetuating the conditions leading to yearly outbreaks (such as refusing to drain the harbor, the lack of sewer regulations and enforcement, and the placement of hospitals within the intramuros). Yet, the yearly death rates as a result of disease actually declined for the period in question. Belot, *The Yellow Fever at Havana, its Nature and its Treatment*. In fact, the number of disease cases began its decline under Tacón, with infections never again reaching their pre-1834 levels in Havana until the wars of independence, at which time the rate of infection would far surpass anything ever before seen in Havana. Mortality rates as a result of disease similarly declined in the city after Tacón, and continued to decline well into the mid nineteenth century, when the work of professionals such as Gutiérrez and Belot helped to focus public attention on the issue. Between 1850 and 1854, there were only isolated death cases that could be directly related to disease. Jorge Le Roy y Cassá, *Estudios sobre la mortalidad en La Habana durante el siglo XIX y los comienzos del actual* (La Habana: Imprenta Lloredo y Ca., 1913). The mid-nineteenth-century fixation on the health and hygiene of the city was therefore not the result of deteriorating conditions in Havana. Rather, it stemmed from a growing concern with the disconnect between a specific vision of Havana and the preponderance of urban pockets that failed to meet these standards.

¹²⁹ Gobierno y Capitanía General, *Ordenanzas de construcción para la ciudad de La Habana*, 9.

two distinct “cities” that existed side by side, albeit in distinct degrees of modernity. The challenge facing administrators, it seemed, was how to devise a way to *link* the two cities (a far cry from the project of *creating* a new city on which the Tacón administration had embarked) into one cohesive entity. Further complicating the process was the fact that the “modern” city and the one “*antigua*” were no longer easily identifiable: neither could be said to lie solely within the intra or extramuros. In fact, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the ability of las murallas to differentiate between the “desirable” and “dangerous” areas of the city and its respective population of habaneros had all but disappeared.

Furthermore, it was not only the overlooked physical environment of the city that concerned city administrators, but its demographic constitution as well. When Miguel Tacón transferred his duties to the new administration of Joaquín Ezpleta in 1838, he made little mention of the spatialization of the city with respect to its demographics, except to note peninsular and criollos enclaves and the rural disposition of the people of the extramuros.¹³⁰ Yet, the years in which Tacón exercised control over the island were the same that were most affected by the demographic changes brought about by the drastic increase in the number of slaves imported to Cuba. While the effects were most dramatically felt in the sugar producing areas of the island, urban areas were also affected by the swift demographic changes and the growth in the number of people of color on the island. By 1825, for example, twenty-eight percent of the slave population of Cuba lived in cities; by 1855, slaves constituted forty-two percent of the adult labor force of urban areas.¹³¹ In Havana alone,

¹³⁰ Gobierno Superior de la Isla de Cuba, *Relación del Gobierno Superior y Capitanía General de la Isla de Cuba, estendida por el Teniente General D. Miguel Tacón* (La Habana: Gobierno y Capitanía General de la Isla de Cuba, 1838).

¹³¹ Humboldt, *Ensayo político sobre la isla de Cuba*, Rafael Jiménez Duharte, *El negro en la sociedad colonial* (Santiago de Cuba, Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 1988), 11.

4,000 slaves labored in the cigar factories of the city, while another 400 worked as skilled laborers in trades and as artisans.¹³² And as the number of people of color on the island increased but the institution of slavery declined, the proportional number of free people of color in urban areas also increased. Such was the rise in number that that the colonial administration in Havana, like habaneros themselves, were forced to grapple with the social position of blacks, both slave and free, and respond to their claim for access to city space and resources in the “new” Havana. The old concerns that had surrounded previous attempts by the colonial administration to modernize the city, such as poverty, vagrancy, and the menace stemming from the rural areas beyond Havana, still threatened the colonial urban project during the middle decades of the nineteenth century; these were now compounded by the visible threat that free people of color, more so than their slave counterparts, posed to the social order that had been so carefully instituted in the Havana of Miguel Tacón.

As some of the old markers of distinction that once distinguished the social classes slowly eroded or else became obsolete (such as *las murallas*), new markers of distinction emerged. Some were topographical; for example, the urban infrastructure that developed to support a modern and hygienic city took the place of *las murallas* in designating where the areas of Havana *antigua* and the modern city now lay. The regulation of physical environment was one of the ways in which city administrators attempted to link (or rather, erase) from the topography of Havana remnants of the old and uncultured city. The result of the new measures, namely the introduction in 1855 of the *Ordenanzas municipales de la ciudad de La Habana* and the *Ordenanzas de construcción para la ciudad de La Habana* of 1861, marked the honing of the colonial urban project. If the era of Miguel Tacón had superimposed a “*política del orden*” on the city and its residents, the legislation of the mid-

¹³² Duharte, *El negro en la sociedad colonial*, 11.

nineteenth century provided the means necessary for its social as well as topographical enforcement.

The introduction of various measures, some initiated by the colonial administration and others quite unintentional, facilitated the colonial project. First, the introduction of the Cuban railroad in 1837 united Havana with Bejucal (with twenty-eight kilometers of rail) and set the stage for future passenger travel.¹³³ The inauguration of the Ferrocarril Urbano de La Habana in 1857, with animal-powered passenger lines to Carmelo by 1859 and to Cerro and Jesús del Monte by 1862 made communication and travel faster and more efficient. New modes of faster transportation also provided residents in the developing areas of the city outskirts, such as Cerro and Vedado, with access to the intramuros, thus reinforcing their ability to function as practical and attractive neighborhoods for the affluent of the city. The railroad and street car system, however, also had unintended consequences that affected how the city was governed. Between 1827 and 1847, according to Carlos Venegas, urban growth was impacted most of all by the *caseríos* (hamlets) and towns that developed next to the steam-powered railway stops.¹³⁴ The new populations and unregulated neighborhoods that existed alongside more affluent areas did not go unnoticed or unregulated for very long. In 1839, Cuban intellectual Tranquilino Sandalio de Noda proposed making all unplanned or upstart neighborhoods illegal. By 1859, not only were random *poblaciones* (settlements) unlawful, but a new measure mandated that all new neighborhoods and neighborhood sprawl be subject to regulation by the city government. In a move reflective of the regulations now in place, in 1839 Noda also helped trace the design of new poblaciones (in contradiction to

¹³³ Omar Felipe Mauri, *La primera de Cuba* (La Habana: Editorial Unicornio, 2002). The first railroad lines were used primarily for the transport of sugar, but the development of urban rail lines soon facilitated travel within Havana province and then later, with the expansion of the railroad, into Matanzas.

¹³⁴ Venegas, *Cuba y sus pueblos: censos y mapas de los siglos XVIII y XIX*, 94-98.

the claim that Mantilla would make two decades later asserting that these existed without an urban plan).

With efforts now focused on standardizing and regulating the urban environment, new designations emerged that allowed the colonial government to recognize and regulate the new neighborhoods more efficiently. In 1844, the *Comisión de Estadística* (Statistics Committee) was created. Any grouping of houses that were under twenty in number would now constitute a “caserío,” and any grouping between twenty and one hundred was to be classified as an “*aldea*”(small village). Anything over one hundred homes all grouped together would be allowed to stand alone as a *pueblo*.¹³⁵ To connect the various zones of the extramuros to the core city, in 1840 large *calzadas* (boulevards) built by a corps of military engineers were introduced. When the census of 1841 appeared, the document included the barrios of the extramuros into its census count of the neighborhoods of Havana, a move that was similarly reflected in the topographical efforts being made to link the different areas of the city to one another.

Despite the ongoing effort to modernize Havana, its lack of social and topographical order and hygiene was continuously used as leverage *by* city administrators to lobby for an increased number of public works projects. Accusations, however, were continuously leveled *at* the same government for the lack of social and topographical order as well as hygiene in and around the city, suggesting that the process of linking “the two cities” was more complicated than simply altering (or, for that matter, regulating) its existing topography. A more nuanced analysis of the cultural production of habaneros, for example, reveals that a similar process of social control as that which was occurring in the physical

¹³⁵ Ibid, 95-96.

city was also taking place in the public sphere, thus reinforcing the 1842 Bando de gobernación y policía de la Isla de Cuba and the 1861 Ordenanzas de construcción para la ciudad de La Habana. The manifestation of order and regulation in the public sphere, while more nuanced than the legislative changes affecting Havana during the middle of the nineteenth century, was nonetheless equally impressed upon the population of habaneros. It differed from its topographical manifestation, however, in one key respect. While public works projects were aimed at instituting social order by *uniting* two competing visions of the city into one modern ideal, in the public sphere social order was to be achieved by *excluding* certain sectors of the habanero population from the vision of the modern city.

This chapter will argue that the mid-nineteenth-century trend towards social control and urban regulation in Havana was in part a reaction to old colonial concerns stemming from poverty and vagrancy, as well as the new concerns stemming over the social position of black criollos. As city administrators defined the new parameters of the city, resulting in what was arguably the most important legislation to ever impact the city of Havana,¹³⁶ they also instituted a set of social legislations that similarly defined the social positions and access to the city of various members of Havana, blacks included. The trend to exclude “undesirable” habaneros (defined as such first by the colonial project and then by passage of the Ordinances) was similarly visible in others areas of the public sphere. The cultural production of habaneros, for example, parodied all those who fell outside of the criollo and

¹³⁶ See, for example, Coyula, Scarpaci, and Segre, *Havana: Two Faces of the Antillean Metropolis*, and Venegas, *Cuba y sus pueblos: censos y mapas de los siglos XVIII y XIX*. Urban historians have generally recognized the 1855 Havana City Ordinances and the 1861 Construction Ordinances as watershed moments in the city’s urban history, as both sets of legislation were responsible for radically altering the topography of Havana by dictating the trajectory of urban growth. The ordinances were passed in response to a series of events that threatened to undo the modern advances of the Tacón administration. The housing boom and unregulated growth of the extramuros, and the urban/rural sprawl that extended beyond its limits, for example, as well as the devastation caused by numerous natural disasters to the intramuros, also prompted the city council and colonial government to better regulate the physical environment of Havana.

peninsular sphere of influence but whose presence in Havana was a growing concern to city administrators. Black criollos, guajiros, slaves, and new immigrants (from Spain as well as from the surrounding Caribbean islands), became stock characters of public representations that served to rearticulate the social position of marginal peoples. Drawing on the ethnographic research of Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, as well as from the numerous written sources of blackface representation, this chapter will examine the various sides of the drive to order, and then unite, the two “cities” of Havana. It will argue that the result was a public redefinition of who would be allowed access into the modern city that was envisioned by city administrators and legislated into existence by the introduction of the mid-nineteenth century ordinances.

Black Criollos and Social Control

New developments affecting Cuba also affected city administrator’s concerns with social order in Havana. Throughout the island, vast demographic transformations had occurred during the early decades of the nineteenth century as a result of the expansion of sugar production. As sugar expanded, so too did the number of slaves imported.¹³⁷ The demographic impact was such that as the white population showed a steady percentage decline between 1774 and 1817 (from fifty-six percent of the population in 1774 to forty-four in 1827), the proportion of the slave population increased markedly (from twenty-six percent

¹³⁷ According to the numbers cited by Alexander von Humboldt, the number of slaves who passed through the port of Havana more than doubled between the first and second decades of the nineteenth century, surpassing the 1000,000 mark for the first time in Cuba. Alexander de Humboldt, *The Island of Cuba* (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1956), 218-223.

in 1774 to forty-one in 1827).¹³⁸ From 1827 onwards, however, the racial balance in Cuba once again shifted as whites regained a racial majority on the island, increasing slightly to forty-seven percent by 1846, and to fifty-seven percent by 1861. Notably, the gain occurred at the same time that the slave population was decreasing in relative proportion to that of whites, and significantly, during the same time that the population of free people of color, for the first time in Cuba, showed a steady and sustainable increase.

The increase in free people of color preceded a momentous phenomenon in the history of Cuba; the gradual decline of the institution of slavery that took place from the mid nineteenth century onwards. On sugar estates, where slavery was heavily concentrated, the disintegration of the institution was visible in the variety of workers employed; there were slaves, “paid “slaves contracted out either by their owners or by their own volition, as well as employed free blacks, whites, and chienne laborers.¹³⁹ Urban slavery similarly showed visible signs of decline. In cities throughout Cuba, a black bourgeoisie developed with access to power and capital. In Havana, for example, free blacks who were able to accumulate substantial amounts of wealth were not uncommon; in 1828, José Oñoro was a foreman on the docks and the owner of four homes in Havana and eight slaves. Similarly, José Agustín Ceballos, also of Havana, was in charge of 160 workers and owned his own business transporting goods (an enterprise facilitated by the advent of the railroad). He also owned his own home and seven slaves. Félix Barbosa was the successful owner of a funeral home in Havana. When he married, his fiancée brought with her a dowry of 5,000 pesos, not

¹³⁸ Kenneth F. Kiple, *Blacks in Colonial Cuba, 1774-1899* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1976), 121. The population of free people of color remained in steady flux throughout these decades, alternately increasing and decreasing in percentages.

¹³⁹ Duarte, *El negro en la sociedad colonial*, 13.

including a home and numerous slaves, thereby substantially increasing their wealth.¹⁴⁰ By 1844, the number of people of color in Havana who could be counted among the black bourgeoisie had increased markedly. Slaves, on the other hand, were becoming an increasingly valued commodity in both urban and rural areas; as the trade and institution showed signs of decline, the price of slaves increased; from 400 pesos in 1820 to 600 and even 700 pesos in 1850.¹⁴¹

The overall stagnation of slavery, the increase in the monetary value of slaves, and the rise of an upwardly mobile population of free people of color did not immediately affect social categories for blacks in Havana. It was not until the 1842 Bando de gobernación y policía de la Isla de Cuba was approved that social categories in Havana were subject to close scrutiny and redefinition. Until then, the trend towards order and standardization that had affected the whole of Cuba was visible in the regulation of physical environment; the number of hectares approved for urbanization, for example, by 1850 surpassed the number approved in the entire century before. In 1842, however, at the suggestion of Captain General Gerónimo Valdés, a new set of government regulations was published by the colonial government. The Bando de gobernación y policía de la isla de Cuba introduced new measures relating not only to the modernization of the island, (such as public order, health, hygiene, and public safety), but which also dictated activities in the “private” lives of

¹⁴⁰ Isabel Castellanos and Jorge Castelanos, *Cultura afrocubana (El negro en Cuba, 1492-1844)* (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1988), 153-154.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 154. This also affected the population of free people of color by raising the price that slaves were forced to pay in order to purchase their own freedom, thereby increasing the time that it took slaves to do so and limiting the number of slaves able to go through the process.

Cubans.¹⁴² Religious observance (including the activities that could and could not be undertaken on Sundays), public morality, and especially entertainment, all fell under new regulation as the colonial government attempted to legislate its ideal vision of Cuba.¹⁴³

As far as Havana was concerned, the Bando first addressed the old problems that threatened social order (poverty, vagrancy, and the extramuros), before moving on to preempt the threat posed by the upwardly mobile black population of the city. Local enforcement of the new measures became the responsibility of *comisarios de barrio* (neighborhood commissioners) and *capitanes de seguridad* (security captains) who were in charge of individual neighborhoods within Havana and its barrios extramuros. Neighborhood security in Havana was especially important. Housing was to be regulated by comisarios who were charged with the task of compiling neighborhood censuses for the district to which they were assigned. When new residents arrived into a neighborhood, they were responsible for informing the comisario of their arrival within a twenty-four hour period. When household numbers increased or decreased by either birth or death, residents were also required to report the change. Failure to do so would result in a fine of four pesos levied upon the head of household. Landlords were responsible for reporting the names of new tenants, or else be fined four pesos. Owners of lodging houses were to provide the comisarios with a list of their clientele on a nightly basis, including the name, profession, and nationality of each lodger or else suffer the higher fine of ten pesos.¹⁴⁴ Under a special

¹⁴² Gobierno y Capitanía General, *Bando de gobernación y policía de la Isla de Cuba espedido por el Esco. Sr. Don Gerónimo Valdés* (La Habana: Imprenta del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1842). University of Florida, Gainesville, Rare Book Collection.

¹⁴³ Under Article Twelve of the new legislation for example, profanity was strictly prohibited, as were any behaviors not befitting "*las buenas costumbres*," a definition that was left to the discretion of the neighborhood watchmen and security guards in each district. *Ibid*, 7.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 8.

article, those who rented rooms to blacks were advised to pay special attention to legal status and permits to ensure that these were not forgeries, or else be forced to compensate owners for any damage done.¹⁴⁵

The effort to track the composition of each neighborhood disproportionately affected the living spaces of more impoverished Cubans. Subletting, for example, was grounds for immediate eviction, whether the renter sublet the entire property or was merely renting a spare bedroom for extra money. Landlords-rights were also re-asserted throughout the new ordinances, giving them the ability to evict any tenant immediately after a second missed rental payment, or else when tenants made a “*mal uso físico or moral*” (ill use, physical or moral) of the property. Landlords and their properties were also now protected from squatters, an issue still of concern in urban areas.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, *ciudadelas* and *casas de vecindad* specially set up for the urban poor were now subject to an even more stringent regulation. Owners were required to maintain the inner portion of their buildings well lit at all times. The lanterns to be used for this purpose were to be maintained on the inner side of building doors (and thus inaccessible to the passerby) and were required to give enough light so that “from the street may be visible all that happens within, to be prorated by the residents of the rooms.”¹⁴⁷

Other measures were more specifically aimed at deterring the impoverished from settling in the capital city of Havana (as well as in the capital cities of the other provinces). A prohibition against *guano*, wood, and straw houses was once again rearticulated, this time

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 12.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 29.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 30.

at the threat of a one hundred peso fine and immediate demolition of the structure. For Havana specifically, the area bordered by *Casa de Beneficiencia* (Charity House), Belascoin, Puente de Chaves, and Canal, and extending to the harbor, was designated as the limits of the Havana población, within which the guano, wooden or straw home were prohibited, and in which any structures deemed to be *insalubres* (unhygienic), would not be allowed to remain.¹⁴⁸ (See Maps 3.1 and 3.2) Any building that was demolished due to its violation of the Bando de gobernación, if it could not be rebuilt by its owner in adherence of the new regulations, would then be forcibly sold to whoever was able to properly rebuild. Furthermore, any structure planned in urban areas must have been previously approved by the *comisarios de ayuntamineto* and the *comisarios de obras públicas*.¹⁴⁹ The Bando thus ensured that the homes of the impoverished within key areas of Havana would be demolished, paving the way for structures that more accurately reflected the ideal vision of the city. Other measures were passed to ensure the permanence, safety and “livability” of proper urban spaces. Neighborhood residents were required to contribute to a fund to maintain a corps of *serenos* (night watchmen) and a corps of firefighters in order to avoid incidents such as the fire which had destroyed the barrio of Jesús María less than two decades earlier.¹⁵⁰ An alert system was also devised to let residents know the location of the flames, and residents of neighboring barrios were required to join in the relief should their help be necessary to contain the flames.

¹⁴⁸ Gobierno y Capitanía General, *Ordenanzas municipales de la ciudad de La Habana* (La Habana: Imprenta del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1855), Ibid, 18, 32. University of Miami, Cuban Heritage Collection.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 57.

¹⁵⁰ S.M., "Incendio acaecido en el barrio de Jesús María el día 11 de febrero de este año," . University of Florida, Gainesville, Rare Book Collection.

Map 3.1

Havana with barrios intramuros, 1841



"Plano topografico, historico y estadistico de la ciudad de La Habana," in *Atlas Cubano* (La Habana: Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, 2000). CD-ROM, Courtesy of University of Buffalo, Buffalo, New York.

Like the regulation of neighborhoods and housing, open and public spaces came under a similar vigilance which targeted a more careful control of the urban population. In this case, vigilance was geared towards an old enemy of the colonial regime: the affluent criollos of the new *erxtramuros*. Strict regulation of the paseos provided residents with a “manual” for acceptable behaviors on the nightly walks. Article Forty-Nine of the Bando de gobernación, for example, specified the activities that would be allowed to take place on the *paseos* of Havana and the manner in which they should be conducted. Any *volantas* and *quitrines* utilizing the promenades after dark (when promenades would normally take place) were required to keep the top portions of their vehicles in such a manner that all passengers were visible.¹⁵¹ The article also set the rental price of the *volantas* at four *reales* per hour, or else per trip around the paseo.¹⁵² On the Paseo Isabel II specifically, a new routine for the nightly processions was instituted by the Bando. Articles Twenty-Three and Seventy-Nine, for example, stipulated the order in which vehicles should enter the paseo. The street closest to la muralla was to serve as the street used to access the paseo; the new calzadas, on the other hand, were designated to provide traffic with an exit.¹⁵³ Regulation, however, also extended to blacks employed by those enjoying the paseos. Their name, address, and legal status, along with the number of the *volanta* which they drove was to be written down daily, or else a fine of twenty pesos would be levied upon the proprietor of said *volanta* upon inspection.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Gobierno y Capitanía General, *Bando de gobernación y policía de la Isla de Cuba espedido por el Esco. Sr. Don Gerónimo Valdés*, 17.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, 25.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, 11, 23.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 26.

There were as well other “elements” of the walled city that were similarly relegated to the extramuros. In an effort to maintain the core city as an enclave of the colonial government, several establishments were relocated to outside of the city walls. At the urging of medical professionals such as Belot, new hospitals were now to be built only in the extramuros, with facilities required to undergo a government inspection, thus removing at least part of the rationale for the unhygienic conditions associated with the cramped quarters of the intramuros.¹⁵⁵

Other articles imposed regulations that affected or reinforced the environment of the city. Rural traffic entering the Havana from the countryside, for example, was to do so only through the gates at Tierra and Arsenal, on the west and southwest sides of the city. An additional gate, at Punta, could be used by all other traffic.¹⁵⁶ Significantly, deterring rural traffic to the west and southwest of the city meant that the barrios adjacent to this side of la muralla, most of which were of a working or “lower” class composition (such as that of Jesús María), would experience the full congestion of the rural traffic. The population of Havana residing away from these barrios (such as in the old colonial core) would thus be spared the noise, clatter, and smell of the traffic.

Along with space, activities and behaviors which contributed to the façade of a modern urban environment were similarly regulated. The Bando prohibited any person from taking a stroll “*sin farol*,” in urban areas. All, that is, except those individuals “*de gerarquía*

¹⁵⁵ Gobierno y Capitanía General, *Bando de gobernación y policía de la Isla de Cuba espedido por el Esco. Sr. Don Gerónimo Valdés*, 30. Interestingly, however, while the new hospitals would now be located in the extramuros, those being built would also be subject to increased regulation, including the monitoring of its physical environment. Thus, while the measure was meant to control pollution within and outside of the walls, it actually ended by reinforcing the association between bad hygiene and the intramuros and reinforcing the growing correlation between modernity and the extramuros.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 22.

y distinción,” (of hierarchy and distinction), a definition that was left to the discretion of city officials and neighborhood comisarios to determine.¹⁵⁷ While the qualifying characteristics may have been open to interpretation, certain people and occupations were specifically written out of this category. Blacks, for example, were specifically subject to the nightly curfews. Access to city space was similarly limited for other member of marginalized groups. Street vendors were required to not only obtain permission from the city council to sell their wares, but they were forced to seek permission from both neighborhood comisarios and capitanes before they were allowed to change residences, making it easier for city officials to control the social demographics of each neighborhood.¹⁵⁸ Under Article Eighty-Five of the new ordinances, lifestyles contributing to an impoverished image of the city, such as vagrancy and begging, were strictly prohibited in urban neighborhoods.¹⁵⁹ The article went on to authorize neighborhood residents to arrest beggars and deliver them to their respective comisarios, who would then hand them over to the Casa de Beneficiencia.

There were, however, neighborhoods and spaces that seemed to exist outside of the regulations. On the calzadas of Monte, San Lázaro, Luyanó, and Reina, “*tiendas, posadas, and tabernas*” (stores, lodging houses and taverns) were allowed to remain open until midnight (instead of subject to the 11:00 p.m. curfew imposed on establishments on other parts of the city), and to re-open once again at 2:00 a.m.¹⁶⁰ The more lax regulations provided city administrators with a way of policing areas of the city over which they might not have otherwise had any control. Failure to comply with any aspect of the ordinance, no

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 12.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 26.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 24.

¹⁶⁰ Gobierno y Capitanía General, *Ordenanzas municipales de la ciudad de La Habana*, 23.

matter how trivial, (such as violating the lighting regulation) would have resulted in a fine of up to ten pesos levied upon proprietors.

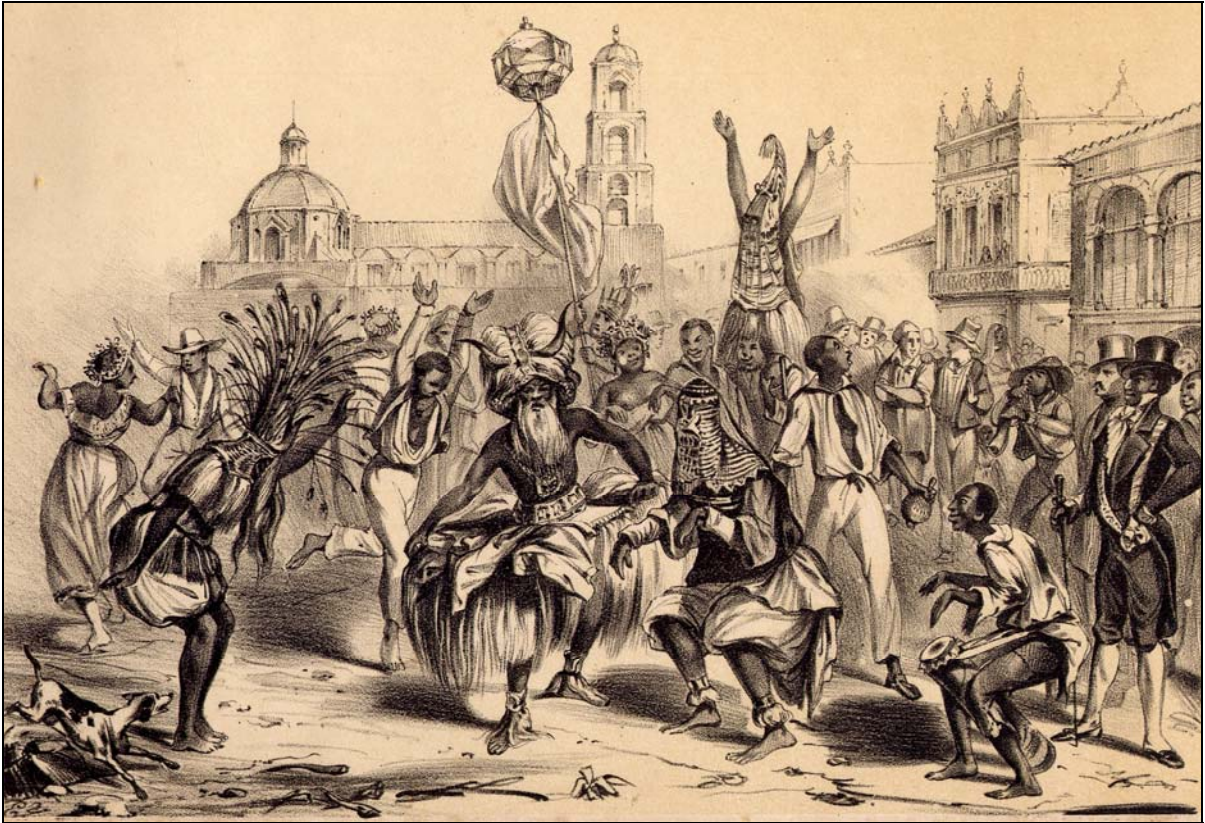
From 1842 onwards, many of the ordinances increased restrictions upon the free black population. Many of the “Public Order” articles of the Bando de gobernación were aimed at rearticulating the limited social position for blacks, made all the more critical by the fact that free blacks in Havana had always existed within a relative scope of social freedom. Article Eighty-Seven of the Bando effectively banished black cabildos to outside of las murallas, and warned comisarios to be especially vigilant of the homes in which cabildo members resided. The article also limited cabildo celebrations to Sundays and special feast days. And under no circumstances were cabildo members to venture out into the city dressed in attire that marked them as “*negros de nación*,” or the cabildo itself would be fined the sum of ten pesos. Furthermore, any part of the cabildo’s costume that could be used as a weapon—namely sticks, spurs, or machetes, were strictly prohibited.¹⁶¹ The regulation on celebration and dress would have effectively removed the most significant marker of a cabildo member as far as black representation was concerned. (See Figure 3.3) Ironically, the colonial government did not attempt to eradicate cabildos, recognizing their necessity in neutralizing the black population. Whereas in rural areas ethnic associations would have been suppressed for their potential threat of insurrection, in Havana these were encouraged as part of a larger effort to divide blacks along ethnic lines.

Popular representations of black Cuban during the mid nineteenth century typically fell on one of two extremes; as in the painting by Víctor Landaluce, they either depicted

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 25. The restriction on dress, however, did not apply on days of celebration.

Figure 3.3

“Día de Reyes (La Habana),” by Federico Mialhe



Víctor Patricio Landaluce. “Día de reyes,” reproduced in *Album pintoresco de la isla de Cuba* (La Habana: B. May & Compania, 1853). University of Florida, Gainesville, Rare Book Collection.

blacks as outside of the urban sphere by virtue of their cultural otherness,¹⁶² or else they featured blacks in positions where any threat to social order would have been assuaged. Men of color shown on the paseos of Havana, for example, often featured them as slaves or servants employed as the drivers of volantas, appropriately attired in dress befitting that of modern habaneros. In Hippolyte Garneray's earlier eighteenth century illustration, "Vista del Paseo Extramuros de La Habana," (discussed in Chapter Two), black representation is similarly regulated, with slave and servant (in this case as the volanata driver) providing the only two spaces of being.¹⁶³ The ordinances of the Bando de gobernación seem to thus correlate with the representation in Garneray and Landaluce's illustration. In a more concrete fashion, they suggest an acceptable form of "social blackness" that provided habaneros of color with the only strategy for entering (both literally and symbolically) into the walled city of Havana.

Although large sections of the Cuban Bando de gobernación had applied specifically to Havana, in 1855 the Ordenanzas municipales de la ciudad de La Habana were drafted to further regulate the city.¹⁶⁴ First, Havana was divided into six districts, and subsequently sub-divided into respective neighborhoods.¹⁶⁵ District One was "Catedral," District Two was "Espiritu Santo," District Three was "Salud," District Four was "Factoria," District Five was "Horcon," and District Six was known as "Regla." The six districts and their respective

¹⁶² The scene most likely takes place in a town square; whether it is Havana or not is debatable, but the background arches and the dome are representative of those that would have surrounded the Plaza de la Catedral in Havana.

¹⁶³ Garneray, "Vista del paseo extramuros de La Habana," .

¹⁶⁴ Gobierno y Capitanía General, *Ordenanzas municipales de la ciudad de La Habana* .

¹⁶⁵ District One was "Catedral," District Two was "Espiritu Santo," District Three was "Salud," District Four was "Factoria," District Five was "Horcon," and District Six was known as "Regla." The six districts and their respective neighborhoods significantly composed areas of the city in both the intra and extramuros.

neighborhoods significantly composed areas of the city in both the intra and extramuros. (See Maps 3.4 and 3.5) While many of the Municipal Ordinances rearticulated the measures already in effect for Cuba, there were several others that imposed new restrictions upon the city and, especially, its population of free people of color. Attire, for example, was once again a particularly important marker for delineating social class and caste. However, the Municipal Ordinances took a different approach to the issue than had the Bando de gobernación. In the Bando, the emphasis had been placed on punishing Cubans of color for a style of dress that implicated blacks as cultural others (as in Landaluce's illustration), or else identified them as belonging, as the term "negro de nación" suggests, to a nation different than the one that would be forged in Cuba. Attiring oneself as a negro de nación was reason enough to be expelled from the walled city as far as the central colonial government was concerned. In the Municipal Ordinances of Havana, however, the emphasis on dress revolved around punishing "whoever uses dress belonging to... another class or category other than his own will pay from five to ten pesos fine and will be subject to prosecution if the object of the costume should be criminal in nature."¹⁶⁶ For the city administrators and professionals in Havana who deliberated over the ordinances for well over a year, the emphasis lay in criminalizing not what stood out as "other," but rather that which attempted to impersonate the familiar, and which thus fell outside of the two polar extremes represented in popular depiction of blacks. The Municipal Ordinances also provided a stricter regulation of the space and movement of black Cubans. Not only were cabildos still excluded from the walled city, but under Article Sixty-Five of the Municipal Ordinances they were to inhabit only those houses, outside of the walls, that had been specifically designated as cabildo

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 22.

Map 3.5

Havana with barrios extramuros, 1845



"Plano topografico de los barrios estramuros de La Habana 1845" in in *Planos de bolsillo de la isla de Cuba, la ciudad de La Habana y sus barrios extramuros* (La Habana: Imprenta del Gobierno y Capitanía General por P.M., 1844). University of Florida, Gainesville, Rare Book Collection.

residences by the governor of Havana. Failure to comply would result in a fine of up to five pesos and the immediate eviction of the party.¹⁶⁷

Those black habaneros who aspired to upward social and economic mobility found their opportunities significantly circumscribed by the colonial ordinances. For example, among the more lucrative employments for free people of color in Havana were positions on the docks, through which habaneros could increase their pay and status as foremen. Joining the colonial militia, as well, provided social and economic opportunities. Both opportunities, however, were severely restricted after the 1842 Bando, which outlawed their service in the military and imposed new restriction for black employment on the Havana docks.¹⁶⁸

Despite the more rigid control of space and people implemented by the Municipal Ordinances, in 1861 another set of legislation was passed. The *Ordenanzas de construcción*, like the Municipal Ordinances before it, were aimed at filling in the gaps left in the previous legislative measures. In this case, once the Municipal Ordinances were in effect, it was the decision of the city government that only by regulating the urban environment of the city could the project to properly create a cohesive city be carried out. The intended effect of the Ordinances, according to Mantilla, was to inform the population of the “urban *medianerías* y *servidumbres*” and help private individuals to know their rights and obligations.”¹⁶⁹ The stated goal of the Construction Ordinances was to achieve the following:

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 24.

¹⁶⁸ Castellanos and Castelanos, *Cultura afrocubana (El negro en Cuba, 1492-1844)* , 156; Gobierno y Capitanía General, *Bando de gobernación y policía de la Isla de Cuba espedido por el Esco. Sr. Don Gerónimo Valdés* , 9.

¹⁶⁹ Gobierno y Capitanía General, *Ordenanzas de construcción para la ciudad de La Habana* , 19.

A concentration of population: its boundaries [of the población] will be standardized; isolated constructions will not extend to far points or those not meant to be settled; the numerous vacant lots in attractive locations will be built upon; the regulations of the public police will be better carried out, and all of this without contradicting, as truly progressive it may be, the tendency to expand the population, and not restrict the right to build new neighborhoods for those who have a rigorously legitimate right to do so, and have put together the means and resources under the new conditions of projects of such importance.¹⁷⁰

In this way, the Construction Ordinances addressed all aspects of public works projects and physical environment, from major issues such as the edification of public and private buildings, and the standardization of streets and sidewalks, to more practical aspects such as the institution and standardization of proper measurements for walls and windowsills, to the mundane, such as the proper lighting of private homes. Furthermore, they emphasized the need to “concentrate” and unite Havana into a modern entity. To achieve this, the ordinances relied upon the “modern” ideals of the legislation governing capital cities in the United States and Western Europe. They were meant to endow the municipal government of Havana with a similar ability for regulating urban growth and its existing population as was thought to exist abroad.¹⁷¹ To enable the process of regulation to continue unhindered, in October of 1859 a Royal Decree was issued creating a corps of municipal architects in all of

¹⁷⁰Ibid, 10.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 14-15.

the major cities of Cuba. By the time that the Construction Ordinances were passed in 1861, the architects no longer served as merely an advisory corps to the governor and city council. At this later date they labored beneath their own regulations, the *Reglamento para los Arquitectos Municipales de La Habana*, in order to ensure full compliance with the Construction Ordinances. Henceforth, it was the corps of municipal architects who were in charge of demarcating the lines of *solares* and dividing those that were ready for construction; and, most importantly, they were to also in charge of setting the price of urban lots for sale in Havana. They were required to live within the city and perform their duties at a salary of 3,000 pesos annually.¹⁷² Passage of the Construction Ordinances and the professionalization of architecture that went along with it was the final step in the nineteenth century process of transforming the different pockets of Havana into one ordered and modern city.

The significance of the legislative measures lay not only in the potential effects they exercised over the topography of Havana, but in the fact that it appeared to seal off any alternate nodes of urban possibilities between 1842 and 1862. Not surprisingly, problems associated with rapid urbanization were staunchly criminalized under the drive for social control. Vagrancy, for example, provides an example of this. While Saco had once recommended social reforms to treat beggars and vagrants (See Chapter Two), during the middle decades of the nineteenth century “treatment” was exchanged for criminalization, especially with regards to people of color. In 1844, for example, a census was taken of all free colored men in Cuba who could not provide proof of residence, employment, or other means of livelihood. These were to be brought in front of a vagrancy tribunal and sentenced

¹⁷² Gobierno y Capitanía General, *Reglamento para los Arquitectos Municipales de La Habana* (La Habana: Imprenta del Gobierno y Capitanía General 1861). Library of Congress, Hispanic Reading Room.

as criminals.¹⁷³ In 1857, under the direction of Captain General José de la Concha, vagrancy was further criminalized with the construction of two “correctional facilities,” one in each Department of Cuba, built especially to house vagrants.¹⁷⁴

Despite strict government regulation, habaneros in urban areas nonetheless found means to escape the scrutiny of the colonial government. Celebrated anthropologist Fernando Ortiz conducted extensive ethnographic work into what he termed “*el hampa afrocubana*,” or the criminal underworld of a particular sector of black habaneros. In *Los negros curros*, Ortiz describes the evolution of a specifically urban, hybrid culture that flourished in Havana from the late 1830s through the middle of the nineteenth century, whose members, most of whom were black habaneros, were commonly known as *negros curros*.¹⁷⁵ While not part of the criminal underworld that Ortiz would go on to later describe in *Los negros brujos*,¹⁷⁶ they nonetheless posed a threat to the social structure of Havana. The fact that they did not conform to the polar representations of blacks in Havana in popular depictions (such as in Landaluce or Garneray’s portrayals) meant that they existed in a space beyond the social control of the legislation being passed. These spaces were confined to areas of the city previously discussed as the working-class enclaves located outside of las murrallas: Jesús María, Regla, Guanabacoa, and Marianao, among the most popular.

In *Los negros curros*, Ortiz situates curro subculture in historical perspective by locating him within the national developments of Cuba. That is, he sees the evolution of a

¹⁷³ Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies: A Comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1971), 131.

¹⁷⁴ José de la Concha, *Memoria dirigida al Excmo. Sr. Don Francisco Serrano y Domínguez, Capitan General de la Isla de Cuba, por el Excmo. Sr. Don José de la Concha*, 2nd ed, Madrid: 1867.

¹⁷⁵ Ortiz, *Los negros curros*.

¹⁷⁶ Ortiz, *Los negros brujos*.

black “criminal” underworld as a response to colonial rule and the mid-nineteenth-century expansion of the institution of slavery. In this respect, Ortíz argues that the defining characteristic of the *curro* was precisely his free and urban status, developed as a foil to his slave “counterpart” more rigidly controlled by the colonial government in rural areas of the country as well as within the sphere of urban slavery. According to Ortíz, “*el hampa*” in Havana thus constituted a free space for Cubans of color that was somewhat akin to the *cimarron* enclaves of rural areas.

While the national importance noted by Ortíz is indeed a significant one, there is also reason to believe that the evolution of the *curro* had local roots and similar implications. For example, Ortíz notes that the urban subculture of the *curro* was specific to Havana, and not one which was replicated in other urban areas throughout Cuba. The signifiers of their class, as well, were ones unique to the city and specifically addressed by the Municipal Ordinances. When these forbade individuals to dress outside of their class, they were directly impacting the population of *curros*, for whom attire was the primary signifier of their status. Ortíz describes the “costume” of the *curro* as one composed from both Spanish and African garb, with a flamboyant at best result. The purpose behind the attire, Ortíz goes on to argue, was to both emulate and differentiate himself from urban whites. In the visual representation of the *curro*, however (such as was depicted by Víctor Patricio Landaluce), what is accentuated is not the *curro*’s ability to emulate white *habaneros*, but rather the outrageousness of his attempt to do so.¹⁷⁷ The representation of his character in Landaluce’s print may well have been part of the response to the “negro *curro*” who, while inhabiting a socially marginal space, was nonetheless one of the first black *criollos* in Havana, and significantly divorced

¹⁷⁷ Víctor Patricio Landaluce, “Los negros *curros*,” (La Habana: Permanent Collection, Museo de Bellas Artes).

from any association with the institution of slavery in both the countryside and the city.

While his presence may have constituted an affront to the larger colonial structure in light of the institution of slavery, the evolution of his character in the habanero public sphere also reflects a clear concern with the social status of black habaneros. Long after his disappearance, for example, his character was sublimated into the realm of popular representation, where he was appropriately re-written to reflect the politics of the urban project and where any threat to the order of the city could be thus assuaged.

Markers of Distinction

Ortíz credits the historical memory of the curro for influencing the production of black representation in mid nineteenth century Cuba. He writes that popular culture became infused not only with black characters reminiscent of the curro, but with those who were drawn from the stratas of Havana's urban and "lower-class" neighborhoods. Their presence was then re-written to more accurately reflect the values of the city and mirror the topographical project begun by the Bando de gobernación and carried on through the Municipal and Construction Ordinances of Havana. In order to explicate the popular culture process of defining certain peoples and characteristics as falling outside of the new public sphere, I will be looking at the development of black representation in Havana, culminating with the Cuban *teatro bufo*, a genre of theatre created as a criollo foil to the "high-culture" entertainment introduced by Tacón and dominated by *peninsulares*. Performed in blackface and drawing from a tradition of "blackvoice" in Havana, black representation alternately

used and molded the figure of the curro to define who, and what, would be allowed into the modern and cohesive city of Havana.¹⁷⁸

Theater scholar Line Real describes the Cuban concept of *choteo*, a process of ridicule that achieves its goal by inverting social hierarchies as an integral component of blackface, and specifically bufo, performances in Cuba.¹⁷⁹ David Krasner and Eric Lott, scholars of North American minstrelsy, similarly agree that a parody of blackness does not necessarily prohibit a redefinition of black identity. Rather, the image communicated is shaped and molded not only by its representation, but by the audience's expectations.¹⁸⁰ For blackface performance in Havana, this meant that the audience's expectations "evolved" from the initial portrayal in the 1830s to the latter stages of the bufo in 1868, the same time period during which the city was undergoing its legislative drive for order. At the same time that writers and audiences were working through the drive for social order in Havana, they were molding a representation of blackness that, while not meant to be a "true" depiction, was nonetheless shaped by the shift in what habaneros would have recognized as "black."

The episode of the teatro bufo which has come to define its historical legacy occurred during the summer of 1869. At the Teatro Villanueva in Havana, a diverse group of theatergoers were gathered for a performance of *Los Negros Catedráticos* (*The Black Professors*) a play which was being performed in the bufo custom of blackface. There was an outbreak of violence when one of the actors improvised in his performance by crying out "long live the

¹⁷⁸ Under Tacón, opera became the entertainment of choice for elite habaneros. The *Teatro Tacón* was inaugurated in 1838, specifically to house the opera troupes visiting from Europe.

¹⁷⁹ Matias Montes Huidobro, "La reacción antijerárquica en el teatro cubano nacional," *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos* 112, no. 334 (1978).

¹⁸⁰ Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

land of sugar” into the audience, a statement which was inflammatory not only because of the recognizably pro-independence slant of the comment (and the genre of theatre, as bufo performances were recognizably criollo events). Theater performances required approval from the colonial censors, and improvisation was strictly prohibited by both the Bando de gobernación and the Municipal Ordinances. To make matters worse, the audience responded with a unison “¡que viva Cuba libre!” The incident continued to escalate inside of the Villanueva until the colonial guard, also present at the performance and provoked by the demonstration, opened fire upon the crowd and wounded several of the audience members. While the event is only tangential to our discussion, it is significant because it marked a pivotal event for the history of the bufo, after which it was effectively transformed into a pro-independence genre of and divorced from its local, habanero context. Therefore, in the historiography that surrounds not only the bufo but also black representation in mid nineteenth century Cuba, the incident at the Villanueva has served to solidify the relationship between it and growing momentum of the independence movement.¹⁸¹ Reinforcing that correlation is the emergence of a criollo literary movement that would go on to support the independence movement but who also used the literary arena to work through the displacement of racial categories that was caused by the possibility of independence.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ See Lane, "Anticolonial Blackface: The Cuban Teatro Bufo and the Arts of Racial Impersonation, 1840-1895", Mary Cruz, *Creto Gangá* (La Habana: Contemporáneos, 1974), Montes Huidobro, "La reacción antijerárquica en el teatro cubano nacional," .

¹⁸² The importance of race in the process of state formation has been an important topic in recent studies of Cuba. For their part, Cubans during the late nineteenth century were familiar with discourses of racial equality. These had been used as a mobilizing strategy for the black population, holding the promise of social parity for all who supported “*Cuba libre*.” (After the wars, discourse and rhetoric would similarly become important tools in the ability of Cubans of color to mobilize the idea of a racially inclusive nation and demand equality in post-colonial society). de la Fuente, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba* . However, the narrative on Cuban state formation highlights the emergence of a racial paradox in Cuban identity that occurred during the struggle for independence. As Lane point out on her analysis of the work of José Martí, the racial paradox lies in the rhetorical effacement of racial categories at the same time that race was

In the blackface and blackvoice genre from which the characters of the bufo emerged, “working through” the displacement of race involved rearticulating the markers of race itself. The process began by revisiting the characteristics developed during the expansion of the slave trade that came to define racial and ethnic difference among slaves in Cuba. The markers of racial difference were most clearly defined in written articulations of blackness. Categories were, in effect, defined by the linguistic characteristics of black Cubans. At the bottom of the racial hierarchy was the *negro bozal*, a slave whose description lies in the first edition of the Esteban Pichardo’s *Provincial Dictionary of Cuban Voices and Phrases* in 1836.¹⁸³ In it, he is described as someone who recently arrived from Africa, distinguishable by the following linguistic pattern:

a disfigured Castilian, without numerical agreement or conjugation, without hard R sounds, S or D endings, frequently exchanging double Ls for Ñ, the E for the I, the B for the V, etc.: a jargon made increasingly confused by the more recent his immigration ...¹⁸⁴

becoming increasingly important in the Cuban public sphere. Such as, for example, when Martí writes that the independence struggle has erased from Cuba the notion of “*blanquitos y negritos*.” With this statement, Martí is in effect drawing upon entrenched racial differences in order to erase difference, thus recognizing its existence in his attempt to disavow it. His use of the terms “negrito” and “blanquito” further underscores the extent of those accepted racial differences in Cuba; while “negrito” (significantly in the diminutive) would have been a term commonly used to designate Cuban blacks, Martí was forced to make-up the term “blanquito” in order to facilitate a conversation about race. Jill Lane, *Blackface Cuba, 1840-1895* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), José Martí, *Nuestra América* (La Habana: Casa de las Américas, 1974).

¹⁸³ Esteban Pichardo y Tapia, *Diccionario provincial casi razonado de voces y frases cubanas*, quoted in Sergio Bernal Valdés, *Lengua Nacional E Identidad Cultural Del Cubano* (La Habana: Edición Enid Vian Audivert, 1998).

Pichardo was a prominent Cuban scholar whose work on the Spanish language in Cuba was published throughout the nineteenth century. In his dictionaries, Pichardo compiles “cubanisms” from the countryside. Between 1836 and 1875, his dictionaries on Cuban Spanish underwent four different editions.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

By the time the third and final edition of the *Dictionary* was published in 1875, almost forty years after the original, the emphasis on linguistic assimilation in the definition of a bozal had disappeared. At the later date of 1875, the term indicated a foreign, rather than a specifically black identity, as it also referred to Chinese immigrants who had recently arrive in Cuba.¹⁸⁵ The displacement of Cubans of color by “foreigners” on the racial hierarchy occurred after the first war of independence. This suggests that that its growing momentum and its use of a discourse and rhetoric that made blacks Cubans an integral component of the independence movement significantly affected racial markers. As the possibility of an independence movement became a reality, the on-stage representations of blackness underwent a similar shift that mirrored the transformation of Pichardo’s category. But in its representation during the 1830s and 1840s, however, blackface writing and performances drew heavily from Pichardo’s initial description of the bozal; that is, the unassimilated slave of rural culture.

The trans-Atlantic slave trade and the late abolition of slavery thus provided habaneros with the initial stock characters from which to draw the negro bozal in both blackface and blackvoice. In 1838, one playwright in particular emerged as the defining voice of Cuban satire, popularizing the use of blackface in writing years before it made its debut on the theater stage. Bartolomé Crespo was born and educated in Galicia, Spain, but had followed the waves of Galician immigrants who arrived in Cuba during the middle of the nineteenth century to arrive in Havana. Although he was a peninsular by virtue of his birth in Galicia, Crespo was nonetheless politically sympathetic to the emerging independence movement in Cuba. Upon his arrival, he began work as a newspaper columnist at *La Prensa*,

¹⁸⁵ Pichardo y Tapia, *Diccionario provincial casi razonado de voces y frases cubanas* .

a Havana newspaper key in fostering the separatist struggle.¹⁸⁶ While at *La Prensa* he published a series of letters and plays under various pseudonyms and soon introduced the “alter ego” that he created in mock imitation of the Cuban bozal. His name was Creto Gangá. The name holds strong allusions to a bozal identity¹⁸⁷ and became his trademark signature in Cuban blackface.

The most famous of Crespo’s plays was entitled *Un ajiaco, o la boda de Pancha Jutía y Canuto Raspadura*, (*A Cuban Stew or The Wedding of Pancha Jutía and Canuto Raspadura*) and was first published in regular installments at *La Prensa*, making its theater debut in 1847.¹⁸⁸ The play revolves around the wedding celebration of two bozal slaves. The mis-communication that surrounds the planning of the wedding is the source of the play’s humor, but it is a humor that is contingent upon the audiences’ understanding that a bozal –and not just a slave—represents a cultural outsider in the sphere of Cuban society. For example, in a reading of the play by Jill Lane, she notes that the name of one particular bozal slave is transformed into various mutations—from Alfonso to Idelfonso, to Lifonso, and then Alifonso—with the effect that by the end even Alfonso himself is no longer able to properly pronounce his own name.¹⁸⁹

The strategy of the play is to utilize the distinctly different language, dialect, and accents of African slaves who were recently forced into bondage and ridicule them for their inability to grasp Cuban culture, while at the same time poking fun at the society in which

¹⁸⁶ Cruz, *Creto Gangá* .

¹⁸⁷ Isabel Castelanos and Jorge Castellanos, "The Geographic, Ethnographic, and Linguistic Roots of Cuban Blacks," *Cuban Studies* 17 (1987).

¹⁸⁸ Cruz, *Creto Gangá* , 94. Crespo’s blackface contributions were so regular, in fact, that in 1848 *La Prensa* (where the “real” Crespo was working) gave Creto Gangá an official position as a writer.

¹⁸⁹ Lane, "Anticolonial Blackface: The Cuban Teatro Bufo and the Arts of Racial Impersonation, 1840-1895"

they existed.¹⁹⁰ The humor of the play and its use of ridicule has been the source of its varied interpretations by literary scholars. Vera Kutzinski, for example, argues that by writing in blackface, Crespo effectively removed himself from any sort of social accountability. The “freedom” that the voice of a bozal afforded him thus allowed Crespo to articulate an early anti-colonial and abolitionist sentiments within colonial society. Kutzinski builds on the argument made by of Cuban theater scholar José Arrom, who contends that blackface allowed Crespo to openly satirize colonial slave society during a historical moment where he would have either been restricted by the colonial censors or else faced dangerous repercussions.¹⁹¹ Other studies of Crespo read his actions as a reflection of an inner knowledge or understanding of Cuban blackness, a claim in line with the literary tradition in Cuba at this time. Mary Cruz, for example, claims that “in order to cultivate his style he must have intimately known those which he represented with so much sympathy” and credits him for bringing blackness to the foreground.¹⁹² But because popular reaction to the play was laughter elicited at the expense of colonial society, the literary historiography surrounding the function of Crespo’s work has largely overlooked the double-edged sword of ridicule. Another possible reading, for example, is that by conflating foreign and blackness, Crespo effectively circumvented the discourse of racial mixing by excluding black Cubans from the emerging society. The result then was a re-writing of Cuba’s historical narrative.

¹⁹⁰ In colonial Cuba, the slave trade continued at a significant rate well into the middle of the nineteenth century, accounting for the large numbers of culturally unassimilated blacks. For an account of the numbers, see Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985). See also Pérez, *Cuba Between Reform and Revolution* .

¹⁹¹ Lane, "Anticolonial Blackface: The Cuban Teatro Bufo and the Arts of Racial Impersonation, 1840-1895", 171.

¹⁹² Cruz, *Creto Gangá* , 49.

The monologue below, taken from the purposefully awkward stanzas of “Wedding Song,” the last act of *A Cuban Stew*, illustrates the manner in which the bozal fell outside of the cultural sphere of Cubans:

Married couple: Little black most fortunate...
 Blessed white hour
 That brought him to me in this land

 The land of whites is glorious
 When good masters are found
 Mine are Christian
 And like sugar itself.

In the original Spanish, the excerpt reads:

Los casados: Negrito má fotuná...
 Jah! Bindita hora branco
 Me lo traé neta tierra.

 La tierra branco son groria
 Cuando se jall amo güeno.
 Jah! La mio son critiano
 Y como súcara memo.

In grammatically correct Spanish the excerpt would roughly read:

Negrito mas afortunado
Bendita la hora blanca
Que me lo tajo a esta tierra.

La tierra de los blancos es la gloria
Cuando se halla amos buenos
Los míos son cristianos
Y como el azúcar mismo.¹⁹³

In the short piece, gender agreements have been confused, numerical agreements are faulty, “e” sounds have been substituted for “i” sounds, and the “s” sounds from the ending of Spanish words have been eliminated. The language conforms closely to Pichardo’s definition of a bozal. Debuted in 1847, however, we also see how the play was marked by the growing momentum of the independence movement. Its treatment of slavery, for example, reaffirms the belief in the benevolence of Cuban slavery popularized in the post-independence period. It places the blame for the cruelty of slave owners in the hands of the foreign immigrant plantation owners who arrived in Cuba in large numbers during the middle of the nineteenth century. At the same time that the institution of slavery was being

¹⁹³ “Canto de bodas,” reproduced in Jorge Luis Morales, *Poesía afroantillana y negrista* (Río Piedras: Editorial Universitaria Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1981). I choose to translate the meaning of the poem into English, instead of trying to do a literal translation that would amount to a minstrelsing of the original Spanish. It would be impossible to capture both the literal meaning of the words as well as the author’s attempt to phonetically approximate the speech of the bozal.

disavowed, its history was being re-written as benevolent when compared to that of other slave societies. The words from “Wedding Song” spoken by the bozal slaves assure slavery a benign place in the historical memory of the nation even as it creates the image of an institution out of place in the emerging society.

Ironically, the construction of black Cubans as cultural “others” by virtue of their slave status was in poignant contrast with the simultaneous attempt to portray all Cubans—blacks and slaves included—as part of a newly emerging society in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Imbued with the beginning of this early nationalism, the name of the play itself, “un ajiaco,” or “stew” serves as a metaphor for the racial mixing that Fernando Ortíz later coined in his ethnographies.¹⁹⁴ The “stew” is one concocted through the array of “harmonious” relationships between the vastly different characters—bozales, Cubans, peasants, and Caribbean islanders.

While the bozal was used as a medium to poke fun at the strange and the foreign, he also reflected an attempt to position a certain form of blackness outside of acceptable forms of habanero (as well as Cuban). As racial categories were being redefined as a result of the constant influx of slaves, Cubans began to define unassimilated slaves as lying outside of the Cuban sphere. For example, the words of an Oriente colonial official illustrates that the threat to the colonial social order did not come from the mass of slaves laboring on Cuban plantations:

There is little to fear from the *negro bozales* because of their grand stupidity,
but the [*negros*] criollos who by and large know how to read and write, and

¹⁹⁴ Fernando Ortíz, *Ensayos etnográficos* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1984).

who are in possession of trades and arts, and among whom there are many who are the owners of large amounts of capital... [they may] deliver the final and perhaps irreversible blow.¹⁹⁵

While the bozal may have functioned as an early form of exclusion from the discourse of racial mixing, where language and culture were becoming instrumental markers of Cuban identity, his slave character is not the one most significantly excluded from this early exercise in nation building in performance comedies and blackvoice writing. Other elements, more in line with the aspirations of an upwardly mobile population, were also ridiculed as unattainable for the black population. The idea that black upward social mobility was ridiculous grew out of the sentiment that it was ridiculous because it was tantamount to an aspiration towards whiteness. The poem below, “*Que se lo cuente a su abuela*,” or “Let him Tell it to his Grandmother,” was written by the black poet popularly known as Plácido (Gabriel de la Concepción Valdés).¹⁹⁶ In it, Plácido ridicules the social aspirations of one particular black Cuban by equating them with a desire for whiteness:

Don Longino is always exclaiming:

--“I am of pure and noble blood,”

With a greater passion

Than the rind of bacon,

And with his olive face

¹⁹⁵ Castellanos and Castelanos, *Cultura afrocubana (El negro en Cuba, 1492-1844)* , 56.

¹⁹⁶ From Plácido, “*Que se lo cuente a su abuela*,” reproduced in Kutzinski, *Sugar's Secrets: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism* , 86.

That indicates his African ancestry
 Deluded he proclaims
 To be of excellent parentage!
Let him tell it to his grandmother.

In the original Spanish:

Siempre exclama Don Longino:
 --“Soy de sangre noble y pura,”
 Con una pasión más dura
 Que cáscara de tocino,
 Y con su rostro cetrino
 Que africana stirpe indica
 Alucinado publica
 ¡Ser de excelsa parantela!
Que se lo cuente a su abuela.

The “don” that prefaces Longino’s name is indicative of his high standing in Cuban society. The fact that he is a mulatto is evident by the olive skin said to “betray” his African ancestry. Don Longino’s characterization as “cetrino,” however, does not only allude to his racially mixed background, since “cetrino” can also be read as “sallow” instead of “olive,” indicating the unhealthy coloring of his skin as well as the use of chemical skin lighteners.

The cynicism with which upwardly mobile blacks were looked upon is also evident in other spheres of Cuban culture. Vera Kutzinski's analysis of mid-nineteenth-century Cuban tobacco labels illustrates that the stories the labels told often featured black Cubans as the objects of ridicule because they inhabited social positions that were at odds with existing racial categories. One particular label consistently depicted representations of a black couple, dressed in formal attire, heads held high, strolling down an avenue. The caption above the picture read "*Holy cow!*" In another representation, a group of black Cubans danced to a minuet, and the caption above that label read "Come and see this!!!" with triple exclamation marks.¹⁹⁷ The images, fringing upon the world of letters via their use of short, animated narratives, anecdotes, and illustrations, would be more fully developed in the ensuing decades by the teatro bufo. At this later date, the use of language developed to play a critical role in advancing the idea illustrated in Plácido's poem: the belief that a demand for social equality was paramount to a demand for social whiteness, and therefore impossible.

The well-known "Escalera Conspiracy" and its consequences for upwardly mobile Cubans of color provides us with evidence as to the very "real" nature of reactions to the perceived threat of the social order. In 1844, the colonial government claimed that an anti-slavery conspiracy had been discovered among slaves and free people of color, supported by the black military regiments of the colonial government. The numbers published by the Military Comission created to prosecute those connected with La Escalera note that over seventy-eight individuals were sentenced to death, among which there were thirty-nine slaves and thirty-nine free people of color, and one person classified as white. Among these were several of the prominent black writers from Matanzas, among them Plácido. There were also

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 57-59.

435 people who fled into exile after mass persecutions to uncover the plot spread into the urban intelligentsia and members of the arts movements.¹⁹⁸ Colonial inquiries into the nature of the “conspiracy” and its membership led to the voluntary exile in the following year of 739 persons of color, of whom most belonged to the upper echelons of black society. Among these, members of the Havana black elite were well represented; the individuals mentioned earlier, Félix Barbosa, José Agustín Ceballos, as well as several others, were all executed or else died while in prison.¹⁹⁹ While the historiography surrounding the Escalera Conspiracy has argued that the individuals involved and the repercussions they faced were responding to a specific abolitionist or anti-colonial sentiment, it is nonetheless significant to note that those targeted for persecution were most likely members of the black bourgeoisie. While the political effects of the Escalera Conspiracy are clear, its social ramifications are more nuanced. First, the fear that surrounded the events did not simply settle the question of slavery, but also all but eliminated the artistic movement among the upper stratas of black habaneros who had successfully used upward social mobility as a theme of their work.

Subsequently, a similar backlash to the social position of free people of color in Havana is visible in the later development of another character of theater performance: the black *catedrático* (professor) who serves to illustrate that the social position of blacks in and around Havana was being redefined in such a way that it mirrored the social concerns of the colonial government as well as legislative attempts to restrict the space of black habaneros. With the introduction of this character, the emphasis in black representation shifted from ridiculing Cubans of color for falling outside of the Cuban cultural sphere to specifically

¹⁹⁸ Castellanos and Castelanos, *Cultura afrocubana (El negro en Cuba, 1492-1844)*, 332. Among those who were exiled was José Antonio Saco.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 332-333.

ridiculing urban blacks who aspired toward upward social mobility. This new representation of blackness debuted in 1868 with the opening of the play *Los negros catedráticos* (*The Black Professors*) written by Francisco Fernández and performed by the theater company known as “*Los Bufos Habaneros*.” The date is cited as the official beginning of the Cuban bufo, with performances exclusively in blackface and the popularization of this particular character.²⁰⁰ While this marks the official debut of blackface performance, the transition from blackface writing to stage performance had previously occurred with the writing of bozal speech and characters in Crespo’s work.

What is particularly striking about the catedrático is that unlike the bozal, he could not be declared a cultural outsider by virtue of being either African or a slave. The catedrático parodied Cuban blacks who, like their white counterparts, were Cuban-born, free, and urban. Like the curro of Havana, he was in effect the first black criollo of the literary arts—someone ostensibly far more dangerous to existing racial hierarchies than the Cuban “negritos” that had appeared before him. The representation of urban, upwardly mobile, free and Cuban born blacks was created at a historical moment when a new class of black habaneros, like the curros, had a “legitimate” stake in the environment of Havana and who, because of the topographical changes now affecting the city, were forced to inhabit a marginal space within it.²⁰¹

In the play *Los negros catedráticos*, the two central black characters, José and Ricardo, contrast markedly. José speaks in the lexical distortions of a bozal, while Ricardo

²⁰⁰ Leal, *Teatro bufo: siglo XIX: antología, selección y prólogo de Rine Leal*, 345.

²⁰¹ In the decades to come, with the added impetus of the growing momentum towards independence, categories of race and blackness would be at their most vulnerable, thus creating another impetus in Havana for their rearticulation by and for habaneros.

does so in the pretentious speech of a *catedrático*. The two men are the would-be rivals for the affections of Dorotea, a young lady of high social standing. The social position of José, however, makes his proposal ridiculous to the girl and her father. In a poignant remark that reflects the discourse of independence, José asks whether or not all Cuban blacks are equal, regardless of the social divisions between them.²⁰² There are important social and political ramifications of eliminating the class distinctions between Cubans of color. Not only does it function as a means of erasing difference, but it also serves to limit the means of representing blackness onstage to two derogatory categories: the *bozal* and the *catedrático*.

The lexical confusion that is part of the *catedrático*'s character, like the *bozal*, similarly served to minimize the threat that black upward social mobility posed and thus construct them as cultural outsiders. According to Matías Montes, because of the threat that assimilation posed, Cubans of color were cloaked in "lexical distortions" which functioned to reassure and assuage the fears of white elites and middle class audiences that "purity"—both linguistic and racial—would remain unattainable for Cubans of color.²⁰³ Remarkably, scholars of the Cuban *bufo* have traced the linguistic roots of the genre's mimicry of black speech and found that it is not patterned after African or slave dialects. Instead, it closely resembles the dialect of Galician Spaniards.²⁰⁴ Because the *bufo* functioned as a parody of social pretensions, the traces of gallego speech in the black characters of the *catedrático* reinforces the idea that the *bufo* was not simply assuaging racial fear, but actually defining who would be defined as a cultural outsider within the urban project.

²⁰² Francisco Fernández Vilaros, *Los negros catedráticos* in Leal, *Teatro bufo: siglo XIX: antología, selección y prólogo de Rine Leal*.

²⁰³ *Ibid*, 248.

²⁰⁴ Matthias Perl, "Cultura y lengua gallega en Cuba: acerca de la caracterización lingüística del gallego en el teatro bufo del siglo XIV," *Santiago* 70 (1988), 21.

To be sure, the purposes of the teatro bufo were manifold, and the meaning that the performances conveyed must have varied across the multi-racial, multi-class audiences and actors. The closing remarks of *Los negros catedráticos* provides the perfect example of the “slippery” nature of the performances: Dorotea’s father closes the play by asking for applause, and stating in grammatically incorrect, convoluted and confused Spanish, that he, too, is a catedrático.²⁰⁵ Nonetheless, the limited space available for social mobility as a result of the stringent Ordinances in the habanero realm, however, was the cause of the verbal disconnect and incoherency of his speech in the literary arena. The result was a character whose use of language, like that of the bozal before him, made him the object of public ridicule. While the bozal and the catedrático appear to inhabit opposite ends in the spectrum of black representation, the catedrático effectively serves the same symbolic purpose as Crespo’s creation of the bozal; that is, he functions to limit the social possibilities of free, black habaneros.²⁰⁶

By 1875, the definition of the catedrático had been codified in Pichardo’s Dictionary, where he described the popular character as a black Cuban who, through verbal affectation and pretentious speech, aspired to a higher social status.²⁰⁷ Black representation may well have assuaged racial fear as the question of independence intensified, but in its inception it reinforced the exclusionary nature of what it meant to be an habanero that would later be

²⁰⁵ Fernández, 162.

²⁰⁶ Lane argues that the catedrático symbolizes the range of black representation while assuaging fears over the displacement of racial categories that the momentum of independence introduced. I posit instead that the catedrático in fact served the same purpose as the bozal: he limited the possibility for the representation of blackness while reinforcing the outsider status of black Cubans. While independence played a critical role in exacerbating this representation, it is important to remember that the catedrático was mocked for his political aspirations; he was instead ridiculed for his social pretensions.

²⁰⁷ Pichardo y Tapia, *Diccionario provincial casi razonado de voces y frases cubanas*, 155.

communicated throughout Cuba. In other words, blackface representation defined who would be excluded from the emerging society. These were drawn from the strata of Havana's neighborhoods, or else they were taken from what city dwellers imagined their rural counterparts to be like. More importantly, they reflected the new parameters of Havana's society as well as the popular concern over the increased social mobility of blacks which, in the decades to come, would be communicated throughout Cuba via the momentum of independence.

Conclusion

In his introduction to the 1861 Construction Ordinances of Havana, Civil Governor Mantilla lauded the *policía urbana y de construcción* for the advances that they had made in public works. These, he claimed, had effectively propelled the city “*al alcance de los adelantes modernos*” (at the reach of modern steps).²⁰⁸ The modern vision of the city and its physical topography and environment, however, came not only at the expense of public works projects financed by the colonial government but also at a social cost to habaneros themselves. To be sure, the changes that took place had the potential to drastically alter the topography of the city and the manner in which it was put to use by its various residents. But on a symbolic level as well, the modern vision of Havana came into being at the expense and exclusion of various sectors of the habanero population who, in a contradiction to the ordinances regulating the city, could not be reconciled with its modern ideal.

The demarcating lines between the old and new cities and its respective populations thus ceased to be physical (as in *las murallas*) or even topographical (as in the regulation of

²⁰⁸ Gobierno y Capitanía General, *Ordenanzas de construcción para la ciudad de La Habana*, 7.

the urban environment that the Ordinances attempted to legislate) but were relegated to the symbolic. As the two cities increasingly melted into one, new markers of distinction emerged that would decide who, and how, each individual would inhabit “*La Habana culta*.”

CHAPTER 4
IN-BETWEEN SPACES:
THE DISRUPTION OF THE COLONIAL PROJECT IN HAVANA, 1863-1896

During the middle decades of the nineteenth century, Havana had been a city understood by members of the outside world as a space of modern and urbane potential. Representatives of the Crown in 1862 described the city as a capital unlike any other in Latin America, where urbanization implied modernity and the prevailing element on the island was “*el elemento civilizado*” (the civilizing element). The cultural changes that had affected Havana during the mid-nineteenth century were similarly impressed upon other outsiders. Foreign visitors to Havana described the appearance of city inhabitants as “as polished and well dressed as [those] in the most civilized cities of Europe,” with the upper echelons composed of a people who were “exceedingly refined, and well educated either in the United States or abroad.”²⁰⁹ The splendor of the city and its physical aspects were also lauded, as in the memoirs written by Samuel Hazard in which he described the newly built Calzada de Galiano, located in the outskirts of Havana beyond the paseos of the extramuros, as a “handsome paved highway, with long rows of well-built, striking looking houses, most of them with pillared fronts.”²¹⁰

²⁰⁹Samuel Hazard, *Cuba with Pen and Pencil* (Hartford: Hartford Publishing Company 1871), 84.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 68.

Many of the urban developments that invited the above commendations were made during the early decades of the nineteenth century. Amidst the well-developed physical environment of Havana and its well-established high society, however, there remained by the middle decades of the nineteenth century the pervasive issue of social spatialization to contend with. The noticeable presence of urban poverty and overcrowding within the city were perhaps the last culprits in inviting criticisms from abroad.²¹¹ Samuel Hazard noted this in the travel accounts he left behind of his visits to Havana, as did numerous others, including Rachel Wilson Moore on a visit to Havana when she described “grandeur and squalid poverty intermingled to the greatest extent we ever beheld.”²¹²

Far from being implicated by the presence of urban squalor alongside modern elegance, however, the colonial administration by the 1860s was in the process of making great strides to prepare the city for spatialization project that would eliminate the criticisms of visitors from abroad while boosting its legitimacy among habaneros.²¹³ Its attempt to spatialize the city spelled several new possibilities for the different groups invested in the habanero public sphere. For Benjamin Vallin, the Spanish envoy to Havana, the steps which

²¹¹ See Louis A. Pérez, Jr., ed., *Impressions of Cuba in the Nineteenth Century: The Travel Diary of Joseph J. Dimock* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1998); Hazard, *Cuba with Pen and Pencil*; Rachel Wilson Moore, John Wilson Moore, and George Truman, *Journal of Rachel Wilson Moore, Kept During a Tour to the West Indies and South America, in 1863-64* (Philadelphia: T.E. Zell, 1867). I found the repeated references to the high degree of social and racial amalgamation in Havana noteworthy. While the historiography surrounding urbanization in Havana has tended to view the walled city as a space of potential and possibility, foreign accounts tend to direct their comments regarding the extent of social and racial amalgamation to the area of the extramuros well beyond the date when the walls were demolished, suggesting that other developments, and not only demolition of the walls, were equally significant factor in the future segregation of Havana.

²¹² Moore, Moore, and Truman, *Journal of Rachel Wilson Moore, Kept During a Tour to the West Indies and South America, in 1863-64*.

²¹³ I am using the term “spatialization” in its original definition in the fields of geography; that is, to describe the connection between physical space and its symbolic uses. The concept of spatialization allows for the mapping of the symbolic uses of space.

the colonial administration was taking to ensure that “civilization” thrived on the island implied the possibility for political reform and the continuation of Spanish rule in Cuba.²¹⁴ When juxtaposed with the threat of an independence struggle, political reform achieved by the rationale of the “civilizing element” of society seemed a not-too-unappealing compromise for Spanish officials and some of their well-off criollo counterparts.²¹⁵

The growing concept of “civilization” also held the potential for far different possibilities in Havana. For its North American visitors “civilization” meant that the city could simultaneously function as both a familiar and exotic locale, satiating the desire for “Other” (often found within the “picturesque” customs of the city or in the more remote locations of the island) at the same time that it offered comparable services to those offered in the United States.²¹⁶ Towards this end, the steady growth of tourism that Havana experienced during the same years in which it saw the greatest extent of urban development was not insignificant. Havana received 5,000 North American visitors annually by mid century.²¹⁷ Foreign immigration, too, peaked during these same decades. Immigrants entered the country, perhaps for the similar potential of possibility, and established the mutual-aid societies in and around the city that further maximized the promise that Havana seemed to hold.

The different possibilities that “civilization” implied were often reconcilable or even complimentary. For example, the increase in tourism and foreign immigration, both of which increased revenues for the city; or the desire for political reform in Cuba instead of

²¹⁴ Benjamin Vallin, *Las reformas en la isla de Cuba* (Madrid: Imprenta de M. Minuesa, 1862), 3. University of Florida, Gainesville, Rare Books Collection.

²¹⁵ See Venegas, *La urbanización de las murallas: dependencia y modernidad* .

²¹⁶ See Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban: Culture, Identity and Politics* , 22-23.

²¹⁷ Ibid, 22.

independence at a time when the economy remained strong. The idea of “civilization,” however, also allowed for irreconcilable visions of the future to emerge among competing interest groups in Havana. For the criollo and peninsular administrators of the city, “civilization” and “possibility” during the latter decades of the nineteenth century implied urban trajectories that were dangerously at odds with one another. In this case, the schism that occurred in the administration of the city during the time period in question reflects the larger phenomenon unfolding within the political trajectory of the island; that is, the political struggle over independence that shook the Cuban countryside in physical episodes between 1868 and 1898. While the armed conflict mostly affected the rural areas of the island, that same struggle nonetheless left a physical imprint on the topography of Havana. First and foremost it did so by irrevocably altering the trajectory of urban development on which the city was poised at the outset of the decades of the 1860s which reflected the waning of colonial rule, and then and then later by establishing a new ideology by which the second phase of urbanization in Havana would be carried out well into the first decades of the twentieth century.²¹⁸

On the Verge of Possibilities

By the decade of the 1860s, Havana had emerged onto the international scene as a city of “diaphanous light,”²¹⁹ its role as the civilizing agent of the island already having been well established during the decades of the mid nineteenth century. Improvements in

²¹⁸ This chapter will deal primarily with the first of these consequences to result from the struggle over independence. The shift in ideology that occurred with the change in government administration will be more fully developed in Chapter Five of this dissertation.

²¹⁹ Roberto Segre, “Havana, From Tacón to Forestier” in *Planning Latin America’s Capital Cities*, ed. Arturo Almandoz, 197 (New York: Routledge, 2002), 200.

notation, census-taking, and cartography had allowed the colonial government to exert a new-found amount of control over the island and its population such as had never before existed.²²⁰ Adding to the overall sense of growth and prosperity were the strides that the colonial government had made in developing the city. Between 1850 and 1862, more hectares were approved for urbanization than had been urbanized during the entire century prior.²²¹ The area of the extramuros, where much of this new development had taken place, now far surpassed that of the city proper. By 1860, the population outside the walls had reached 122,730, compared with the 46,445 inhabitants that the intramuros was able to house.²²² While areas of the extramuros were now well-established middle-class enclaves as opposed to the havens for the urban poor that they had been in decades prior, the demographics of the city were once again in flux. The results were the flaring of spatial tensions in and around Havana, albeit this time for political reasons. Peninsulares, for example, were arriving in vast numbers during the mid nineteenth century, and continued to do so throughout the latter decades of the same century despite the increased political tensions between Cuba and Spain. By 1860, immigration numbers from Spain totaled 100,000. And between 1868 and 1894, despite the reality of war, another 400,000 Spanish immigrants would enter the country.²²³ Unlike in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century when most Spanish immigrants arrived from Andalucía, Castilla, and Extremador, the new arrivals hailed from such places as Galicia, Asturias, and the Canary Islands, causing

²²⁰ Venegas, *Cuba y sus pueblos: censos y mapas de los siglos XVIII y XIX*, 98-101.

²²¹ Venegas, *La urbanización de las murallas: dependencia y modernidad*, 38.

²²² See Segre, "Havana, From Tacón to Forestier," 197.

²²³ Ibid, 194. The significance of the new arrivals is illustrated in the previous chapter, where many recent immigrants such as writer Bartolomé José Crespo y Borbón did not share in the economic status or political allegiances of the Spanish vanguard.

a transformation not only in the overall demographics of the city, but within the Spanish population itself.

Despite the new changes that increased the potential for urban friction, several developments had already taken place during the mid nineteenth century that allowed colonial administrators to position Havana and its inhabitants for a return to a Tácon-style urbanization. First, the division between high and low cultures had been well-established by the mid 1860s. And although it remained a contested terrain, the rhetorical and symbolic exclusion of the “undesirable” members of the public sphere—urban blacks, guajiros, and the poor—had proved a process popular with habaneros (see Chapter Three). Next, the symbolic exclusion of these individuals was followed with an attempt to *geographically* exclude them from the more desirable areas of the city via the 1862 City Ordinances. In physical terms, the Ordinances defined the modern and urbane areas of the capital and safeguarded these by establishing a hierarchical system of roads, streets, and avenues which then dictated the type of functions that would take place in the different areas of the city (see Chapter Three).

Another significant step taken in an attempt to modernize the city came in 1863 with the decision to demolish the ancient city walls. Although they still served a symbolic purpose in differentiating between areas of the city and their respective inhabitants, the walls that surrounded the city proper had long ceased to provide Havana with any practical benefits. The military concern that once served as the impetus for their construction had been removed by the decline of both the Spanish and British empires, as well as by an overall decline in the ideology of conquest.²²⁴ On a more practical level, amidst continued population growth the city walls were proving to be an encumbrance to urban development.

²²⁴ See Anthony Pagden, *Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c.1500-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

As commerce grew during the mid nineteenth century, the city was becoming increasingly congested not only with pedestrians, but with merchant traffic, the majority of which entered and left Havana through the north and west gates of Punta and Monserrate. Nine doors similar to those in the illustration below were installed at various junctures along the walls to encourage the dispersal of traffic, but congestion continued to be a noticeable problem. Pedestrians, mounted horsemen, *volantes*, carts, and *carrujes* all congregated at the city gates and made congestion within the walled city a growing problem.²²⁵ The scene was impressed upon visitors during the middle decades of the nineteenth century, who commented on the difficulty of maneuvering one's way throughout the narrow and congested streets of the walled city.²²⁶

In an effort to create physical space and relieve the obstruction of city streets and points of entry, a plan advocating the complete removal of the city walls gained popularity among city administrators. The Crown had previously considered such a plan in 1839, when it contemplated selling portions of the wall in order to increase revenues and maximize space. Although the initial plan was never carried out, by 1862 the idea of demolition resurfaced as an extension of the 1862 City Ordinances and the ordering of the city that the ordinances proposed. With the timing right, the plan for demolition was finally approved in 1863 after it was supported by the director of the Office of Public Works, Cuban engineer Francisco de Albear de Lara.

²²⁵ See Gobierno Superior de la Isla de Cuba, *Relacion del Gobierno Superior y Capitanía General de la Isla de Cuba extendida por el Teniente General D. Tacón* (La Habana: Gobierno Superior de la isla de Cuba, 1838). University of Florida, Gainesville, Rare Book Collection.

²²⁶ John George Wurdemann, *Notes on Cuba, Containing an Account of its Discovery and Early History* (Boston: James Munroe and Co., 1844).

The physical demolition of the ancient city walls continued until 1875. In a symbolic capacity, the decision to tear down the walls represented far more than the physical unification of the city and the incorporation of the extramuros into Havana proper. Demolition of the walls also served to “liberate” the core city from its physical confines, thereby positioning Havana for what seemed to be yet another phase of rapid urban development branching into the west and south of the core city. The tangible effects of demolition were also several. The area of land that was cleared once the walls disappeared consisted of twenty six hectares, measuring 1,700 meters in length. In real terms, this translated into an area the equivalent of eighteen city blocks in length and four city blocks in width that were suddenly (if slowly) made available.²²⁷

Next on the list of developments set to bring the city into a new modern age was the 1865 introduction of a system of urban *repartos*, or neighborhoods. The reparto system provided an official means of designating different areas of Havana. In its own symbolic capacity, the creation of repartos helped to neutralize the potentially destabilizing effects that demolition caused in the psyche of habaneros, for not only did the reparto system advance the spatialization project introduced by the City Ordinances, but it served as a controlling force for the area outside of Havana that had once been the disorganized city outskirts. The neighborhood created in the wake of demolition was Reparto Las Murallas, so named by the architects charged with designing the new neighborhood, Juan Bautista Orduña and Manuel Portilla y Portilla.²²⁸

²²⁷ Segre, “Havana, From Tacón to Forestier,” 197-198.

²²⁸ Ibid, 197.

Heavy construction of Reparto Las Murallas took place between 1865 and 1883, a time span that coincides with the entire length of the first war of independence (1868-1878) as well as that of the interim government between the first and second wars. The political tensions mounting in the island during the period that Las Murallas was under construction not only left their imprint in its urbanization plan, but radically transformed the nature of the historical struggle over urban space. The “urban wars” against the inhabitants of the extramuros that Alexander von Humboldt described in 1828 were still taking place in the very same spot where Las Murallas was being created. Ironically, however, “*los habitantes de los arrabales*” (the residents of the suburbs) now constituted a radically different population than the lower-class residents described by Humboldt.²²⁹ “Los habitantes de los arrabales” in Reparto Las Murallas now included peninsulares and criollos invested in the growing ideology of the independence movement, and well as private land speculators looking to profit from the area. The colonial government’s investment in the reparto, too, was now much different than it had been four decades earlier. At this point in time, the potential cost of an independence struggle outweighed the benefits of a symbolic reinforcement of colonial rule, a decision that would also impact the urbanization of the reparto. Construction of the neighborhood therefore mirrored the political developments caused by the independence struggle gaining strength in the countryside, albeit in a distinctly urban and habanero way, leaving a visible imprint not only in Reparto Las Murallas, but on the overall topography of the city.²³⁰

²²⁹ Humboldt, *Ensayo político sobre la isla de Cuba* .

²³⁰ Le Riverend, *La Habana, espacio y vida* . I agree with Julio Le Riverend’s assertion that the wars of independence marked both a period of significant social and political change as well as continuity, especially for people living in the capital city, which did not see much of the armed struggle. I also contend, however, that urbanization in Havana was first and foremost influenced by the political conflict leading to the wars of independence *prior* to the armed struggle (as in the tensions between criollos and peninsulares which would

The Struggle for Independence in Havana Repartos

It is important to note that unlike the Cuban countryside, Havana was not affected by the physical violence of war as were the rural areas of the island during the early years of the independence struggle. The political struggle that led up to the independence wars, however, was one that markedly affected the people and neighborhoods of Havana. As the base of the colonial administration, political struggles were performed in the spaces of the city, and decisions impacting urban development in Havana during the latter decades of the nineteenth century were marked by the politics of independence in a way that the earlier development of Havana's neighborhoods were not.

The urbanization of El Vedado, for example, provides an excellent counter-point to the urban development of Las Murallas. The difference between the design and use of each neighborhood draws attention to the growing impact that the independence struggle had on the topography of Havana. El Vedado came into existence in 1858 when the "El Carmelo" estate was approved for parceling by the city council. The initial plan was introduced by the Conde de Pozos Dulce as a means to establish an urbanized reparto that would serve as a model of hygiene and urbanization. One year after the plan was drawn, the neighboring Vedado farm was sold and both areas were joined to create the first urban, residential neighborhood in Havana.²³¹ In its new incarnation, the neighborhood of "El Vedado"

later influence the decisions that administrators made with regards to urbanization), as well as by the ideological consequences of war. Both factors left a visible imprint on the topography of the city and permanently altered the trajectory of urban development on which Havana had embarked prior to 1868.

²³¹ The official neighborhood was designed in 1860 by engineer José Yboleón Bosque.

stretched from the Almendares River located to the west of the city all the way to Infanta Street in the east.²³²

Vedado is perhaps one of the best examples of the array of ideological influences that were exerted on Havana prior to the struggle for independence. For example, the designs of engineer José Yboleón were influenced by the Spanish designs of the engineer Ildefonso Cerdá, whose work on the *ensache* of Barcelona is reflected in the square and compact nature of the residential blocks of El Vedado.²³³ The neighborhood also exhibits similar characteristics in its aesthetic designs and in its use of space as those present in the “Garden City” designs of Frederick Law Olmstead in the United States. El Vedado was designed to contain a maximum of 160 inhabitants per hectare, leaving between thirty and fifty-five percent of all neighborhood space clear.²³⁴ When compared to the almost 325 inhabitants per hectare that the intramuros housed, the spatial differentiation would have been visible even to the casual observer.

There were also other physical markers of the new neighborhood. Streets in Vedado measured sixteen meters in width and avenues measured fifty meters. Each house was obligated to construct a five meter garden in its front yard. On the street, the pavement was tree-lined. Public parks as well as recreational areas were also planned into the neighborhood. Climate considerations were integrated into the built environment, and the direction of the day and night breezes were taken into account when the avenues were

²³² Calle Infanta served as the western boundary to the developments that had been built during the early to mid nineteenth century. The entire area of Havana that lay between Infanta in the east, and Monserrate to its west (both streets split the city in a symmetrical north-south fashion) was the area formerly known as the extramuros.

²³³ Segre, “Havana, From Tacón to Forestier,” 200.

²³⁴ Asociación de Propietarios Industriales y Vecinos del Vedado y Príncipe, *Discusión pronunciado en al acto de descubrir el retrato del Dr. Manuel Varela Suárez* (La Habana: Imprenta Seone y Fernández, 1928), 6.

constructed, so that the neighborhood would benefit from the ocean breezes. Its two main avenues, “Paseo” and “Prado,” were oriented towards the coast to allow for the breeze to cool the neighborhood, making this area of the city significantly more comfortable than the compact areas of the core city.

Although the original neighborhood plans drawn by the Conde de Pozos Dulce were virtually unaffected by the politics of the early separatist movement, further development of the neighborhood was markedly affected by the onset of the independence struggle. Without financial subsidies from the colonial government in the years that followed construction of the neighborhood, the development of El Vedado suffered from the financial fate of many of its residents, among them the most prominent members of the criollo “sugar aristocracy” that made up the population of the lavish neighborhoods on the outskirts of the city.²³⁵ While certainly well-off during the first half of the nineteenth century, the deteriorating conditions of the countryside took an increasingly harsh economic toll on this sector of the population. The subsequent standstill in the development of El Vedado mirrored a similar urbanization standstill taking place throughout Havana. The vacant lots throughout the neighborhood, designated for the construction of stately mansions, were now left bare, and were soon overrun by weeds, or else used as dumping grounds for urban waste by neighborhood residents. The housing regulations that had been specified in the original plans were also ignored as the population of the new reparto experienced increasingly harsh financial times with the full onset of the independence war. Lots meant for single-family homes were used instead by residents to house two and three families in an attempt to alleviate their economic

²³⁵ Ibid, 7.

situation, or else the portales of each home, in direct violation of housing regulations, were used to establish small businesses with which to subsidize the family income.²³⁶

After the death of the Conde de Pozos Dulce, Vedado resident Dr. Manuel Varona Suárez emerged to continue the development of El Vedado. Towards this end, his greatest contribution was the establishment of the *Asociación de Proprietarios, Industriales, y Vecinos del Vedado*, (Association of Property owners, Entrepreneurs, and Neighbors of Vedado), who thereafter oversaw the administration of the reparto. The Association established different bodies to oversee its administration, including police, firefighters, and sanitation. They also ensured that each home reflected the urban potential of the neighborhood by being properly numbered, its lots properly marked, and trees and shrubbery well cared for. As far as urban development was concerned, the association sought to expand its goals of hygiene and urban progress not only in Vedado, but throughout Havana. It initiated urban works projects that included support for the extension of the former Alameda de Paula (which would turn into what is now the seaside wall of Havana, the Malecón), seaside baths for the impoverished, and “*Centros de Socorro*” to aid those in need. Most importantly, however, in its support of the physical development of the city, the Association also served as the unofficial watchdog that ensured city compliance with the 1862 City Ordinances, relieving the colonial government of this task and establishing itself as central player in urban affairs. Their growing importance in urban affairs came at a time when the colonial government was either uninterested or unable to continue in its own position as the leader of urban development in Havana because of its more important priority of maintaining political stability in time of war. With the Association’s usurpation of urban authority in one

²³⁶ Ibid, 7.

of the most “advanced” neighborhoods of Havana, criollos were able to effectively diminish the colonial government’s claim in one of the key neighborhoods of the city.

Unlike the situation that eventually unfolded in El Vedado, Reparto Las Murallas reached urban maturity during the years immediately leading up to the struggle for independence. Mounting political tensions and the recent demolition of the city walls provided the necessary ingredients for Reparto Las Murallas to function as a forum on which different groups of habaneros could express political ambivalence while staking a claim on the “new” territory. Immediately after the 1863 demolition of the walls, for example, the colonial government replanned the three *plazuelas* (small squares) that stood at the entrance of the city gates at Monserrate. These were subsequently converted into the Plaza Isabel II, and then later, into the Parque Central. The city park covered the length of four city blocks; Prado, Neptuno, Zulueta, and San José, in what became the center of Havana. Construction was finished in 1877, at which time its “modern” adornments (such as streetlamps) were shipped in from New York to emulate those of New York City’s Central Park.²³⁷

Construction of the Parque Central by the colonial government, however, by no means meant that the space was a colonial enclave. On the contrary, in 1871 eight medical students were killed by the Spanish army for political crimes against the colonial government in the park; after their deaths, they were memorialized with garden plots in the same location.²³⁸

The symbolic dimensions of the neighborhood were further amplified by the fact that Reparto Las Murallas was located in an “in-between” space *between* those areas of the city already “claimed” for either criollo or Spanish uses. For example, to the west of Las Murallas was Cerro and Vedado, both of which had been developed with the specific

²³⁷ Zenaida Iglesias Sánchez, “El Parque Central,” *Habana Radio*, August 8, 2005.

²³⁸ Ibid.

objectives of its criollo residents. To the east of Las Murallas lay the shrinking enclaves of Spanish colonial power: the Plaza de Armas, the stately mansion which surrounded it, and the developments made by Tacón (many of which had already served as contested sites between criollos and the colonial administration). To the south of the city there remained the surviving remnants of Havana's lower-classes, although many of these enclaves had also undergone "urban renovation" that changed their use in decades prior. Furthermore, because the 1862 City Ordinances had been drafted prior to the decision to demolish the walls or construct the neighborhood, the space that Las Murallas occupied was not affected by the strict zoning laws that regulated the other spaces of the city. Therefore, because it was literally "surrounded" by so many other spaces and interests, it became a literal battleground for different interest groups.

Creating further ambivalence as to who would inherit rightful claims over the reparto were several distinguishing characteristics of Las Murallas. Unlike Cerro or Vedado, Las Murallas had not been created as a means to provide wealthy habaneros with either an urban respite from the city center or as a residential alternative to the cramped core city. Instead, the late and almost accidental creation of the neighborhood in the middle of already developed and established spaces allowed for various interpretations to emerge regarding its potential uses. The vacant spaces surrounding the four main arteries of the extramuros, Belascoín, Galianao, Reina, and Monte, housed communities of competing interests. In these areas that made up Reparto Las Murallas, the struggle over space was largely a political one between criollos and peninsulares, it was also one that held significant repercussions for Havana's lower classes. For example, in 1880, perhaps out of a growing concern that Havana would not be so lucky as to survive unscathed should a second war of independence

engulf the island, the colonial government slowly outlawed the presence of black *cabildos* from congregating next to the area where the walls had stood on the south side of the city, altering the character of that neighborhood.²³⁹

While the struggle over Las Murallas was laden with symbolic significance, it was far from existing solely in this realm. As in the rest of Havana, the use of space in Las Murallas was significantly affected by the impending threat of an independence war. Once demolition of the walls was begun and it was interrupted by the outbreak of the first struggle for independence in 1868, the monarchy quickly approved the sale of hectares in order to raise funds for the war effort. By the mid 1880s, the economic conditions of Havana were such that the colonial government was forced to sell even more land in Reparto Las Murallas, this time against the wishes of the city council who proposed instead that the area be utilized for the construction of government buildings to service the city and increase its revenues. Among its proposed plans was the proposal to relocate the University of Havana and construct a tax office. Instead, the colonial government sold much of the area to private individuals who then developed the reparto according to a new vision of entrepreneurial “urban possibility” made feasible by the struggle for independence.

With the colonial government no longer able to support the type of expansion it had engaged in only a few years earlier during the urbanization boom of 1850 (1850-1862), urbanization came to a rapid standstill when projects were indefinitely postponed. Such was the extent of the economic strain that even projects already approved were halted. The 1862 plan by Cuban architect Saturnino Martínez to create the new avenue of “Serrano” became one of the casualties of the new economic policy. The plan would have joined the Plaza de

²³⁹ María del Carmen Barcia Zequeria, *Una sociedad en crisis: La Habana a finales del siglo XIX* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2000), 77. In a similar move almost a century earlier, cabildos had been expelled from the intramuros in 1792.

Armas, in the core city, with the Paseo Isabel II in the extramuros. Construction of this avenue would have not only demolished every block between Obispo and O'Reilly streets in Havana proper, but it would also have served as a reinforcement of the modern and ordered trajectory introduced by the 1862 City Ordinances. Ironically, on a symbolic level, the construction of Serrano Avenue much like the relocation of the University and the colonial tax office, would have served as reinforcement of colonial authority in Havana.

With business interests now having a stake in urban development in the center areas of the city, a new stage of private development was ushered in. This included not only the development of Las Murallas, but the further development of already urbanized areas (as opposed to the creation of new urban repartos). Foreign owned hotels, for example, became one of the new symbols of Reparto Las Murallas. The Pasaje Hotel was the first to open its doors in 1876, followed shortly by the Plaza and the Quinta Avenida Hotels in 1879. The Roma and Telégrafo Hotels followed by opening their doors in 1880. The demand was such that by 1899, twenty-five new hotels were fully functioning in Havana.

The demand for hotel lodgings reflects more than the simply availability of land. Foreign land speculators responded to the growing business of tourism. Immigration, as well, similarly created new demands that altered the urban topography. Private hospitals and aid societies in predominately peninsular and other immigrant areas were constructed as an alternative to the medical care that was provided in Havana's already existing hospitals, the Paula and the Hospital Militar. The *Beneficiencia Catalana* (Catalan Charity), and the Asturian and Galician centers were some of the new landmark services in Reparto Las Murallas.²⁴⁰

²⁴⁰ Segre, "Havana, From Tacón to Forestier," 200.

Order and sanitation were now among the principal factors concerning the new emerging administration of the city, whether in El Vedado or Las Murallas. By 1879, a new *Junta Superior de Sanidad de la Isla de Cuba* (Sanitation Committee) was created to oversee hygiene and sanitation across the island. Based in Havana, its members were selected from among colonial government officials, medical doctors, civil engineers, merchants, veterinaries, and architects, among other professionals. Concern with hygiene and sanitation, in fact, extended far beyond the aesthetic organization of neighborhoods.

City-wide measures were enacted to ensure that the conditions leading to cholera and yellow fever outbreaks in Havana were eradicated or at least contained. In 1882 a resolution was introduced to clean the harbor in Havana in the hopes of eliminating enough of the bacteria that could lead to disease.²⁴¹ When outbreaks did occur in specific neighborhoods, such as that in Colón in 1890, these were published in the newspapers and the respective neighborhoods were quarantined to avoid the spread of disease.²⁴² Boats entering the harbor from regions known to be infected were quarantined, and passengers and their baggage were fumigated. Funeral homes, stables, and other establishments considered unhealthy were transferred to the outskirts of the city, away from the majority of inhabitants.²⁴³

²⁴¹ "Solicitud de Juan García para limpiar la Bahía de La Habana," 1882, Fondo Junta Superior de Sanidad, Legajo 8, no. 1, Archivo Nacional de Cuba (Hereafter cited as ANC).

²⁴² "El brote de cólera publicado en los periódicos de La Habana," 1867-1878, 1890, Fondo Superior de Sanidad, Legajo 5, no. 230, ANC; "Cólera asiático en La Habana," 1890, Fondo Superior de Sanidad, Legajo 9, no. 41, ANC; "Cordón sanitario en La Habana para prevenir la propagación del cólera," 1890, Fondo Superior de Sanidad, Legajo 9, no. 41, ANC.

²⁴³ "Orden vigente sobre la cuarentena de barcos," Fondo Superior de Sanidad, Legajo 11, no. 181, ANC; "Traslación de establos a los afueras de la ciudad," 1890, Fondo Superior de Sanidad, Legajo 9, no. 29, ANC; "Traslación de trenes funerarios a las afueras de la ciudad," 1890, Fondo Superior de Sanidad, Legajo 9, no. 32, ANC; "Orden de fumigación de pasajeros y equipaje llegados de La Habana," 1894, Fondo Superior de Sanidad, Legajo 18, no. 72, ANC. This trend would be continued well into the final years of the nineteenth century, when rural townships served as a "dumping ground" for Havana's sick. In Marianao, for example, a special hospital was built during the 1895 war of independence to remove those with contagious illnesses away

Still, while the mortality rates for the city had remained relatively stable during the first half of the nineteenth century, the numbers show a dramatic increase from the 1860s onward. In fact, a similar rate of mortality had not been seen in Havana since the first years of the nineteenth century, prior to the hygiene or sanitation ordinances passed by Tacón.²⁴⁴ Whether due to the onset of war or the outbreak of viruses (or the unsanitary conditions caused by war, as troops entering the city were often seen as a source of contagion), the increase in mortality rates was enough to question the efficacy of the colonial administration in Havana.

Concern over sanitary conditions extended to newly built areas in the city outskirts and its criollo residents. During the earlier part of the century, when the extramuros still inhabited a marginal space in the habanero psyche, the city's hospitals, insane asylums, and garbage dumps had been transferred to the extramuros. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the relocation of the stables and the funeral home, although not in their immediate vicinity, joined the earlier developments in providing a constant source of worry for residents of El Vedado. Ironically, while urbanization of the reparto came about as a backlash to the unhygienic conditions and virus outbreaks of the walled city, neighborhood residents now had to contend with the presence of these establishments in their vicinity. The fear of epidemics was such that even in Vedado, residents took precautions to build first on higher ground in the belief that this would provide them with some measure of protection against the unsanitary establishments of the city outskirts.

from the population of Havana. Fernando Inclán Lavastida, *Historia de Marianao de la época indígena a los tiempos actuales* (Marianao [Cuba]: Editorial El Sol, 1943).

²⁴⁴ Jorge Le-Roy y Cassá, *Estudios sobre la mortalidad de La Habana durante el siglo XIX y los comienzos del actual* (La Habana: Imprenta Lloredo Y Ca., 1913), 6.

The construction and use of space in each neighborhood visibly articulates the differences that were emerging in the new society. With the establishment of Vedado and Cerro, the urban periphery was established as a space for the criollo sugar aristocracy and its merchant classes. The core city and the area where the extramuros once stood, on the other hand, once again served as a place of marginality and dislocation; at this point and time, however, the "*habitantes de los arrabales*" were once again transformed, this time by the growing independence struggle. Peninsulares, for example, composed a large part of the newly established residents of Las Murallas. The tobacco factories that flourished in this area during the decades of the 1880s were owned mostly by peninsular immigrants who had relocated to Havana. Galicians and Catalans made up the large majority of the proprietors of the 134 tobacco factories that ringed the core city.²⁴⁵ Such was the initial integration of peninsulares into the vicinity of Las Murallas that the single presence of a pro-separatist symbol was enough to incur the wrath of the Spanish *Cuerpo de Voluntarios*, the military unit organized to control the pro-separatist strain in Havana. In 1869, the lavish private residence of Miguel Aldama was looted by the *Cuerpo de Voluntarios* upon the discovery that he was sympathetic to the separatist struggle. The residence was first destroyed and then converted into a tobacco factory.

Violence, however, was only one of the markers that colonial rule was waning. By 1867, only one year prior to the colonial decision to halt land urbanization in Havana, one of the emblematic institutions of mid nineteenth century modernization disappeared. The *Centro de Estadística* was disbanded immediately before the first struggle for independence in 1868, permanently reversing the nineteenth-century trend towards quantification and

²⁴⁵ Segre, "Havana, From Tacón to Forestier," 199.

notation. And although the census was published as scheduled in 1867, it did not live up to the standards of the previous publications.

Cuban production also declined, in rural areas especially, due to the destruction of land, crops, and equipment. The rural populations displaced by war migrated to urban areas where they competed with urban workers (and, after 1886, with the thousands of former slaves freed by the emancipation proclamation) for already scarce jobs and places to live. In Havana, 20,000 workers were unemployed. Of those who were employed, many were paid in depreciated wages or, if employed as public officials, they were oftentimes not paid at all as the colonial government itself felt the strain of the economic depression exacerbated by the war effort.²⁴⁶ The strain on resources led not only to the suspension of public works, but the suspension as well of the urban services that had previously lent the colonial administration an amount of credibility. Trash collection, urban lighting, and similar services were halted. The depression also affected some of the long-established institutions of importance in Havana. The *Caja de Ahorros* liquidated its assets, and the *Banco Industrial* and *Banco de Comercio*, for example, closed their doors.²⁴⁷

The trend in urbanization and the price of urban property in the different repartos of Havana reveals a similar waning of the colonial urban project following the Treaty of Zanjón and the uncertain decade of the 1880s. At the same time of economic depression, scarce credit and high unemployment and migration to urban areas, the price of urban property in and around Havana remained high. A two-bedroom home in Havana proper, for example,

²⁴⁶ Pérez, *Cuba Between Reform and Revolution*, 132.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, 131.

would rent for up to three ounces of gold (not scrip) monthly.²⁴⁸ Ironically, despite the increase in available housing that occurred with the development of the extramuros, and the potential of a new residential district that emerged with the demolition of the ancient city walls, the housing situation for most habaneros did not significantly improve. The number of residents looking for housing actually *increased* during the interim years between the two struggles for independence as a result of economic decline in rural areas. The solution to such a problem was the rise of single-room dwellings serving as alternatives to single-family residences, the cost of which was in the realm of twelve pesos monthly.²⁴⁹

Popular stories circulated around Havana during this period of urban dislocation (among the *renting* population) that warned against the pitfalls that such an arrangement could have. Both potential landlords and those looking to exchange landlords were painted as potential victims of the real-estate market. For the families who rented a portion of their home in order to keep up with the demands that their own landlords were making upon them were warned against the possibility of the “problem tenant” that they might encounter. For instance, in popular writer Francisco de Paula Gelabert’s short story “*Se alquila un cuarto a un matrimonio sin hijos*,” (Room for Rent to a Couple without Children) the husband and wife who decide to rent out a single room of their home are taken in by a couple appearing to be the perfect tenants. In the end, the renters refuse to stay in their designated area of the home or pay the agreed upon sum, and end up causing such an altercation that the police have to be called in to intervene.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ Francisco de Paula Gelabert, *Cuadros de costumbres cubanas* (La Habana: Imprenta de la Botica de Santo Domingo, 1875), University of Florida, Gainesville, Rare Book Collection.

²⁴⁹ Ibid, 133.

²⁵⁰ Gelabert, *Cuadros de costumbres cubanas* , 131-147.

For those seeking more affordable accommodations, Gelabert's stories point out that the move into more affordable neighborhoods may come at the cost of one's honor and respectability. In "*Las que andan como locas buscando casa*," ("Going crazy looking for a house") the protagonists are three women; the matron of the home and her two single daughters. They embark upon a search for new lodgings after being surprised by their landlord with a rent increase. What they find are not only more affordable neighborhoods to live in, but that the population which resides in these is decidedly of an ill-repute. After a series of misfortunes befalls their search, they finally give up their endeavor when they meet a young black woman residing in one low-income neighborhood who describes exactly what she has done in order to keep her affordable accommodations: the story the young woman recounts is enough to drive the other three women, who are poor but honorable, back to their more expensive dwellings.²⁵¹ The stories question whether the additional income saved by "downgrading" one's accommodations are really worth the risk that one took to get it; but the abundance of such stories suggests that the struggle over urban housing implicated the stability of social order, and with it, the colonial government that was unable to sustain it.

As rent prices remained high and a number of new arrivals continued to arrive from rural areas of the country as well as from abroad, city administrators had to contend with more pressing concerns than that of social or racial spatialization. First, not all who searched for affordable housing had the option of finding it, or of returning to their original living situation should they be unable to do so. A large majority of those without options were the rural migrants increasingly dislocated by the wars of independence who looked to urban areas in search of economic improvement. As they arrived in Havana, however, what they found were unaffordable rent prices and an increasingly sparse periphery in which to settle.

²⁵¹ Ibid, 123-131.

The political consequences of such a situation would become quickly apparent as the independence struggle waged on and the colonial government's concern shifted to maintaining political stability (by controlling law and order) in and around Havana.

Social and Political Threats to Havana

While colonial concern with public order revolved primarily around the political tension with criollos, not all threats to the public order were the result of the political divisions between criollos and peninsulares. There were other, “everyday” threats that also hinted at the unraveling of colonial order and the demise of the urban project. Even events such as the sacking of the Aldama residence and the violent repression from the Cuerpo de Voluntarios were not enough to deter most of the everyday occurrences that threatened public order in the lower-class neighborhoods of Havana. The nature of crime and criminal activity²⁵² in and around the city during the last decades of the nineteenth century reveals the different ways in which the physical city of Havana served as a public forum for individuals to enact colonial grievances, as well as reveals the tenuous hold that colonial officials maintained over both city and country.

Civil order was suspended in Cuba during the first war of independence between 1868 and 1878. In its place, law enforcement responsibilities were transferred to a newly created *Comision Militar*, under whose discretion the administration of individual municipalities was placed. When the war ended with both parties agreeing to political reform under the Treaty of Zanjón, however, civil order was re-instated and the

²⁵² “Crime” is perhaps a misleading term, as I am specifically referring to activities that were criminalized during the struggle for independence. These, along with behaviors that came to be seen as criminal, were products of a specific political and cultural juncture in Cuban history (and, more specifically, habanero history) that will not necessarily coincide with an earlier or later Cuban definition of criminality.

administration of the colonial government re-organized. Subsequently, new law enforcement bodies were created and the 1878 *Ley Orgánica de Ayuntamientos* was passed. Arguably, it was the single most influential piece of legislation to emerge from the treaty with respect to the running of city and municipal governments, including that of Havana. The Ley Orgánica transferred oversight responsibilities away from the military commission and into the hands of each municipal government. The actual powers that municipal governments were endowed with, however, remained unclear. In order to alleviate the uncertainty that surrounded the new law, in 1881 the colonial administration commissioned the publication of a government guide detailing the exact nature and extent of the responsibilities conferred upon municipal and city governments, including the specifics of what “*orden Pública*” (public order) entailed in the post-war period, and the exact manner in which certain situations were to be handled.²⁵³

Under the new government re-organization, each of the six provinces in Cuba had a civil governor who answered directly to the Captain General of the island. Each province was further divided into municipalities (who then also had a municipal governor, who answered to the provincial governor), and each municipality subdivided into various barrios that also had their own *alcalde de barrio* (neighborhood governor). As the highest ranking supervisor within each neighborhood, the *alcalde de barrio* was charged with a variety of duties to ensure public safety and colonial order. Among his new duties was the collection of *cédulas de vecindad* (neighborhood census) that accounted for each resident of a neighborhood, including foreigners and immigrants. After each *cédula* was taken identity

²⁵³ Gobierno General de la Isla de Cuba, *Guía de Gobierno y Policía de la Isla de Cuba, compendio de las atribuciones gubernativas de los Alcaldes, Tenientes de Alcaldes y Alcaldes de Barrio, con un Prontuario alfabético de la legislación vigente sobre Policía y Orden Público* (La Habana: La Propaganda Literaria, 1881), University of Florida, Gainesville, Rare Book Collection.

cards were issued that allowed residents to travel freely (and legally) throughout the island.²⁵⁴ The census and identity cards provided colonial administrators with an accurate picture of the demographics of each neighborhood, which subsequently facilitated the job of law enforcement bodies. Collection of the *cédulas* and assignment of identity cards was a serious part of the duties of each *alacade*, and the colonial government was keen on prosecuting individuals for non-compliance or falsification of identity papers, especially during the wars of independence.²⁵⁵ In urban areas, the task of collecting *cédulas* and familiarizing oneself with *barrio* residents fell on the *Policía de Gobierno y Orden Público*, who was also in charge of overseeing and maintaining public order (in rural areas, it was the *Guardia Civil* who shared this same responsibility), and it did so with the help of various other law enforcement bodies, such as the *Cuerpo de Voluntarios*, *Policía de Seguridad*, *Policía Municipal*, and the still-standing *Cuerpo de Serenos*. Each *barrio* was further patrolled by *inspectores* and *celadores* (security guards) that reported crimes and criminal activity in each neighborhood to its *alcalde de barrio*.

The government re-organization affected Havana first by forcing the incorporation of two of the rural *cercanías* into its new municipality. In what was most likely an attempt to maintain a stricter vigilance over the rural areas of the country, the colonial administration now stipulated that all unincorporated *cercanías* surrounding the major *poblaciones* of the island be incorporated into a larger unit, the municipality.²⁵⁶ Adherence to the new

²⁵⁴ Ibid, 40-41.

²⁵⁵ “Kinet Francisco Lorenzo, vecino de La Habana, por el crimen de falsificación de papeles durante la Guerra de Independencia,” 1875, Fondo Carceles y Presidios, Legajo 70, no. 22, ANC.

²⁵⁶ Eduardo Varela Zequeira, *La policía de La Habana (Cuevas y Sabaté)* (La Habana: Imprenta y Papelería “La Universal”, 1894). The 1878 Constitution stipulated that every unincorporated suburb of a large “*poblacion*” be immediately incorporated into its nearest municipality. Not coincidentally, the measure would

legislation added two more barrios into the municipal territory of Havana, which now included the core city, its barrios extramuros, and the previously unincorporated areas which surrounded it.

Despite the array of law enforcement bodies functioning in Havana, the primary responsibility for maintaining public order in each neighborhood rested with the small corps of inspectors and celadores assigned to a neighborhood “beat.” The relatively small area of the neighborhood that each team—composed of one inspector and one celador—was charged with policing allowed each of these to forge intimate and knowledgeable relationships with the residents of his assigned barrio. Potentially, these relationships could yield the necessary information leading to the arrest of wanted or known criminals. The information that inspectors and celadores were privy to, for example, ranged from the mundane, such as who was having intimate or extramarital relationships with whom, to the politically sensitive, such as whose unsavory relatives were visiting Havana, and the political leaning of individual residents.²⁵⁷

Among the hierarchy of criminal activity that concerned the colonial administration was this last category, which could be construed as political in nature. Towards this end, special regulations insured that the primary responsibility of municipal governors was the upkeep of “public order,” endowing alcaldes with the authorization to take extreme measures for the protection of public order, including the ability to suspend civil government and call

have allowed the colonial government to gain tighter control over the largely unsupervised rural zones of the country.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

upon the full force of the colonial military establishment.²⁵⁸ Reunions of any kind, as well as freedom of the press, also rested within the discretion of the municipal governor.²⁵⁹ In Havana, this translated into an immediate censoring of the press and those newspapers that were seen as seditious in nature—including ones which used the deplorable conditions of rural migrants on the Havana outskirts to point out that “real” habaneros would soon find themselves in similarly dire straits should the economic situation continue to escalate: *no solo los concentrados / no tienen carne / ya vemos que nos quedamos sin ella, / en La Habana, por los precios / escandalosos que cobra / la gente del matadero* (not only the reconcentrados / don’t have meat / we see that we are left without it / in La Habana, because of the prices / scandalous that are charged / by the people at the butchery).²⁶⁰ The newspaper responsible for printing the poem, *La Lucha*, was among the censored.

The colonial government’s concern with the political ideology of habaneros stemmed from the fear of incidents that would disrupt the political stability of the capital city, hereto largely unscathed by the violence of war. One of the glaring exceptions, however, was an incident in 1869 caused when the colonial censor allowed the performance of a bufo performance entitled *Los Negros Catedráticos* (The Black Professors) at the Teatro Villanueva. The play ended in an altercation between the colonial government and criollos which escalated after one of the actors, in character as a drunkard, shouted “*que viva la tierra donde nace la caña*,” (long live the land of sugar) into the audience, who, emboldened by the

²⁵⁸ Gobierno General de la Isla de Cuba, *Guía de Gobierno y Policía de la Isla de Cuba, compendio de las atribuciones gubernativas de los Alcaldes, Tenientes de Alcaldes y Alcaldes de Barrio, con un Prontuario alfabético de la legislación vigente sobre Policía y Orden Público*, 19.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, 20, 25.

²⁶⁰ Barcia Zequeria, *Una sociedad en crisis: La Habana a finales del siglo XIX*, 110.

recognizably pro-separatist rallying cry, responded with “*que viva Cuba Libre*.”²⁶¹ The Cuerpo de Voluntarios responded by opening fire upon the crowd.

Once colonial censors realized the potential of print publications and public gatherings to mobilize support for separatist struggle, public performances of the bufo in Havana were banned. In the previous chapter, I discussed blackface writing and bufo performances as a means to analyze the nature of urban race relations in Havana. Here, however, it is important to bring the reader back to Jill Lane’s central argument concerning the proto-nationalist agenda embedded in the bufo.²⁶² By the end of the nineteenth century, performances (those able to circumvent colonial censors) had been incorporated into the mainstream habanero cultural sphere. Their overt support of independence, however, meant that the location in which the bufo was performed was an important factor in the success—and safety—of the events. The 1869 incident at the Teatro Villanueva, one of the more popular locales of the bufo, illustrates the importance of location in the escalating competition for city space.

Until 1869, the Teatro Villanueva had been one of the unaffected places of criollo cultural life. Located in Reparto Las Murallas, the Villanueva had been singled out early on to showcase bufo performances precisely because of the criollos who frequented the establishment. Other cultural venues located in Reparto Las Murallas (as in Havana in general) were similarly divided along political lines. The Teatro Tacón, for example, was also a popular venue for criollos to showcase performances critical of the colonial

²⁶¹ Leal, *Teatro bufo: siglo XIX: antología, selección y prólogo de Rine Leal*, 347.

²⁶² Lane, *Blackface Cuba, 1840-1895*. In her study, Lane renders a more complex reading of the bufo. Her analysis centers on the paradoxical emergence of race as a central component of “national self-knowledge,” at the same time that the rhetoric of independence erased the very concept from the national agenda. She gives the example of José Martí’s when he asserts that there were no blacks or whites in Cuba, but only Cubans, as emblematic of this paradox. José Martí, *Nuestra América*, 2a. ed. (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1985).

government, while other venues, specifically the theaters of Albizu, Payret, and Irijoa, catered to the entertainment interests of peninsulares in Havana.²⁶³

The violent episode at the Villanueva reflected more than the escalation of political tensions and the onset of the independence struggle. While it was certainly rooted in the precarious political situation of 1869, it was also the topographical manifestation of that same struggle; competition for city space between criollos and peninsulares escalated on a similar scale as that of the armed struggle being waged in the countryside, with the effects marked on the topography of the city. With the onset of the war and tensions at an all time high in Havana, the co-existence of interests that had been one of the defining characteristics of Reparto Las Murallas was shattered by the colonial government's use of force. Within the strict confines of habanero politics, their actions can be interpreted as an attempt to extend the nexus of colonial rule to the west of the traditional enclave of the core city.

Like most anti-colonial incidents, the occurrence at the Villanueva was reported to the press. By colonial decree, the colonial censors were to peruse the newspapers and report criminal activity to the magistrates in order to ensure that offenders were properly prosecuted.²⁶⁴ In reality, however, more criminal accounts were reported in the press than were thereafter prosecuted by the colonial authorities.²⁶⁵ Archival records indicate that the extent of criminal activities prosecuted between 1868 and 1898 were primarily those that

²⁶³ There were also venues that catered to popular tastes. The Teatro Alhambra (closed in 1895) and the Politeama, for example, were popular with both criollos and peninsulares who enjoyed less "politically charged" performances.

²⁶⁴ Resolución del Gobierno General, 23 de febrero de 1880. Gobierno General de la Isla de Cuba, *Guía de Gobierno y Policía de la Isla de Cuba, compendio de las atribuciones gubernativas de los Alcaldes, Tenientes de Alcaldes y Alcaldes de Barrio, con un Prontuario alfabético de la legislación vigente sobre Policía y Orden Público*, 29.

²⁶⁵ Yolanda Díaz Martínez, "Sociedad, violencia, y criminalidad masculina en La Habana de finales del siglo XIX. Aproximaciones a una realidad," in *La sociedad cubana en los albores de la República*, ed. Instituto Cubano del Libro, 49-90 (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2002).

dealt with arson, homicide, and robberies committed in the vicinity of Havana and thought to have a connection to the independence struggle (criminal activity of a similar nature but with no visible ties to the independence movement was, however, was also prosecuted).²⁶⁶

The most notable omission in archival records is that of an “everyday” criminal subculture in the city. Cuban scholar Yolanda Díaz notes that proof of these “petty” offenses can be found instead in numerous newspaper accounts.²⁶⁷ A possible explanation for the government’s focus on anti-colonial activity and the censor’s unwillingness to follow-up on certain crimes, besides the obvious reason of war, is also the divergence of interests between government officials and the press. The colonial government’s decision to prosecute only those crimes that threatened its immediate survival, rather than the criminal activity of petty thieves and criminals, is an understandable one in the political context of war. The interests of the Havana press, however, were different. Newspaper editors were not simply interested in reporting the activities which threatened colonial order, but in reporting those incidents which threatened the immediate physical and material safety of habaneros. For this reason, newspaper accounts and popular stories dwell not on the fires that were scorching the rural areas surrounding Havana, or on the nature of homicides committed during the last years of colonial rule, but on the escalation of everyday “petty” crime committed in and around the city.

To be sure, petty crime was not a new development in Havana. Prior to demolition of the walls, criminal activity within the intramuros was one of the driving forces behind the development of the extramuro neighborhoods of Cerro and Vedado. The rise in certain types

²⁶⁶ Fondo Carceles y Presidios, Legajos 69-76, ANC.

²⁶⁷ See Yolanda Díaz Martínez, “Sociedad, violencia, y criminalidad masculina en La Habana de finales del siglo XIX. Aproximaciones a una realidad.”

of criminal activity between the 1865 creation of Reparto Las Murallas and the second war of independence, however, served to undermine the already unstable authority of the colonial government. An analysis of José Trujillo y Monagas' accounts as celador of the *Barrio de San Francisco* (located in the former intramuros) between 1866 and 1869, and later as sub-inspector of the Third District of Havana, and finally as its Inspector, reveals the extent to which law enforcement officials were caught between the anti-colonial concerns of their superiors and the everyday needs of barrio residents.²⁶⁸ Whereas the former was concerned with maintaining public order for the purpose of avoiding an outbreak of separatist violence in the capital, the latter was concerned with the threat stemming from an overall rise in criminal activity and the alarming growth in public crimes such as robbery and charlatanism.

As the colonial government became increasingly concerned with the extent of anti-colonial demonstrations around Havana, they were also aware that the nature of criminal activity in the capital was changing. The author of the Trujillo accounts describes the changes he witnessed with regards to the nature of criminal activity around Havana since the outbreak of the first war of independence. He described the change as one marked by an overall worsening of the city since the era of Miguel Tacón and the increase in "certain types" of criminal activity.²⁶⁹

What we see develop in the Trujillo accounts is the emergence of banditry as the method of choice for perpetuating criminal activity in and around Havana. While banditry was certainly a source of concern in the rural areas surrounding the city or in the neighboring provinces of Pinar del Rio and Matanzas, Havana saw a rise in the overall activity of rural

²⁶⁸ G.G.Y.F., *Los criminales de Cuba y el Inspector Trujillo* (La Habana: La Propaganda Literaria, 1881).

²⁶⁹ Ibid, 16.

bandits acting in Havana.²⁷⁰ The author of the Trujillo account described the new phenomenon as caused first by the different opportunities that existed for criminals in the capital; bandits fleeing prosecution in rural areas could more easily hide themselves in the busy streets of Havana. The high number of merchant traffic moving through the city on a daily basis also provided bandits with a means of permanently escaping the city. And finally, for those who wished to pursue criminal activity, Havana provided the perfect opportunity. In and around the city, infamous bandits were rounded up and captured. In 1867, two well-known bandits (one of which was known by the name of El Habanero), were captured in the Mercado de Cristina. In 1868, Ramón Carranza y Rubio, aka “el Mono,” was captured for crimes and robberies committed in Havana. In 1874, Antonio Díaz was killed by Inspector Trujillo on a public street after alluding capture. And in 1875, the infamous Felipe Quiñones y Ortega was taken in by Trujillo, as was the rest of his band. He was later executed at La Punta for his various crimes.²⁷¹

During this early stage of the independence struggle, colonial officials were not overly concerned with the influx of rural criminals into Havana. The author even goes on to note that to a certain extent, given the political context and the rural nature of the country, banditry was to be expected.²⁷² What concerned colonial officials instead was the development of another, equally new phenomenon: the escalation of “*cierta clase de delitos que se cometen en las grandes poblaciones*” (the type of criminal acts that are committed in large urban areas).²⁷³ At first glance, Havana would appear to be no different than other

²⁷⁰ Varela Zequeira, *La policía de La Habana (Cuevas y Sabaté)* .

²⁷¹ G.G.Y.F., *Los criminales de Cuba y el Inspector Trujillo* 24-32.

²⁷² Ibid, 6.

²⁷³ Ibid, 5.

urban areas in its increase of criminal activity specific to large cities. However, the same lack of social spatialization on which the North American tourists had previously commented would play a significant role in undermining colonial authority. In light of the tenuous political situation, the heterogeneous population of the city's neighborhood was proof of the inability of the colonial government to contain criminal activity—so often associated with class but now associated as well with wealthier criollos—to specific areas of the city, such as to the southern end of the city where tourists and “respectable people” seldom ventured. For example, in 1865 Reparto Las Murallas had been a meeting ground for the city's different interest groups. The 1869 incident at the Villanueva, however, illustrates that the theater, once located in a “safe zone” of the city, was now located in an area of Havana increasingly under competition from both criollos and the colonial administration. Furthermore, the criminal accounts of Trujillo illustrate that by 1881, the colonial government had all but ceded control of this reparto, as evidenced by Trujillo's comment upon his pursuit of another well-known bandit. The inspector manages to capture the criminal on the outskirts of Reparto Las Murallas. Reflecting upon the incident, he comments on the luck of having captured him prior to their actual entrance into the heart of the neighborhood, as the bandit would have certainly escaped given the criminal element that resided there.²⁷⁴

The specific nature of the criminal activity to which the author refers to is also illustrated by the incident described above. The rapid urbanization of Reparto Las Murallas, together with the growth of the tourist market and an influx of foreign immigration and displaced laborers, contributed to the rapid change in the habanero landscape, at the same time that the independence struggle was slowly chipping away at the colonial government's

²⁷⁴ Ibid, 37.

legitimacy. The result was an increase in the public nature of criminal activity. Robberies took on a political significance when a representative of the colonial government was robbed at gunpoint, in broad daylight, in front of the Plaza de Armas. Rare, however, was the occasion in which these types of crimes took place within the private spaces of someone's home or in the isolated areas of the city. Rather, the criminal activity found more profitable outlets in the busy environs and the amalgamated population that existed within Reparto Las Murallas and its surrounding neighborhoods.

The new emphasis on public space extended to the new criminalization of activities not previously seen as such. José Antonio Saco's groundbreaking essay in 1831 on vagrancy, *La vagancia en Cuba*, had positioned the issue as an indicator of a larger problem; that is, an overall breakdown of Cuban morality caused by the growth of cultural vices such as gambling.²⁷⁵ Saco advocated the use of government programs, such as Houses of Charity, to alleviate the problem and provide alternatives to those who would otherwise suffer from what he describes as a social ill. Measures implemented by the government during the decades leading up to the administration of Miguel Tacón took a similar view. While the stated goal of government legislation was to deter vagrants, it did not do so through its criminalization. Vagrants apprehended by private citizens or public officials in Havana during the 1830s, for example, were taken to the Casa de Beneficiencia or made to labor on public works projects, thereby channeling these individuals into productive work (See Chapter Two). In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, however, vagrancy was not merely looked upon as a social ill but as a criminal one. At this later date, vagrants apprehended in Havana as well as in other provinces of Cuba, were tried in criminal courts

²⁷⁵ Saco, *La vagancia en Cuba* .

and sentenced accordingly. Individuals as young as fifteen, for example, instead of being placed in asylums as advocated by Saco in earlier decades, were now tried and sent to correctional facilities (not Charity Houses) especially designed to house vagrants.²⁷⁶

An old development took on a new significance between the end of Trujillo's term and the onset of a new war of independence in 1895. Whereas criminal activity associated with the rural areas of the country had been easily dismissed under the Trujillo terms, by 1896, this was more difficult to do. At this later date, not only were rural bandits using Havana as a base of operation, but a new development had occurred: habanero criminals were themselves emulating their rural counterparts. The habanero emulation of *rural* criminal activity took the form of celebrating not, as one could expect, the emerging heroes of the independence movement who hailed from the rural areas of the country, but rather the heroes of the banditry underworld who were increasingly able to elude the government authorities.

The 1896 criminal accounts left behind by Eduardo Varela Zequeira, a newspaper reported for the Havana daily *La Lucha*, illustrates not only the evolving nature of criminal activity in Havana from the end of the first war of independence to the outset of the last, but also the destabilizing effect that the rural population was beginning to have on Havana. Varela recounts the experiences of the *Inspector de Policía* Juan Cuevas and his *celador*, Tomas Sabaté²⁷⁷ under the direction of the chief of Police and Public Order, Tomás Pavia.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁶ "Diego Alcántara," 1877, Fondo Cárceles y Presidios, Legajo 69, no. 3, ANC; Bernabé Alcántara, 1857, Fondo Cárceles y Presidios, Legajo 69, no. 4, ANC; "José Angel Labarde," 1874, Fondo Cárceles y Presidios, Legajo 70, no. 28, ANC; "Juan de Armas," 1859, Fondo Cárceles y Presidios, Legajo 70, no. 15, ANC; "Jorge Fernández," 1869, Fondo Cárceles y Presidios, Legajo 70, no. 8, ANC.

²⁷⁷ Tomas Sabaté would gain such notoriety as a barrio inspector that he would later be employed by Spanish General Valeriano Weyler to maintain order of the reconcentrado camps in the vicinity of Havana.

²⁷⁸ Varela Zequeira, *La policía de La Habana (Cuevas y Sabaté)* .

Charged with patrolling the areas of the intramuros, the pair would go on to recount time and again their encounters with known bandits hiding in Havana as well as their encounters with “new” bandits, some of them lifelong residents of the city, who chose to emulate the more celebrated bandits operating in the countryside.

By 1896,²⁷⁹ there were visible signs indicating the demise of colonial order in Havana and the urban project as it had been previously articulated in the city. The attacks on colonial order, moreover, came from various aspects of the habanero public sphere. On the one hand was the threat that public crime now visibly posed—and on the other was the threat from the demise of urbane culture in the city. Because so much of the colonial government’s authority in Havana rested in the public works projects and urban development that was increasingly disrupted as the independence struggle first gained momentum in the rural areas, it became increasingly difficult for the colonial government to maintain its façade of political authority in the capital city.

Conclusion

For the colonial administration and the foreign visitors who in earlier decades had found Havana a myriad of social influences undermining civilized society, implementation of the 1862 city ordinances, demolition of the walls in 1863, and the creation of repartos in 1865 should have provided the necessary impetus to propel the city from the brink of modernization to full fledged modernity. The stately mansions and neighborhoods under

²⁷⁹ The reason I choose 1896 as the end date for this study is because of the marked increase in the criminal activity in Havana after this date, in particular with those crimes relating to robbery. Escalation of the war effort during the final years of the struggle created particularly demoralizing conditions around Havana, especially for the population of people who had been relocated from the interior of the country and relocated in the vicinity of Havana. As the armed struggle took a turn against the Spanish army, funds were cut and the encampments of individuals were often left unfed. Coupled with the high number of dislocated individuals who made their way to Havana in search of better economic opportunity, the nature of criminal activity once again shifts.

construction on the city outskirts were evidence of the modern possibilities that had been created in Havana. Together with the new legislation regulating the different areas of the city, the stage was set for the colonial government's final victory over the habanero "lower classes."

The reversal in urbanization trends from the 1860s onward, however, spelled first the decline of the colonial project in Havana. While the wars of independence raged on in the rural areas of the country and seemingly left Havana intact, the changes brought about as a result of the power struggle between criollos and peninsulares left a definitive mark on the topography of Havana. Not, as one would expect in times of war, as a result of the destruction of the urban landscape, but rather as a result of the increased competition over city spaces and resources that eventually marked a shift in power between colonial officials and the residents of Havana.

CHAPTER FIVE

URBAN GUAJIROS:

THE TRANSFORMATION OF HAVANA, 1896-1909

“It was, indeed, an awesome sight that Gonzalo Collazo now looked upon. Hungry tongues of leaping, hissing flames, rising higher and higher... while louder and louder grew the crackling and the crashing of falling buildings.”

Isabella M. Witherspoon, *Rita de Garthez the Beautiful Reconcentrado*, 1898

When Mrs. Isabella M. Witherspoon, from Long Island, New York, penned the fictional novel entitled *Rita de Garthez the Beautiful Reconcentrado (A Tale of the Hispano-American War)*, she was inadvertently writing the multiple layers of Havana’s history. In her novel, Witherspoon describes the journey of one Gonzalo Collazo, a Cuban guajiro from the province of Oriente. The story begins with Gonzalo’s return to his village at the base of the El Cobre mountains, where he finds it engulfed in flames and every *bohio* in the process of being destroyed by the Spanish Army. He soon discovers that his fiancée and his mother have survived the ordeal but have been rounded up by Spanish troops and taken to one of the thirty four centers of *reconcentración* that were established outside of the large *poblaciones* in Cuba.²⁸⁰

²⁸⁰ Isabella M. Witherspoon, *Rita de Garthez, the Beautiful Reconcentrado. A Tale of the Hispano-American War* (Patchogue, New York: Advance Press, 1898). Unlike in the novel, the reconcentrados around Havana came from the province of Havana (and in lesser numbers from Pinar del Río and Matanzas), and not from Oriente. Rural residents were usually relocated in centers within the same province.

Thus begins the journey in which Gonzalo follows a division of General Weyler's army from Oriente to the outskirts of Havana. Once at the relocation center, he covertly reunites with the surviving members of his family and engineers an elaborate plan to extricate them from the dire conditions in which they live. In what is described as a desperate attempt to both save his family and procure U.S. reinforcements for the Cuban army, Gonzalo Collazo blows up the U.S. battleship sent by President McKinley to protect North American interests in Cuba, the *U.S.S. Maine*. The act is, of course, one for which he must ultimately pay for with his life in the fictional account, but he is nonetheless vindicated by the fact that his actions draw the attention in the United States and convince its administration to aid in the reconstruction of Cuba.

The impact of the U.S. occupation on Havana was manifold. The historiography that surrounds its urbanization is marked by the political transition from colony to republic. The literature has tended to emphasize 1902 as the beginning of a second phase of urban growth (the first phase of urbanization having begun with the administration of Miguel Tacón) attributable to the end of Spanish colonialism and marked by a trajectorial shift that occurred as a result of the North American administration.²⁸¹ While independence was certainly a watershed moment for certain aspects of the lives of habaneros, the political transition was nonetheless only one of several factors affecting urban life in Havana.

²⁸¹ Coyula, Scarpaci, and Segre, *Havana: Two Faces of the Antillean Metropolis*, Le Riverend, *La Habana, espacio y vida*. While the literature on urbanization has tended to view independence as a watershed event, recent scholarship habanero social and cultural trends from colony to republic tend to de-emphasize the colonial transition. See, for example, Mildred de la Torre, *La sociedad cubana en los albores de la República* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2002). Those that do mark the transition as a difficult one for certain sectors of habaneros, for example, do so not by emphasizing U.S. policies affecting Havana (and the rest of Cuba), but rather the social changes that took place in the city prior to independence that were subsequently intensified by the policies that followed with the U.S. occupation. See, for example, María Poumier, *Apuntes sobre la vida cotidiana en Cuba en 1898* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1975).

In this respect, the 1898 publication of Witherspoon's novel is significant in that it illustrates the revisionist tendencies that surround accounts of the end of colonialism in Cuba and its impact on Havana. For example, the novel joined a plethora of North American accounts, articles, and short stories written during the last half of the nineteenth century that alternately celebrated, disparaged, and encouraged change in Cuba.²⁸² It differs from the trend in nineteenth-century accounts, however, in one key respect; while previous writers impressed their descriptions of Cuba, and Havana in particular, upon their literary audiences, the novel by Witherspoon is ostensibly about the need for U.S. intervention in the island. Its political inclinations clear, the account emphasized the need for a U.S.-led reformation of Cuba, a process that was first begun by reassessing the social and physical conditions of the capital city and later hindered by the new population of displaced guajiros that, like Gonzalo and his family, now resided in the city.

In her fictional account Witherspoon describes several of the central factors that contributed to the transformation of the city during the final decades of the nineteenth century. First, she addresses the impact of the Spanish military campaigns that forcibly removed much of the Cuban peasantry from the four western provinces of the island and relocated them to metropolitan areas. The mass relocations were part of an effort to curb support for the insurgency by eliminating their access to foodstuffs, supplies, and manpower in areas of the countryside where the separatist movement was strongest. Issued in 1896 by General Valeriano Weyler, the relocation orders affected only those provinces under Spanish control where the colonial government hoped to keep the strength and numbers of the

²⁸² See for example, Stephen Bonsal, *The Real Condition of Cuba Today* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1897), Frederic Remington, *The Collected Writings of Frederic Remington*, ed. Peggy Samuels and Harold Samuels, 1st ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Publisher, 1979), Witherspoon, *Rita de Garthez, the Beautiful Reconcentrado. A Tale of the Hispano-American War*.

insurgency at bay. While the area affected was mostly limited to the western half of the island, the orders were nevertheless responsible for bringing between 250,000 and 500,000 individuals into the various urban peripheries of Cuba. Up to 100,000 of these individuals were relocated to the Havana outskirts.²⁸³ The rounding up of villagers took place in areas of the country that could potentially pose a threat to the colonial government. The further destruction of villages by fire subsequently hindered the ability of individuals to return to their homes, thereby increasing the number of people who stayed in metropolitan areas beyond suspension of the relocation orders.²⁸⁴

Fire was another theme of urban growth around Havana, both relayed by Witherspoon and accounted for by travel writers and governmental officials of the United States, Spain, and Cuba.²⁸⁵ Pursuit of this scorched-earth policy by both sides of the revolutionary war, for example, was responsible for bringing thousands of displaced guajiros into urban areas, where fires were still common but where the danger from these was now significantly lower than that in the countryside. By the final year of the nineteenth century, fire as an element of urban growth was a well-established phenomenon in Havana; during the first decades of the nineteenth century, it had played an instrumental role in precipitating the

²⁸³ Maria del Carmen Barcia, *Una sociedad en crisis: La Habana a fines del siglo XIX* (La Habana: Editorial del Ciencias Sociales, 2000); Mario Coyula and Jill Hamberg, "Urban Slum Reports: The Case of Havana, Cuba," in *Understanding Slums: Case Studies for the Global Report 2003* (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2002); Brigadier General William Ludlow, *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1898* (Washington: U.S. War Department, 1899).

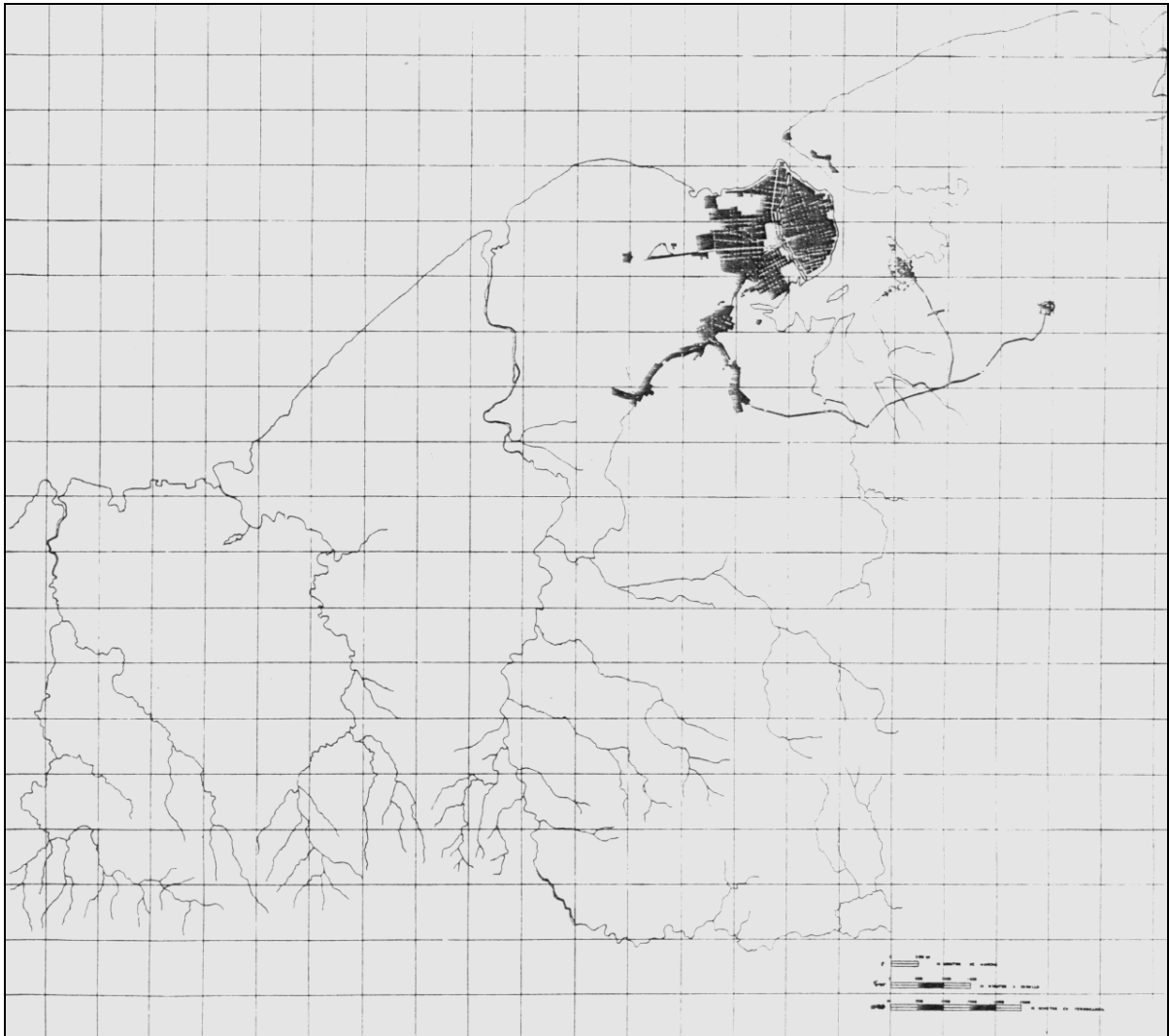
²⁸⁴ The physical destruction of the countryside also functioned as well as a means to hasten the physical and economic destruction of the Cuban countryside and thus immobilize the insurgency.

²⁸⁵ "Adrian Bocoy, Presidio de La Habana," 1880, Fondo Cárceles y Presidios, Legajo 71, no. 3, Archivo Nacional de Cuba (Hereafter cited as ANC); "Cristóbal de la Torre," Fondo Cárceles y Presidios, Legajo 73, no. 39, ANC; Valeriano Weyler, *Mi mando en Cuba (10 Febrero 1896 a 31 Octubre 1897)*, ed. Felipe González Rojas (Madrid: Imprenta, Litografía y Casa Editorial de Felipe González Rojas, 1910).

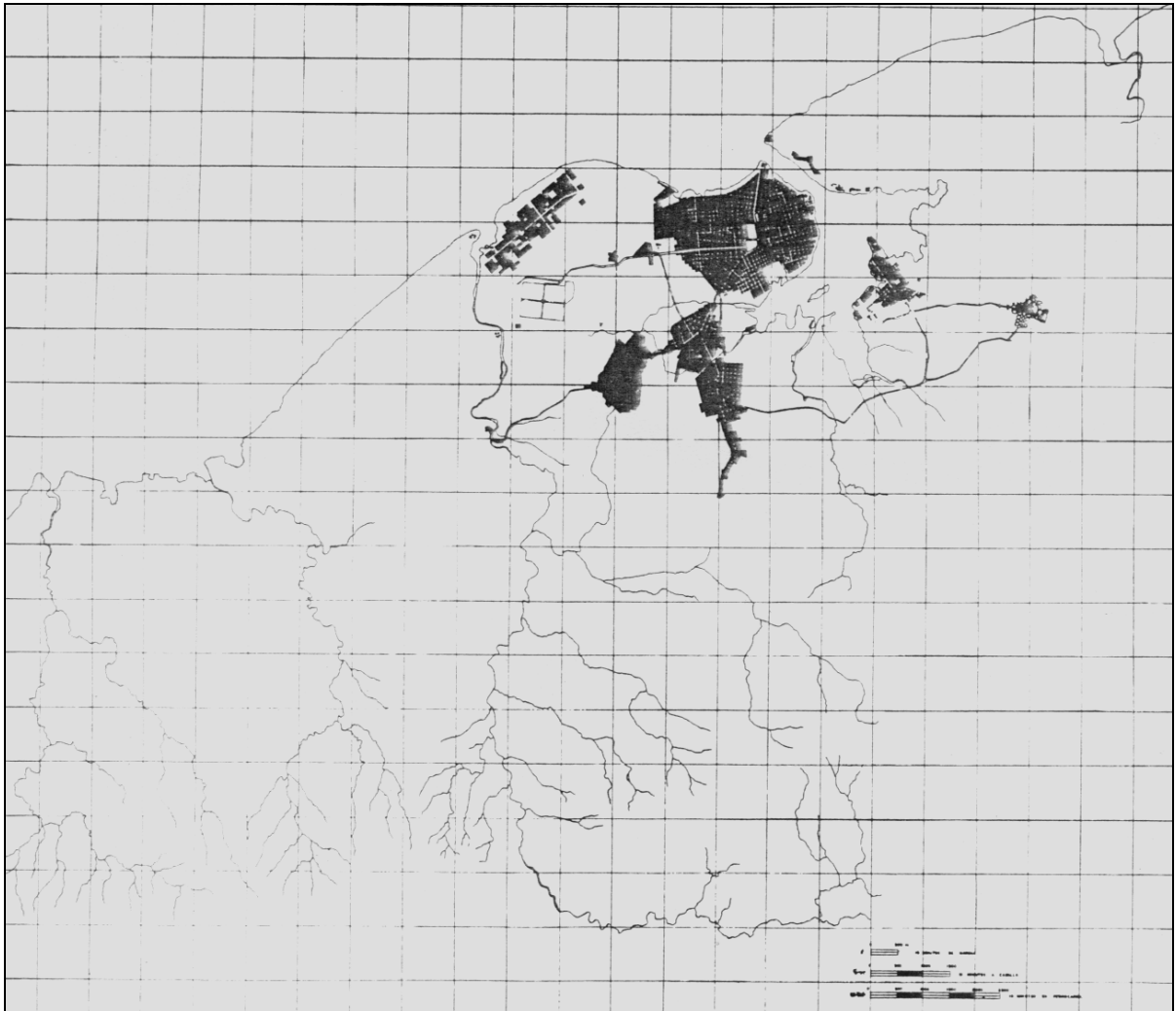
expansion of the city into the outlying areas of the extramuros.²⁸⁶ Henceforth, deliberately set blazes had been a contributing factor in the expansion of the city, albeit for reasons that differed significantly based on the social and political changes that affected each era. In a manner that was nonetheless reminiscent of earlier efforts by habaneros to rid the urban periphery of “undesirables” and push these onto unsettled rural areas away from the city center, fire was once again creating a new population of marginalized *habaneros*. Guajiros fleeing deteriorating economic conditions in the countryside or forced to relocate by the Weyler proclamation were arriving *en masse* on the city outskirts. Like the characters of Witherspoon’s novel, these “urban guajiros,” would play a critical role in the history of the city as the independence movement evolved and the living situation of the city outskirts deteriorated. The reconcentración, while creating an impetus for urban change around in post-colonial Havana, also contributed to the preponderance of accounts (primary and otherwise) that, as in the opening quote by Witherspoon, allude to the utter destruction of Cuba. The subsequent need to rebuild thus allowed a “new” urban project to emerge in the wake of the North American occupation, marking the final transformation of the city into a “modern” and urbane metropolis. Evidence to support this claim, after all, lies in the explosion of urban growth that occurred in the years following the independence of Cuba, unparalleled even by the unprecedented mid-nineteenth-century developments achieved under the administration of Tacón. (See Map 5.1-5.3)

By examining the reconcentración around Havana and the records left behind by North Americans and Cuban governmental officials, however, this chapter will argue that the transformation of Havana described in North American accounts (fictional and otherwise),

²⁸⁶ Deliberately set fires destroyed working-class neighborhoods and squatter settlements outside of las murallas once space within the intramuros became increasingly scarce. In Chapter One I argue that this was part of a larger effort to expand the city westward into the less crowded and more desirable areas of the extramuros.

Map 5.1**Urban Development in Havana, 1750-1850**

Town Planning and Associates, “Desarrollo histórico de La Habana, 1750-1850” in *Plan piloto de La Habana, Directivos generales y diseños preliminares*, (La Habana: Town Planning and Associates, 1959). University of Miami, Florida, Cuban Heritage Collection.

Map 5.2**Urban Development in Havana, 1850-1899**

Town Planning and Associates, “Desarrollo histórico de La Habana, 1850-1899” in *Plan piloto de La Habana, Directivos generales y diseños preliminares*, (La Habana: Town Planning and Associates, 1959). University of Miami, Florida, Cuban Heritage Collection.

Map 5.3**Urban Development in Havana, 1899-1924**

Town Planning and Associates, “Desarrollo histórico de La Habana, 1899-1924” in *Plan piloto de La Habana, Directivos generales y diseños preliminares*, (La Habana: Town Planning and Associates, 1959). University of Miami, Florida, Cuban Heritage Collection.

governmental records, and Cuban historiography, was influenced first by the mass relocations of rural residents to the area around Havana, and then by the ideological imposition of an urban project that did not resonate with habanero mentality given the social and cultural transformations that had occurred in Havana. The conditions of the urban periphery marked a "triple" disillusionment with the urban project. For Spanish officials, the colonial transition was lost to the modern innovations that the United States represented. For habaneros, the conditions of the urban periphery during the war years served to discredit Spanish colonialism (and thus the colonial urban project) at the critical moment of the physical U.S. intervention. The demographic changes that the city had experienced, however, were incompatible with the transformations that North Americans sought to impose, which caused the administration to legislate the extent and manner in which Havana, and thus by implication its residents, should be expected to modernize. The result was a renegotiation of the modern positioning of the city and the rights of its subjects that went beyond the physical transformation of Havana itself.

The Reconcentración around Havana

On October 21, 1896, General Weyler issued a proclamation in which he stated that guajiros who found themselves “*en los campos o fuera de la línea de fortificación de los poblados*,” (in rural areas or outside of the fortification lines of towns) had eight days to report to specified meeting points within the Spanish-held province of Pinar del Río.²⁸⁷ The text of the bando went on to expressly forbid guajiros to bring foodstuffs, farm animals, or other possessions to their new destinations. If they owned livestock, they were to turn it over

²⁸⁷ Weyler, “Bandos, decretos, órdenes,” in *Mi mando en Cuba* (10 Febrero 1896 a 31 Octubre 1897), 427.

to Spanish officials upon arrival at said meeting points, where it would be appropriately cared for until their owners returned. Failure to comply with the order by refusing to show up for *reconcentración*, it stated, would result in the reclassification of those individuals as “*auxiliaries de los rebeldes*,” (rebel auxiliaries), and anyone found in the rural areas affected by the proclamation after the eight day period would be subject to the same treatment given to captured members of the insurgent army.²⁸⁸

The October proclamation issued in Pinar del Río came at the heels of a similar (albeit largely failed) attempt to reconcentrate rural residents from the eastern areas of Cuba. Seven months earlier, General Weyler had gone ahead with the first orders of *reconcentración* in the provinces of Puerto-Príncipe and Santiago de Cuba, as well as in Sancti-Spíritus.²⁸⁹ The proclamations, however, were issued too late to further the Spanish campaigns in the eastern provinces, as these were already under the control of the Cuban army. Thus, from October 1896 onward, Weyler pursued *reconcentración* in the western provinces as part of a military strategy to avoid similar defeats as those experienced in the eastern areas of Cuba.

The idea to relocate forcibly individuals during the last Cuban war for independence, however, was not part of Weyler’s own military strategy. The colonial government had enacted a similar plan during the earlier Ten Year’s War at the urging of Félix de Echauz y Guinart. In the midst of the military campaigns, Echauz had published a report that he wrote in collaboration with Spanish military personnel engaged in the armed struggle in Cuba. He detailed the deplorable condition of the armed struggle against the Cuban insurgency and the

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Concentration and other Proclamations of General Weyler*, 55th Cong., 2d sess., April 11, 1898, 549-551.

actions that he believed were necessary in order to ensure a Spanish victory.²⁹⁰ Entitled “*Lo que se ha hecho y lo que hay que hacer en Cuba*,” Echauz counted the rural population of Cuba among the most important resources of the rebel army. He also credited the natural resources of the island with providing the insurgents with daily subsistence, and their access to the coastlines with their ability to procure reinforcements from abroad. In order to counter the effects of their three primary assets, he urged the military establishment to enact the following recommendations:

Take away their ability to wage war at close range over farmhouses, lone regiments and convoys. Finish with their resources of the interior, tearing up the country and reconstructing it under a general plan formulated for its defense and prosperity. Seal off the coast, such that they are not able to receive reinforcements from abroad.²⁹¹

In order to implement the three-step plan, he advocated:

Reconcentrate at the points of [military] intersections the population from the interior, and at the cross sections the population from the coast. The adoption of this plan, taking into account the fortification line, will result in twenty-four large centers of population, protected and at the same time overpowered by other garrisons ... these large

²⁹⁰ See Felix de Echauz y Guinart, *Lo que se ha hecho y lo que hay que hacer en Cuba. Breves indicaciones sobre la campaña* (Barcelona: Imprenta del Diario de Barcelona, 1872).

²⁹¹ Ibid, 13.

centers of population and garrisons... will establish a dividing line between friend and enemy, so clear and delineated, that without scruples or compassion we could pass the knife of the law through all that lies outside of it.²⁹²

Echaz's plan foreshadowed the policy of *reconcentración* that Weyler implemented almost three decades later. In order to eliminate the subsistence base of the Cuban army, for example, his plan advocated the scorched-policy that would deprive not only the Cuban army, but also the population of *guajiros* of subsistence means, including those not subject to the *reconcentración*. And because the plan called for their complete reliance on the Spanish army for adequate provision of food and shelter, any disruption of the *reconcentración*, such as by the lack troops to oversee the operation or insufficient funds to provide *reconcentrados* with daily rations, would pose a mortal threat to the *guajiros* that had been thus deprived of their livelihoods. This would prove especially problematic during the final years of the revolutionary war, when the Echaz plan had been fully implemented but the military power of the Spanish army was significantly diminished. Furthermore, the idea that *reconcentración* would allow the Spanish army to distinguish between "friendlies" was tantamount to the criminalization of those *guajiros* outside of the safe zones established as a result of the October proclamations of 1896.

By December of that same year, similar proclamations to the one that was issued in Pinar del Río were published in the three remaining western provinces of Cuba. La Habana, Matanzas, and Santa Clara were now all subject to the *reconcentración* of their rural populations to locations near Spanish posts, most of which could be found outside of major

²⁹² Ibid, 15.

towns and cities.²⁹³ By the time the last of these was published in December, reconcentrados were arriving in rail carts to the city of Havana to await their resettlement plans. While they initially came from the rural areas of the province of La Habana, they also hailed from as far as Pinar del Río and Matanzas, bringing with them mass panic at the conditions in which the war had left the countryside and its residents.

Among this first wave of arrivals to Havana from the province of Matanzas there could be found not only the rural residents subject to the orders of reconcentración, but also those guajiros who were fleeing from the towns and *ingenios* that “*ardían en la provincia de Matanzas,*” (were ablaze in the province of Matanzas).²⁹⁴ The scorched-earth policy that followed the reconcentrados and the panic among the rural residents is not surprising given the armed struggle in the countryside and the unfolding of events in the rural areas of the island. An 1895 publication of the Havana-based newspaper *Diario de la Marina*, for example, had stated that unless individuals were public allies of Spain, they would be considered an enemy of the colonial government (as re-stated in the Weyler proclamation).²⁹⁵ The proclamation was the cause of much dismay for residents of the western provinces, especially when the insurgent army countered with a similar declaration one year later that further limited their options of neutrality. The bando, issued by the insurgent forces of Máximo Gómez, stated that all Cuban labor from which the colonial government could derive profit (namely the production of sugar) should cease at once in order to decrease the revenues of Spain. Those who failed to follow the order, “*serán incendiadas sus cañas y*

²⁹³ The two eastern provinces, Puerto-Príncipe and Santiago de Cuba, were so renamed following the 1878 reorganization of the island and its division into the six provinces. By the time of the reconcentración, Puerto-Príncipe and Santiago de Cuba were considered “free Cuba.”

²⁹⁴ Ibid, 41.

²⁹⁵ Barcia Zequeria, *Una sociedad en crisis: La Habana a finales del siglo XIX*.

demolidas sus fábricas” (their sugar cane will be set on fire and their processing plants demolished).²⁹⁶ The notice went on to further state that anyone found in violation would be treated as a traitor of the Cuban army and judged accordingly. Four months later, another proclamation that more specifically targeted rural laborers was issued in Sancti-Spíritus. The notice called for the criminalization of those Cuban *obreros* (workers) who labored on the sugar plantations or whose labor in other ways benefited the colonial government.²⁹⁷

The political incentives for *reconcentración* thus increased as the Spanish military became fearful that, caught between the forces of both armies and increasingly made to choose sides, the rural population would sway towards the insurgency and thus propel a rebel victory. The driving force behind the October decision to *reconcentrar*, for example, came as Spanish popularity in the west further declined and their ability to repel the insurgency waned. By late January of 1896, when the forces of Antonio Maceo and Máximo Gómez had captured the eastern parts of the island and were advancing the western front, it became clear that more drastic measures were needed to neutralize the threat of an attack on Havana than those offered by Arsenio Martínez Campos, the Spanish General in charge of the military campaigns (and credited with ensuring the 1878 Treaty of Zanjón). During his unsuccessful tenure in the final war of independence, the colonial government had already begun to contemplate *reconcentración* as a means to turn the tide of the war. On July 25, 1895, correspondence between Martínez Campos and Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, the President of the *Consejo de Ministros*, concerning the problems Spain was facing in Cuba, reveals the impetus towards *reconcentración* from Echaz to Weyler. Citing the high incidents of

²⁹⁶ *Circular del Cuartel General del Ejército, 1º de Julio de 1895, Weyler, Mi mando en Cuba (10 Febrero 1896 a 31 Octubre 1897)*, 34.

²⁹⁷ *Circular del Cuartel General del Ejército Libertador, Jurisdicción de Sancti-Spíritus, Noviembre 6 de 1895, Ibid*, 35.

support for the Cuban army and a diminishing support for Spain, Martínez Campos proposed reconcentración as a means to control the rural population, albeit with reservations as to the effect that it would have. He wrote:

I could reconcentrate rural families in towns, but I would need a lot of force in order to defend them; there are only a few [people] of the interior who want to be volunteers [for the Spanish forces]: secondly, their misery and hunger would be horrible, and I would be pressed to give rations, and in the last war I came to give 40,000 daily: I would isolate the towns from the rural areas, but it would not impede the espionage: women and children would do it: perhaps it will come to that, but in extreme measure, and I think I have no conditions in that case.²⁹⁸

By June 1896, the failure of Martínez Campos to enact this or any other measure to successfully repel the Cuban army forced the resignation of his command. The hesitancy surrounding the Spanish army's lack of troops, the necessary funds to feed the reconcentrados, or the moral qualms of implementing the policy would be resolved when General Weyler was assigned control over the Spanish military following the temporary assignment of General Sabas Marín. Weyler's permanent assignment became official in

²⁹⁸ Presidente del Consejo de Ministros, *Carta confidencial al Excmo. Sr. D. Antonio Cánovas del Castillo*, reprinted in Weyler, 30-31.

February of 1897, at which time he ordered the reconcentración as part of his campaign to neutralize the rural population.²⁹⁹

Mass mobilization plans to ensure the safety of Havana subsequently followed both the orders of reconcentración and the increasing strength of the insurgency in Pinar del Río. Under orders from Lieutenant Colonel for the Spanish Army, Ramón Domingo, the city administration prepared for the possibility of an attack.³⁰⁰ *Cuerpos de voluntarios* (volunteer corps) were organized in the various neighborhoods of the city and its extramuros, including those barrios and neighborhoods where wealthy criollos made up large portions of the population. El Vedado, Regla, Cerro, Jesús del Monte, Casa Blanca, Príncipe, and other neighborhoods within and around Havana yielded to the organization efforts as companies of volunteer militias were organized for the protection of colonial and commercial interests.³⁰¹ Among the establishments militias were assigned to guard in case of an attack were the *Banco de Comercio*, *Banco Español*, *Aduana*, *Mercado de Colón*, the *Hospital Militar*, the railway station, the various parks in Havana, and the plazas of the intramuros. Militias were also to be dispatched to major streets and thoroughfares in areas of the city where criollos might pose a problem. El Vedado, for example, was specifically assigned patrols to stand

²⁹⁹ That the rural population around Havana elicited special colonial from the colonial government is not surprising (its “política del orden” in Havana had long singled out this population), especially given the strength of the insurgency among guajiros in the eastern part of the island. Prior to the arrival of Weyler, special foot patrols patrolled the outlying areas of Havana looking for suspicious activity.

³⁰⁰ Ejército de operaciones de Cuba, *Orden General del 6 de Enero de 1896 en La Habana*, reprinted in Weyler, 45-49. Plans included providing a signal to the population that the city was under attack (five cannon shots to be fired from the Castillo del Príncipe), a plan of military action in the case of such an event (the reunion of the military volunteer corps in previously designated areas), the policing of public order, for which purpose special patrols were organized and assigned specific streets assigned to each. The patrols, composed from among the members of the Guardia Civil, engineering corps, colonial infantry and resident volunteers, were also entrusted with the neutralization of any threat surfacing in Havana and its outlying areas. Of these, the corps was to be especially vigilant of Marianao and Guanabacoa.

³⁰¹ Ejército de operaciones en Cuba, *Instrucciones reservadas que acompañan á la Orden general del día 6 de enero de 1896*, reprinted in Weyler, 49-53.

watch at various street corners and secure the neighborhood. In total, over 3,000 volunteers were enlisted in Havana for the task of guarding streets and public buildings, as well as the outskirts of the city.³⁰²

Whether the volunteer corps of each Havana neighborhood would have posed a united front against the forces of the insurgency, or whether its membership would have ceded the city to the Cuban army is unknown, since the Havana plan was never tested. Instead, the impact of the war was felt in the declining economy of the city and the economic toll this took on both residents and military personnel stationed in Havana. Visitors to the city commented on the precarious economic conditions under which colonial employees labored, including its military and the Cuerpo de voluntarios. Economic transactions in Havana, for example, were increasingly undertaken in gold, silver, copper, and the occasional North American dollar as scrip lost its value. Colonial employees, however, if paid at all were paid in depreciated or worthless script, to the effect that many, penniless and abandoned to their fate, took to the streets to beg for alms.³⁰³ Havana residents and those stationed within its limits thus experienced the war in a far different manner than their rural counterparts prior to 1896. Unlike residents of the countryside, they were not exposed to the physical aspects of the armed struggle, but instead experienced the faltering of the colonial regime through the waning of the services—and thus the legitimacy—that the colonial government had once offered elite habaneros. Even full knowledge of battles and their outcome was not a given, as military censors in Havana took careful note to edit reports of

³⁰² Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Statement of Frederick W. Lawrence, May 20, 1896*, 55th Cong., 2d sess, April 11, 1898, 321-338.

³⁰³ *Ibid*, 329.

insurgent victories before publication of battles fought appeared in Havana newspapers.³⁰⁴

Knowledge of battles and events thus streamed into Havana through third parties accounts.

The insulation from the armed struggle, however, was about to undergo a drastic transformation as reconcentración was pursued on a full scale after December of 1896.

While Echauz had initially recommended that twenty-four relocation centers be established along the military lines of the previous war, in actuality, thirty-four such centers were created, all of which varied significantly in size and importance.³⁰⁵ In the province of Pinar del Río, for example, where up to 40,000 reconcentrados were thought to be relocated, the distribution of the centers and their numbers varied significantly. Only 460 reconcentrados were assigned to the center outside of the capital city of Pinar del Río, while in the small towns of Candelaria and Consolacio, also located within Pinar del Río, over 4,000 reconcentrados were assigned to each center.³⁰⁶ In an 1897 map published by Stephen Bonsal,³⁰⁷ a correspondent of the *New York Herald*, the locations of the major reconcentración centers are shown. (See Figure 5.4)

The demographics of the four western provinces were radically transformed due to the influx of reconcentrados from the rural areas of the island. While exact figures are difficult to ascertain, by 1897, between 250,000 and 500,000 individuals had been displaced as a direct result of the proclamations. In the province of La Habana, small towns and even railway stations experienced drastic growth as a result of the reconcentración. In the town of

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Statement made by Mr. Stephen Bonsal on the 11th day of June, 1897*, 55th Cong., 2d sess, April 11, 1898, 397-418.

³⁰⁶ Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, 55th Cong., 2d sess, April 11, 1898, *Correspondence, Consulate-General of the United States Fitzhugh Lee to Mr. Day, Dec. 3 1897*, S. Rep. 718, 12-13.

³⁰⁷ Bonsal, *The Real Condition of Cuba Today*, 2.

Jaruco, for example, located mid-way between the provinces of Matanzas and Havana, the small railway town was transformed by the eight to nine thousand reconcentrados thus relocated.³⁰⁸

Demographic change, however, was not the only significant change to occur. The social and economic standing of the towns, too, was affected by the conditions in which the resettlement camps operated. For example, once interned in the camps, reconcentrados were watched by a regiment of Spanish soldiers, and not allowed to step beyond its limits without a military pass. The initial problems that Martínez Campos had described 1895—namely that of inadequate funds leading to the gradual starvation of the reconcentrados—were soon realized. As Spanish forces were defeated on the battlefield the rural population was increasingly criminalized by the Spanish army that saw them as a potential threat instead of a population in need of protection. Diminishing funds to feed and care for the reconcentrados soon followed, leading to the decrease of daily food rations until they ceased almost altogether. Even in instances when escape was a possibility for the few guajiros who had managed to smuggle goods they could now use as bribes to obtain military passes or be allowed to leave, the condition of the countryside made survival a next to impossible task. First, the scorched-earth policy had destroyed much of the countryside from where the reconcentrados arrived. Furthermore, in marshy or non-agricultural areas such as Jaruco, the population of reconcentrados would have found it difficult to eek out a subsistence base, as well as remain hidden in areas where their presence was in violation of the Weyler bandos and tantamount to committing a war crime. Their total dependence on the Spanish military

³⁰⁸ Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Statement made by Mr. Stephen Bonsal on the 11th day of June, 1897*, 55th Cong., 2d sess, April 11, 1898, 397-417.

meant that one year later, the mortality rates for reconcentrados at certain camps reached levels as high as fifty percent.³⁰⁹

From the rural areas of La Habana province, reconcentrados were brought into the Havana outskirts. The camp to where reconcentrados were taken was located at the site of the municipal ditches of the city of Havana, colloquially known as “Los Fosos,” or literally, “the ditches.” (See Map 5.5) By the end of the reconcentración, it was estimated that approximately 150, 000 individuals, many of them women and children, had been relocated to Havana province, approximately 50,000 of them in the municipality of Havana alone.³¹⁰ In a three-month period from August of 1897 to December of 1897, for example, 1,700 individuals entered the camp at Los Fosos. These came from Jaruco, Campo Florido, Guanabo, Tapeste, and other similarly small towns in the Province of La Habana. By December of 1897, 460 of the reconcentrados were dead or dying in Los Fosos from disease and starvation.³¹¹

The problems that prevailed at other locations similarly plagued reconcentrados at Los Fosos. Insufficient troops and funds to adequately escort the relocated, for example, led to them being brought to the camps on foot, and escorted by bands of paid conscripts, such that by the time of arrival their physical conditions were already precarious. Sanitary conditions also contributed to death and disease, and were one of the primary reasons why the North American administration would focus its efforts on improving conditions in and

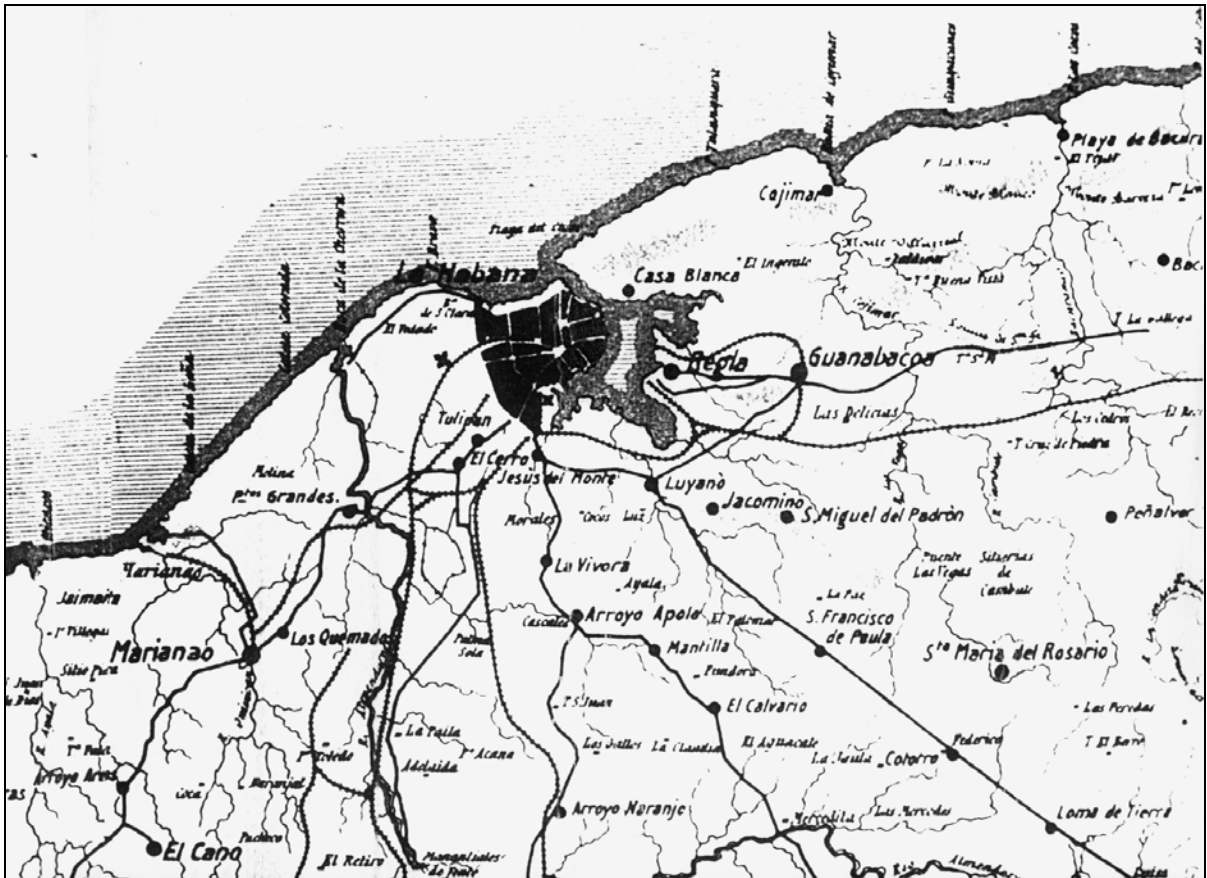
³⁰⁹ The rates varied across camps. Some centers of reconcentración, such as those in Matanzas, or those with fewer reconcentrados, had more resources at their availability and thus lesser death rates.

³¹⁰ Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Correspondence, United States Consulate-General Fitzhugh Lee to Mr. Day, December 14, 1897*, 55th Cong., 2d sess, April 11, 1898, S. Rep. 727, 14.

³¹¹ Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Correspondence, United States Consulate-General Fitzhugh Lee to Mr. Day, November 23, 1897*, 55th Cong., 2d sess, April 11, 1898, S. Rep. 712, 9-11.

Map 5.5

City and Province of Havana, with Los Fosos Marked by “X”



Valeriano Weyler, “Croquis de la Provincia de La Habana,” in *Mi mando en Cuba*, 1910.

around the city. Foster Winn, the acting sanitary inspector for the province of Havana in June of 1897, attributed the outbreaks of small pox, dysentery, yellow fever, and malaria in Havana to the conditions in which the reconcentrados congregated on the Havana outskirts lived.³¹²

Winn also placed the number of reconcentrados outside of the city of Havana at closer to 80,000 individuals.³¹³ The results from the influx of individuals at Los Fosos were several. First, despite the jail-like conditions in which individuals were held and the meager means of subsistence outside of the camps, there are indications that several were able to bribe their way out or else find other means of escape. Necessity-driven criminalized activity, such theft, especially of food and animals, showed a dramatic increase after the initial reconcentraciones of 1896. The work of Cuban scholar Yolanda Díaz Martínez, in her study of criminal behavior in Havana during the years of the nineteenth century, shows a dramatic increase in the number of crimes committed as of 1896. Crime rates increased from forty four prosecuted to seventy seven during the first year in which the reconcenteración was instituted, and then decreased dramatically each year thereafter until the end of the war. By 1902, they had once again reached their pre-war levels.³¹⁴

³¹² Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Statement of Dr. Foster R. Winn on the 21st day of June, 1897*, 55th Cong., 2d sess, April 11, 1898, 419-435.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Yolanda Díaz Martínez, "Sociedad, violencia y criminalidad masculina en La Habana de finales del siglo XIX. Aproximaciones a una realidad," in *La Sociedad cubana en los albores de la República*, Instituto Cubano del Libro (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2002), 49-89: 60. There were, of course, other reasons for the increase in crime and criminal activity, not the least of which was the waning of colonial rule itself and the overall decline in the economy of Havana. Offenses against the state increased for the simple reason that habaneros could now get away with it. Also, as the armed struggle continued and more and more of the colonial government's man power and resources were concentrated on the effort to beat the Cuban insurgents, civil servants fell to the margins of the colonial government's concern. At the time of independence, for example, the U.S. administration in Havana noted that workers employed by the colonial government had gone months without receiving payment for their work. And those whom the colonial government kept on the payroll for fear of the repercussions to public order in Havana—such as policemen—had once again been

Marking the second impact of the reconcentración on the city of Havana was the social and demographic shifts that occurred in its wake. Immediately after relieving General Weyler of his command, the new commanding general of the Spanish army, Ramón Blanco, issued a proclamation in foreshadowing the official end of the reconcentración. On November 17, 1897, he formally extended the protection of the Spanish army to the reconcentrados, assuaging the unofficial criminalization by the colonial government but not officially or fully suspending the order for reconcentración. The proclamation stated that those reconcentrados willing and financially able to go home were free to do so, permitting they were able to fulfill the new requirements of freedom. They were to carry identification cards identifying them as part of the reconcentrados, furnish proof of their former residence, including land titles if they were to go back as agricultural laborers. Furthermore, they were to get permission for the type of work they wished to undertake on the land, as well as for the people and animals that would reside with them. They also had to show proof of how they would obtain the food, clothing, tools and materials needed to maintain themselves in proper health.

For those reconcentrados wishing to find employment on sugar, coffee, or tobacco plantations, the owners of such estates would be subject to new regulations should they choose to employ them. First, they would be obliged to build centers of defense that could adequately deter an attack from the rebel army. They were authorized to bear arms for the protection of their crops, and to arms as well their employees with revolvers and machetes to

compensated for their services in depreciated script. The result, then, was a city whose population was on the brink of literal starvation and where crime and criminal activity was skyrocketing.

help protect the estates.³¹⁵ Those not able to return to their own farms or find employment on the commercial estates, which included the great majority of the reconcentrated population, would then be entitled to the services of the newly created *Juntas Protectoras de Reconcentrados* (Relief Board of Reconcentrados) while they remained in the internment camps. The relief boards were set up in the capital of each province and administered independently in each municipality, involving the military that was to hand out daily rations, the parish priest in charge of administering charity, and physicians who would oversee that hygiene measures were strictly followed.³¹⁶ That the orders for reconcentración were still in effect, Blanco explained, was the result of his unwillingness to release hundreds of thousands of reconcentrados, the majority of whom were women and children, into the Cuban countryside or the city streets without any means of survival.

As part of his plan to end the reconcentración and resettle the dislocated, Blanco allocated \$100,000 to the general relief fund and the Board of Reconcentrados.³¹⁷ Of that fund, 12,500 in Spanish silver was set aside specifically for the relief effort in Havana.³¹⁸ Given the estimated 75,000 reconcentrados that U.S. Consul in Havana Fitzhugh Lee believed to be alive and in need of aid in and around Havana, the total amount appropriated came out to a sum of approximately seventeen cents per person, to be fed clothed and sheltered. By February 1898, also in foresight of the end of the reconcentración, the United

³¹⁵ Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Proclamation by General Ramon Blanco on November 13, 1897*, 55th Cong., 2d sess, April 11, 1898, Inclosure with S. Rep. 704, 5-6.

³¹⁶ *Ibid*, 6.

³¹⁷ Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Correspondence, United States Consulate-General Fitzhugh Lee to Mr. Day, November 23, 1897*, 55th Cong., 2d sess, April 11, 1898, S. Rep. 710, 8-9.

³¹⁸ Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Correspondence, United States Consulate-General Fitzhugh Lee to Mr. Day, December 14, 1897*, 55th Cong., 2d sess, April 11, 1898, S. Rep. 727, 14-15.

States similarly established another, albeit unofficial, fund for the relief of the reconcentrados. Consul-General Lee took charge of administering the funds directly from Havana. An initial \$5,000 was collected from the U.S. Office of the Treasury, as well as an additional \$1,743 from private donors. The money was to service the entirety of Cuba, and was used primarily to purchase food and secure railroad transportation to distribute provisions throughout the island.³¹⁹

The official end of the reconcentración came four months after the November proclamation by Blanco. On March 3, 1898, Blanco issued another proclamation terminating the Weyler encampments. The order stipulated that all those interned as part of the reconcentración were now free to return to their former homes, or else resettle themselves in a location of their choosing. It went on to state that the fiscal responsibility for the reconcentrados would be shouldered by the boards of relief in each municipality, which were to provide limited funds for their relocation with the aid of private charities such as those established by private citizens and church officials. The Board of Reconcentrados that was established in November was to take charge of distributing emergency provisions such as food, clothing, and medicine, as well as establish food kitchens for those individuals for whom returning to their homes was made impossible by a lack of means or the lack of home to return to.³²⁰

By April 1898, the American Relief Fund was created in the United States to oversee general relief efforts as the United States prepared to declare war on Spain. By orders of the

³¹⁹ Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Correspondence, United States Consulate-General Fitzhugh Lee to Mr. Day, February 4, 1898*, 55th Cong., 2d sess, April 11, 1898, S. Rep. 767, 23.

³²⁰ Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Translation of the Articles of General Blanco's Proclamation of the 30th March, 1898, Suspending the Reconcentración*, 55th Cong., 2d sess, April 11, 1898, Incosure No.1, S. Rep. 809, 28.

United States Treasury, it appropriated \$50,000 to the Cuban cause. Most of the funds (\$45,000), however, were targeted to the aid and relief of U.S. citizens found in Cuba.³²¹ Since its initial appropriation of \$5,000 to aid the reconcentrados, the United States Treasury, much like the colonial government, had relied on private charities to shoulder the relief effort. At the publication of the first Blanco proclamation, for example, The Ward Line Steamers in New York arranged for the free shipment of charitable goods collected from donors in the United States.³²² The American Red Cross, under the supervision of Clara Barton, had also attempted to be on the forefront of the North American relief effort. It secured permission from Spain to enter Cuba as an international relief organization. From the United States it collected food, clothing and medicine to be shipped directly to Havana, from where it would be then distributed to the other provinces. Under a new subcommittee known as Central Cuban Relief Committee, the Red Cross did indeed manage to collect food and medical supplies to be shipped to Havana. It employed J.K. Ellwell, until then a North American resident of Santiago, to manage the distribution of goods from warehouses in Havana. The provisions arrived in Havana on February 9, 1898, only six days before the explosion of the *U.S.S. Maine*. Consequently, all provisions were left in the harbor and the warehouses in Havana padlocked until the second week of April, at which time Clara Barton and the Red Cross evacuated the city in fear that a declaration of war was imminent.³²³ While the provisions were not distributed in the initial month following the suspension of the

³²¹ Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Statement of Hon. Fitzhugh Lee, April 12, 1898*, 55th Cong., 2d sess, April 11, 1898, 534-535-548.

³²² Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, Correspondence, *Correspondence, United States Consulate-General Fitzhugh Lee to Mr. Day, November 23, 1897*, 55th Cong., 2d sess, April 11, 1898, S. Rep. 710, 8-9.

³²³ See William E. Barton, *The Life of Clara Barton, Founder of the American Red Cross (Vol.II)* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1922).

reconcentración, the Red Cross did manage to distribute the goods at the conclusion of the war when the island was under the political administration of the United States.³²⁴

The administration of the relief effort prior to the official end of the reconcentración signaled one of the first attempts by the North American administration to institute a plan for the reorganization and maintenance of the city. The move came after the Spanish government on January 1, 1898 instituted limited political autonomy in Cuba, much to the chagrin of peninsulares on the island. The establishment of autonomy effectively allowed the U.S. government, under direction from the U.S. Consulate in Havana, to set up administrative agencies charged with the care of the reconcentrados.

Other measures, however, autonomous of both the Spanish and U.S. government, were soon established by habaneros and those affected by the influx of reconcentrados. General Lee noted that despite the Blanco proclamation in which reconcentrados were allowed to leave the encampments only under very specific conditions, many had stayed in the area of the relocation center but were now residing in the private residences of Havana residents. Charitable committees, as well, independent of political affiliations gathered many of the reconcentrados to shelter and feed in their temporary locations.³²⁵ At the urging of what remained of the colonial government, which could not sustain the care of the reconcentrados, Cubans were asked to join the relief efforts and “adopt” the reconcentrados. In Havana, as well as the outlying townships away from the urban center such as Marianao, private residents took on much of the burden of the relief effort. Luisa Quijano from

³²⁴ Arthur Gardner and Herminio Portell Villa, *Clara Barton, protector of the Cuban "Reconcentrados", Variation: Pamphlets in American history.; Biography ; ; B 136*. (Havana: Pan American Columbus Society, 1954), 16.

³²⁵ Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, Correspondence, *Correspondence, United States Consulate-General Fitzhugh Lee to Mr. Day, November 23, 1897*, 55th Cong., 2d sess, April 11, 1898, S. Rep. 710, 8-9.

Marianao, for example, took on the care of those reconcentrados who found themselves in ill health, or suffering from disease caused by the conditions of the reconcentración centers.³²⁶

Compared to smaller towns and cities throughout Cuba, Havana survived the reconcentración relatively well. As the capital city of Cuba, provisions accumulated in Havana, so that the distribution of goods began first with the indigent of the city and the reconcentrados at Los Fosos. Because there were never sufficient provisions to reach the interior of the island, or because freight trains could not always be secured to ship the food free of charge, much of the relief effort was expended on Havana. The provisions brought to the city between 1898 and 1900 by the Red Cross and the Cuban Relief Committee, for example, were distributed among habaneros before an attempt was made to reach those in areas further inland.³²⁷ Relief centers were also first established in Havana. Immediately after the reconcentración, General Lee made arrangements for the care of many of the orphaned children around the city by setting up an asylum to oversee their care. Another such institution, established after the November Blanco proclamation, also existed in Havana. Located on Cádiz street in the former intramuros, it served as a refuge for 159 children and 84 women. Another 93 women and children were housed in yet another asylum, this one located near the reconcentración center of Los Fosos.³²⁸ Managing the relief effort in

³²⁶ Barcia Zequeria, *Una sociedad en crisis: La Habana a finales del siglo XIX*, 43-44; Inclán Lavastida, *Historia de Marianao de la época indígena a los tiempos actuales*. Women in small or rural towns came to play a significant role in the relief effort, forming committees and raising funds to establish medical care and provide food for the reconcentrados. In the province of Santa Clara, for example, (asociaciones villareñas), organizations and committees formed included el Bando Piedad, La Gota de Leche, Las Damas Caritativas, Las Hijas de Maria, La Sociedad Cristiana de Jóvenes, La Fundación Luz y Caballero, La Junta de Señoras Protectoras. The same organization also went on to help in other charitable contributions, such as by ensuring education for children in rural townships.

³²⁷ Gardner and Portell Villa, *Clara Barton, protector of the Cuban "Reconcentrados"*, 16.

³²⁸ Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Correspondence, United States Consulate-General Fitzhugh Lee to Mr. Day, November 27, 1897*, 55th Cong., 2d sess, April 11, 1898, S. Rep. 712, 9-11.

Havana, however, did not come without economic consequences for residents of the city. To help with the costs of providing food and shelter to the reconcentrados, the ayuntamiento of Havana, by November of 1897, had levied a tax of five percent on all property in Havana. The measure proved to be a successful one, raising over \$80,000 to be used for the sole relief of reconcentrados in the vicinity of Havana.³²⁹

Other measures (besides the orders of reconcentración) enacted by the colonial government at the outset of war also contributed to the transformation of the city. In a vein similar to that of the reconcentración of guajiros—meant to rid the countryside of potential threats—the colonial government began mass deportations from Havana to areas outside of Cuba—to rid the city of the same—soon after the October order for reconcentración. Not surprisingly, the individuals selected for deportation came largely from the stratas of habaneros whose political views may have been at odds with those of the colonial government, or who had been historically singled out as potentially dangerous to political or social order of the city. The tobacco factories in Havana, for example, which had experienced an influx of recent Spanish and Caribbean immigrants in their labor force, were perhaps the most affected by the orders. A *Comité Central* was established with the sole purpose of overseeing smaller committees in many of the tobacco factories, which were responsible for informing the Central Committee regarding the activities and political views of its workforce.³³⁰ The main destinations of the individuals arrested and marked for deportation was Spain or Spanish territory—*deportados* might be taken to Cádiz, for example, or the Islas Chafarinas off of the coast in Morocco.

³²⁹ Ibid, 9.

³³⁰ Manuel M. Miranda, *Memorias de un deportado* (La Habana: Imprenta La Luz, 1903), 5.

Manuel M. Miranda, a worker in the *Don Quijote de la Mancha* tobacco factory in Havana, for example, describes his ordeal when on November 9, 1896, he was selected for deportation during one of the raids on the tobacco factories in Havana.³³¹ Although he managed to escape and hide in Guanabacoa, he was subsequently found, arrested, and deported from Havana for having spoken publicly against the forced military conscriptions of General Weyler. Along with Miranda, ninety-one other men were also deported from the city, among them the former editor of the newspaper *La Discusión*.³³² Once arrested, he was taken to Cadíz, where he spent two years before finally returning to Havana.³³³

Urban Shifts and Transformations

By the end of the independence war against Spain, Havana had been thus affected by the reconcentrado stations throughout Cuba and the mass deportations from the city. By the time the Treaty of Paris was signed on December 10 and the new arrangement between Cuba and the United States formalized, the city had also experienced the extent of U.S. aid through the relief efforts for the reconcentrados.

The political transition that followed the end of the war was subsequently marked by an absence of both celebration and protest in that reflected the standing of each administration in Havana. Political power over the island officially occurred in a private meeting where Spanish officials decorously handed control of the city to their North

³³¹ To ensure compliance with the deportations and to maintain overall order in Havana, civil governor José Porrúa, working with the Chief of Police and barrio investigators Cuevas and Sabatés, put together gangs, locally known as “*las chotas*,” to enforce public order.

³³² Ibid, 12, 19.

³³³ See Miranda.

American counterparts before departing from Havana, without any special celebration.³³⁴ On January 1, 1899, Spanish troops marched towards the harbor in preparation of their evacuation orders amidst streets that were visibly empty of habaneros.³³⁵ While the actual transition was a smooth one, the events leading up to the political transition were not as devoid of the colonial demise. The prevalence of social services that had once reinforced the power of the colonial government came to a complete stop towards the end of the war. The conditions of the urban poor (reconcentrado and otherwise) around the city had worsened since the arrival of the first North American administrators in Havana; once it became clear to Spanish officials that a political transition was imminent, food rations and urban services slowed then ceased altogether. Lower-ranking colonial employees (such as members of the Havana police force) also similarly felt the full force of the end of Spanish colonialism. Payment to these also ceased, such that when the U.S. administration took a census of the urban poor in the city, it counted many from among the ranks of the previous administration.

The political transition that occurred on January 1, 1899, was thus eased by the discredited Spanish administration and the social transformation of Havana that had occurred in years prior. The void in social services and public works projects left behind by the end of Spanish colonialism was rapidly filled by the North American administration in order to quickly stabilize the country.³³⁶ To not do so would have threatened its legitimacy as a viable

³³⁴ Brigadier General William Ludlow, *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1898* (Washington: U.S. War Department, 1899).

³³⁵ “Fuerzas españolas en dirección al Muelle de La Habana el día de la evacuación, 1º de enero de 1899,” photograph reprinted in Marial Iglesias Utset, *Las metáforas del cambio en la vida cotidiana: Cuba 1898-1902* (La Habana: Ediciones Unión, 2003), 289. The turnout for the transfer of power contrasted markedly with the turnout that occurred when the Cuban Army of Liberation marched into Havana, for which thousands of habaneros were present.

³³⁶ For many the higher-level government officials, the political stability of the countryside was a much more pressing concern than that of Havana. The lack of a proper Cuban army or police force able to patrol rural

administration, especially in the wake of the recent discreditation of the colonial government. Poverty caused as a result of the reconcentrado settlements and the demise of the colonial regime now threatened the legitimacy of the new administration if left unaddressed. According to Ludlow, “the relief of the starving and destitute thousands in and about the city demanded instant assistance.”³³⁷ Furthermore, “the physical condition of the city could only be described as frightful. There were several thousand reconcentrados in and about, who had been herding [*sic*] like swine and [were] perishing like flies. They were found dead in the streets and in their noisome quarters, where disease and starvation were rampant. Other thousands were lacking food, clothes, and medicine.”³³⁸ In 1899, when the U.S. administration took control of the city, 242,055 indigents composed of former reconcentrados, urban migrants, and former employees of the colonial government were now congregated on the urban periphery.³³⁹ Unlike in previous decades, poverty, death and disease were not specific to certain areas of the city. Reconcentrados, Ludlow commented, were “dying in streets and alleys.”³⁴⁰ Making the situation worse, Houses of Assistance and the Casa de Beneficiencia had been all but abandoned and its employees not been paid in months, often becoming a part of the urban poor themselves.

areas, high levels of seasonal unemployment, and the high number of dislocated peasants once again made banditry a serious threat in rural areas. Then, too, was the fear that social and economic dissatisfaction, highest in rural areas where much of the armed struggle for independence had been waged, would give way to anti-U.S. rebellions similar to those occurring on the island of the Philippines. Adding to this fear was the presence of still-armed members of the former Cuban insurgents, many of whom still insisted on resolving once and for all the question of Cuban sovereignty.

³³⁷ See Brigadier General William Ludlow, *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1898*, 25.

³³⁸ *Ibid*, 25.

³³⁹ Roberto Segre, *La vivienda en Cuba en el siglo XX* (Mexico: Editorial Concepto, 1980), 125.

³⁴⁰ Brigadier General William Ludlow, *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1898*, 25.

Along with poverty, the eradication of disease, implementation of proper hygiene and sanitation measures were factors addressed as a means of stabilizing the city. Military Governor Ludlow embarked upon a campaign of health and hygiene measures to divorce Havana from its association with the rural reconcentración and the demise of the city that the settlements had brought about. Between 1897 and 1898, over 1,500 habaneros had perished in the span of just one year and thousands more had died in the poorer municipalities of Havana as a result of epidemics. In Regla, for example, over 3,000 deaths occurred in 1898, and Guanabacoa, located just across the bay, had over 3,500 deaths as a result of disease.³⁴¹ The number of dead and infected had increased markedly during the reconcentración; between 185 and 1896, the number of deaths in the municipality of Havana increased from 7,410 to 11, 728; between 1896 and 1897, it increased once again to 18,123, and yet again in 1898 to 21,235. In the span of less than one decade, the city had witnessed a 300 percent increase in the numbers of its dead or dying. The numbers, however, changed drastically with the re-introduction of sanitary and social services. By August of 1899, the number of deaths in the municipality of Havana had decreased to 6,136.³⁴² Epidemics of disease showed a similar decline; while the numbers of yellow fever increased three-fold between 1895 and 1896, jumping from 570 cases to 1,540, by August 1899 there were only nineteen documented cases in the municipality of Havana.³⁴³

To aid the effort, 50,000 U.S. dollars were allocated for new sanitary services and public order. Street cleaning that had been suspended during the war was once again

³⁴¹ Ibid, 52-53.

³⁴² Ibid, 52-53.

³⁴³ Ibid, 52-53.

reinstated, with services provided not only to the intramuros, but to the outlying areas of the city as well, including those where poverty and reconcentrados prevailed.³⁴⁴ (See Map 5.6) A trash collection schedule was also reinstated, with every day service to heavily congested street in the intramuros and twice to three times weekly elsewhere in the city.³⁴⁵ Services were carefully planned in regulations that conveyed the importance of following the proper collection and disposal of garbage and denigrating the manner in which trash collection had taken place previously which had contributed to the spread of disease.³⁴⁶ Public works projects to reinforce sanitation and hygiene soon followed. To avoid another epidemic of yellow fever, all public buildings were cleaned and disinfected. Thirty-five miles of sewers were cleaned out and renovated to allow for proper drainage.³⁴⁷ Streets were also paved to avoid drainage problems and potential health hazards. (See Map 5.7) Furthermore, a new Office of the Municipal Architect was created with eight employees, and any home, especially that located in the outlying barrios of the municipality, that was deemed dangerous or unhygienic were immediately demolished.³⁴⁸

The new sanitation measures and public works projects successfully addressed the needs of the city and provided immediate physical stability to its residents. However, the conditions in which the city had been “found” by Ludlow and his administration would significantly affect the urban trajectory and the aspects of urban growth that were emphasized by the North American administration, eventually conflicting with the new urban

³⁴⁴ Ibid, 12.

³⁴⁵ Ibid, 18187-188.

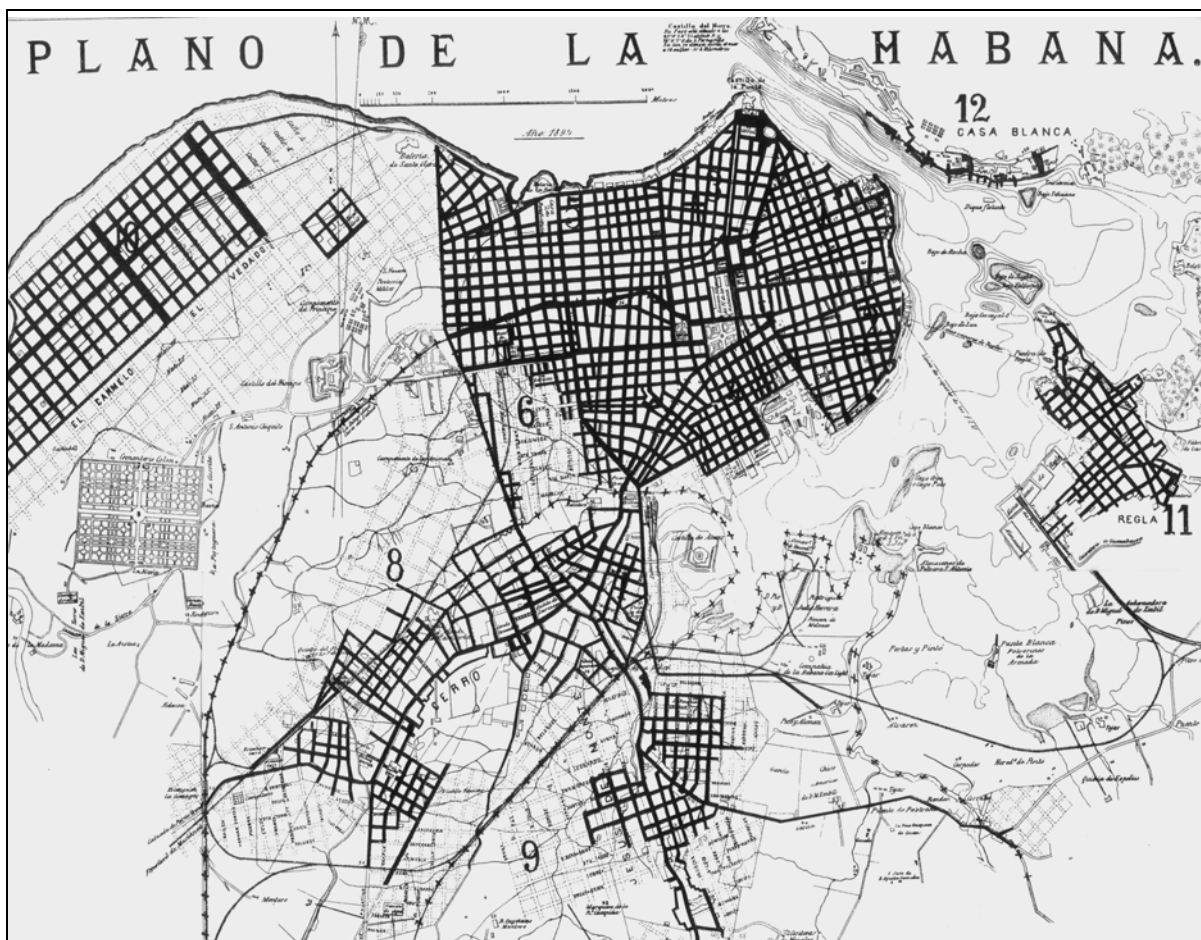
³⁴⁶ Luis M. Cowley, "Recogida de basuras en las calles," *Revista de Medicina y Cirugía de La Habana*, 14 (1909).

³⁴⁷ Ibid, 186-187, 191-192.

³⁴⁸ Ibid, 193, 196.

Map 5.6

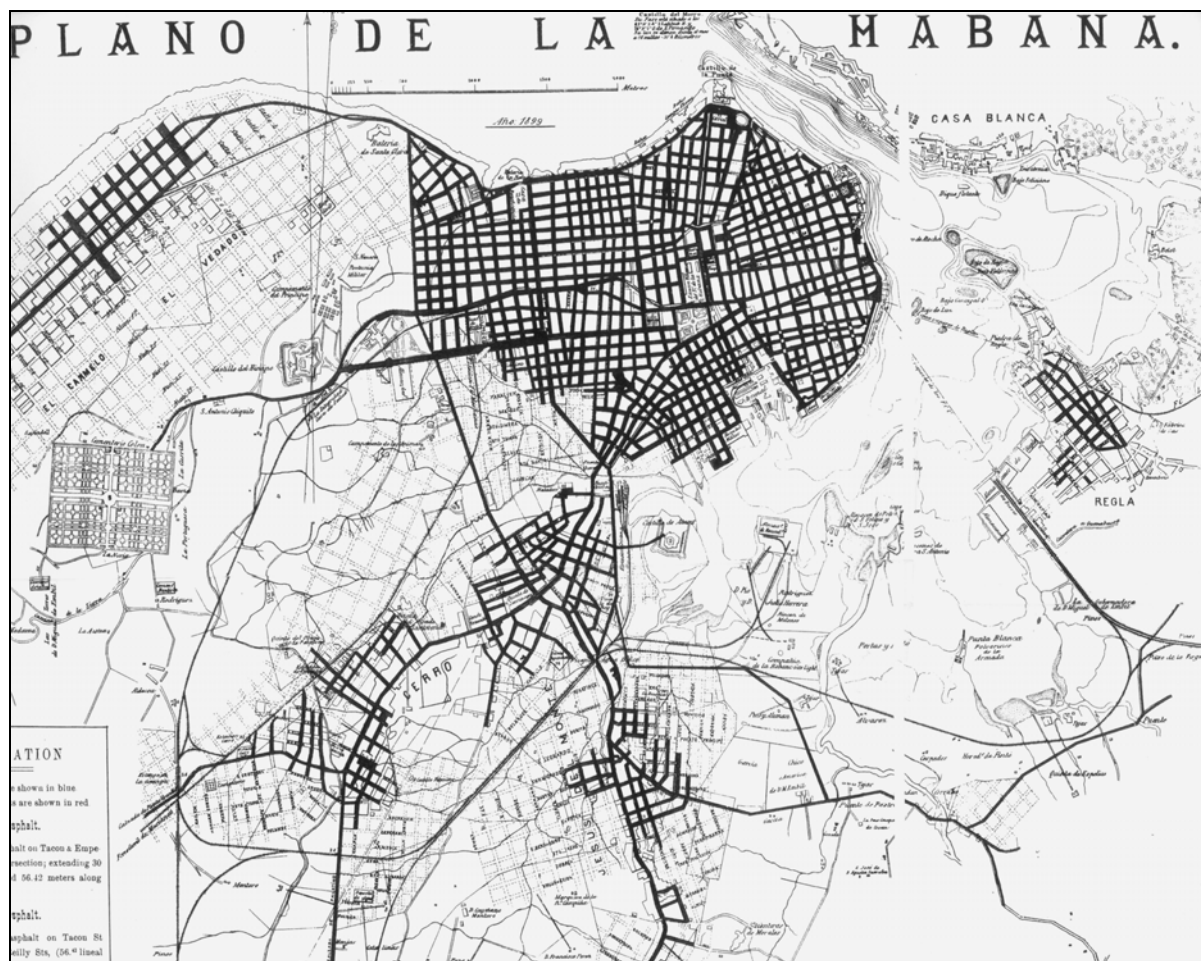
Map Showing Street Cleaning, 1899



Major Corps of Engineers, "Map Showing Street Cleaning," *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1898* (Washington: U.S. War Department, 1899).

Map 5.7

Map Showing Street Paving, 1899



Major Corps of Engineers, "Map Showing Street Paving," *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1898* (Washington: U.S. War Department, 1899).

values of habaneros. Upon taking control of the city in January 1899, Ludlow had found Havana to be a city composed of “women and children” and filled with the old, infirm, and destitute.³⁴⁹ The physical condition of the city was a far cry from that of “*La Habana culta*” that had been imagined in previous decades and written into the various accounts (fictional and otherwise) of Cuba. The disjuncture between that Havana and the one affected by the social transformation of the past years was not lost Ludlow. In his assessment of the city, the administration would focus not on renovations accomplished or recommendations made, but rather on the physical aspects of the city that fell short of the expectations with which the administration had been prepared.

The shortcomings of the city, according to the report by Ludlow, were those relating to hygiene and sanitation (again, affected by the stations of *reconcentración*). Future projects were thus marked by a new emphasis on hygiene and sanitation that unlike the previous urban projects, concentrated not on creating a new city divorced from the old, or uniting the two cities into one cohesive entity. Rather, under the new North American administration, the urban project emphasized hygiene, sanitation and order and used the colonial past of the city to promote urbanization. To this extent, measures instituted in Havana, including those that continued past the U.S. occupation, were those that supported the new ideals of urbanization. Soon after the initial assessment of the city, for example, routine censuses were conducted to monitor health and disease. Following the 1902 political transition that transferred control of the government to a Cuban administration, the local *Departamento de Sanidad de La Habana* and the national *Junta Superior de Sanidad* investigated cases of typhoid, tuberculosis, meningitis, and yellow fever in the city and its surrounding areas,

³⁴⁹ Ibid, 26.

separating cases by demographics that took age, race, and district into consideration in order to more closely monitor and quarantine the offenders when necessary.³⁵⁰ By 1907, there were no reported cases of yellow fever in the municipality of Havana, and outbreaks of other diseases in Havana and its outlying areas had been successfully contained as a result of the quarantines.³⁵¹

The move to stabilize Havana by addressing the immediate concerns of hygiene and sanitation had been a reaction to the condition of the city precipitated by war and relocation. The discourse which the North American administration used correlated the city's colonial past with the cause for the lack of urban amenities. The condition of the city, created by a specific set of circumstances affecting the nation as a whole, and the subsequent introduction of the North American administration were thus used as leverage for the imposition of an urban project divorced from its colonial and habanero origins. Local responses to the new administration and its measures, however, were swift and several.

Public works projects were quickly underway. The city was not only cleaned, but private contractors bid for its contract.³⁵² Administrative efforts cleared vacant lots, urbanized *repartos*, and transformed the vacant areas into public parks.³⁵³ Street paving, cleaning, and trash collection were once again urban staples. The area spanning the

³⁵⁰ "Informe demógrafo, estado de defunciones ocurridos en La Habana durante la decena terminada 10 de agosto de 1903, Departamento de Sanidad de La Habana," 1903, Fondo Secretaria de la Presidencia, Legajo 115, no. 10, ANC; "Fiebre amarilla en los Distritos de La Habana," 1906, and "Letter from Chief Sanitary Officer to William H. Taft, Recommending the Quarantine of the Harbor," Fondo Secretaria de la Presidencia, Legajo 106, no. 78, ANC.

³⁵¹ Carlos J. Finlay, Jefe de Sanidad de la República, Departamento Nacional de Sanidad "Informe anual sanitario y demográfico de la República de Cuba bajo la administración provisional de los Estados Unidos," (La Habana: 1908), Library of Congress.

³⁵² "Comunicación sobre el contrato para la compra del abono de los establos y la limpieza de La Habana," 1909, Fondo Secretaria de la Presidencia, Legajo 101, no. 90, ANC.

³⁵³ "Solicitud de parque público," 1909, Fondo de Secretaria de la Presidencia, Legajo 18, no.13, ANC.

municipality of Havana and its outlying barrios were once again surveyed and, as had occurred in the 1860s, redefined into a newly formed and incorporated Department of Havana. (See Map 5.8) Despite the rapid advancements, however, habaneros found reason to complain and made their complaints vocal and public to the new administrations. The residents of Vedado and Príncipe, having recuperated from the war, were once again active members of urban planning. Their previous opposition to the colonial administration was similarly channeled to the ineffectiveness of the new administration to fully meet their expectations. In a 1906 petition to the Provisional Governor of the island, the new members of the old Asociación de Proprietarios, Industriales y Vecinos del Vedado y Príncipe enumerated their many complaints against the city government, including the Departamento de Sanidad, Secretaria de Obras Públicas, Ayuntamiento de La Habana, and the Consejo Provincial de La Habana.³⁵⁴ In the petition, the Association specifically accused the different urban departments of not promoting a hygienic city; specifically, the Association noted the streets of Vedado which were in disrepair or needed paving, vacant lots not fenced in by the city government, the lack of sufficient public lighting, and the improper labeling of streets, all of which, they claimed, contributed to bad urban hygiene.³⁵⁵ The Provisional Governor was sufficiently disturbed to forward the complaints of the Association to the director of each department. Appeals to the Provisional Government continued. In letters and petitions addressed to Charles Magoon, the “unsanitary” and “unhygienic” state of the city was referenced by habaneros in their appeals for specific urban works projects. In 1907, over seventy habaneros composed of merchants, business owners, and private citizens signed a

³⁵⁴ “Letter to Charles Magoon, dated October 25, 1906, from Asociación de Proprietarios, Industriales, y Vecinos del Vedado y Príncipe,” Fondo Secretaria de la Presidencia, Legajo 101, no. 95, ANC.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

letter and petition to Charles Magoon asking that Teniente Street in the intramuros, where business was conducted, be paved. Again referencing the positive effects for hygiene in the city, they positioned their argument to coincide with that of the new administration. Within the same years, the project was completed.³⁵⁶ Residents from less prestigious neighborhoods similarly joined the letter campaigns. From the barrios of Jesus del Monte and Víbora, residents successfully initiated campaigns to repair streets and install sewer systems in their neighborhoods.³⁵⁷

At the same time that public works projects were being put in motion, public order was also being pursued as a crucial element of Havana. To enforce public order in the city at the outset of the occupation, the new administration was forced to develop a police force to patrol the areas of the newly defined Department of Havana. In 1899, the *Guardia Rural* (Rural Guard) was formed.³⁵⁸ It was specifically responsible for patrolling the peripheral areas of the city, which, according to Ludlow, “unless adequately guarded, would be the

³⁵⁶ “Correspondence to Charles Magoon, Col. W.M. Black, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,” 1907, Fondo Secretaria de la Presidencia, Legajo 24, no.17, ANC.

³⁵⁷ “Letter to Provisional Governor Charles Magoon, dated January 1907,” Fondo Secretaria de la Presidencia, Legajo 67, no.38, ANC.

³⁵⁸ The former *Ejército Libertador*, the Cuban Army of Liberation who mounted the armed struggle against Spain, had been disbanded by the U.S. administration almost immediately after the defeat of the Spanish in order to avoid a potential challenge to U.S. authority. To remedy the situation, The *Guardia Rural* (Rural Guard) was formed as the new military-police force entrusted with patrolling the outer areas of the city, and would answer directly to the U.S. administration. As its name suggests, the Rural Guard was primarily responsible for maintaining order in the outlying, rural areas of the country. Before the Guardia was transformed into a national police force in 1900, however, its 1500 recruits were primarily responsible for protecting the property interests of the landowners who subsidized the few and small outposts dispersed along the countryside. The Guardia was based in Havana and composed of Cubans. Many of its members were recruited from among the disbanded ranks of the *Ejército Libertador*, but its constituency varied significantly, despite recruitment efforts that targeted the ex-soldiers in order to incorporate them into a supervised military body. Unlike the former *Ejército*, the Guardia was composed primarily of white Cubans, and recruits were now compelled to provide letters of recommendation, preferably from property owners, in order to be considered for Guard appointments, thus changing the socio-economic background—and interests—of its rank and file membership. See Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Army Politics in Cuba, 1898-1958* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976).

refuge of criminals and disorderly persons, where foot soldiers would be unable to hunt or control them.”³⁵⁹ The similarities between the colonial government and the new North American administration were telling. Previously, the rural enclaves along the Havana periphery had concerned colonial officials, who questioned the loyalty of its inhabitants and their ability to foment trouble (hence the orders of *reconcentración*). The large tracts of vacant land to the west and south of the city proper, which connected outlying areas such as Cerro and Vedado to Havana, were thought to be susceptible of sheltering the criminal activity of the insurgency. To the new North American administration in Havana, these areas were equally suspect of criminal activity, but for different reasons. The association of criminality that the Cuban insurgency had once labored beneath was displaced onto the population of “urban guajiros” living in peripheral areas of the Department of Havana. In the town of Marianao, for example (located nine miles from the core city of Havana) where former *reconcentrados* had been sheltered and where many had subsequently established residence, the Rural Guard was especially vigilant.³⁶⁰

The new administration had reason to be vigilant; while police action and public works (lighting, street paving, etc.) had eradicated much of threat posed by bandits, a new form of crime had flourished in outlying areas that reflected the dissatisfaction of rural peoples residing in urbanized areas. In 1906, Provincial Governor of Havana Emilio Núñez

³⁵⁹ Brigadier General William Ludlow, *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1898*, 15.

³⁶⁰ On January 13, 1907, an incident in Marianao had caused a public scandal when the police had to be called to intervene in an altercation that involved guajiros from the rural provinces of Cuba, *habanaeros*, North Americans, and two members of the liberal Party, all of whom were present at a cockfighting party. The sport was one which had been explicitly forbidden by order of Military Governor Leonard Wood a few years earlier, and was an offense for which the Rural Guard was often called to Marianao to investigate. The group arrested on January 13 was fined and released, but the incident made headlines. *La Discusión*, 13 January 1905, in Emilio Roig de Leucsenring, *Males y vicios de Cuba republicana: sus causas y sus remedios* (La Habana: Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad, 1961), 234.

noted that “public trust, especially in rural areas, has not coincided with the tranquility that reigns in the same; a great and noticeable despondency exists ...”³⁶¹ Visible threats to public order, of the type that had threatened the colonial government during the war years were appropriately neutralized by the Rural Guard to the extent that public order was sufficiently intact. As Governor Núñez, noted, however, there were suggestions that as was not well with regards to the satisfaction with the North American and Republican administrations, and their measures.

Animosity between the newly formed Rural Guard and the rural population in the outlying areas of the Department of Havana had escalated into instances of physical violence. Between 1900 and 1907, rural people leveled accusations at the police force for excessive force or violation of the law when questioning inhabitants. In rural areas outside of Havana and Havana province, the accusations were more serious and frequent. By 1906, their extent and nature was a matter of public record; in Pinar del Río, the newspaper *La Realidad* published a letter by the Liberal Party denouncing the number of abuses suffered at the hands of the Rural Guard and listing the names of both accused and accuser. The letter was specifically addressed to “Mr. Charles Magoon” (printed in large boldface type, taking up the entirety of the newspaper’s front page) and asked whether rural Cubans under the provisional government were to stand for such treatment. Once again, the letter campaigns were being used to ask the government to rise to the new expectations of habaneros; the letter printed by the newspaper went on to demand that an acceptable form of action be taken.³⁶²

³⁶¹ “Expediente que contiene informe de los gobernadores provinciales respeto al orden, tranquilidad, estado de prosperidad y situaciones de la zafra en sus respectivas provincias, dirigidos al Gobernador Provisional de la Isla,” 1906, Fondo Secretaria de la Presidencia, Legajo 28, no. 13, ANC.

³⁶² “Letter to Charles Magoon by the Liberal Party Denouncing the Rural Guard in Pinar del Río,” 1906, Fondo Secretaria de la Presidencia, Legajo 116, no. 9, ANC.

Conclusion

The period marked by the beginning of the reconcentración in 1896, the end of the U.S. military occupation until 1902, and the first Republican administration of Tomás Estrada Palama until 1906, was a period in which the urban project in Havana was transformed.³⁶³ It was not, however, a “new” project initiated by the North American government, but rather one created from the reaction of the historical moment in which the city found itself on the eve of the U.S. occupation. Despite the measures taken to neutralize poverty and emphasize hygiene and sanitation in urban growth as a means to legislate “la ciudad ideal,” by 1907 the number of urban poor in and around Havana had increased from 242,055 in 1899 to 302, 526 in 1907, when the United States established a second administration in Havana under Charles Magoon.³⁶⁴

The indigent population of Havana was composed of former reconcentrados and their families, as well as displaced rural peoples who migrated to city in search of work. During the low season of sugar production especially, the number of unemployed who congregated in urban areas increased. Workers in Havana were now competing with a displaced rural population from the war years, rural migrants who arrived in urban areas after having being displaced by the introduction of new technologies and the expansion of mechanized sugar production. Foreign immigrants similarly arrived in Cuban for the *zafra* but who stayed beyond the sugar harvest and became competition for jobs in urban areas, as were the former slaves who were now part of the urban work force.

³⁶³ The ambiguous political periods that followed independence consisted of the U.S. occupation from 1899 to 1902, the brief Republican interlude of the Tomás Estrada Palma administration between 1902 and 1906, and the provisional North American government that ruled the island between 1907 and 1909.

³⁶⁴ Segre, *La vivienda en Cuba en el siglo XX*, 125.

Despite the prosperity of the nation, the infrastructure of the city was not prepared for the rapid explosion of urban growth.³⁶⁵ The disjuncture between economic prosperity and raised expectations as a result of the discourse and rhetoric of urban growth and the reality of urban migration would cause another reevaluation of the urban project, highlighting the ways in which habaneros understood the new project and their new positioning as urban subjects.

³⁶⁵ Sugar production was increasing on the island; from 335,668 tons in 1899 to 1,427,673 in 1907 (and it would increase yet again to 4,009,734 by 1919, before the market crash that devastated the Cuban economy). The market value of sugar was similarly rising; from 2.47 in 1899 to its peak of 5.06 in 1919.

EPILOGUE

TRAJECTORIES OF CHANGE

The Spanish flag was lowered from atop of the *Castillo del Morro* in Havana harbor on January 1, 1899, at which time the remaining colonial officials in Havana prepared to evacuate the city. Between December 1898 and New Year's Day 1899, 17,000 Spanish troops marched through the streets of Havana on their way to board the vessels that would take them home.³⁶⁶ In political terms, the processions of men symbolized the end of the colonial era in Cuba and the beginning of a series of new administrations that would culminate with the present-day government of Cuba. The ramifications of the political transition would also be visible within the physical topography of Havana, as the North American administration and the Republican governments would henceforth use the redefinition of urban space to reinforce their own administrations.

This dissertation has explored the historical development of urban expansion in and around Havana and the strategies employed by habaneros invested in the spaces of the city to impact urban expansion. From its initial founding in 1603, when it was imagined from its first two barrios of Campeche and La Punta, "Havana" has alternately functioned as an idea of both inclusion and exclusion. The first attempts to unite Campeche and La Punta into one

³⁶⁶ Brigadier General William H. Ludlow, *Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1899, from December 22, 1898* (Washington: U.S. War Department, 1899), 11.

entity were themselves “habanero” attempts; the two neighborhoods were brought together with a makeshift bridge meant only to facilitate travel and communication. Similarly, the first attempts to enclose the city with walls were done without the knowledge or consent of the Spanish Crown. By the time Roda's plan was implemented, it was a measure enacted for the protection of the city; but by the time the walls were at their most complete, the idea of insulating Havana from westward expansion had fallen out of favor with the peninsular elite, whose economic interests lay in promoting a modern and cohesive space to rival the metropolises of western Europe and, increasingly, those of the United States.

Thus began the colonial urban project that would span the length of the colonial era itself. Although earlier attempts to urbanize had occurred when the strategic importance of Havana and its harbor became clear, it was not until the era of Captain-General Miguel Tacón that Havana had become a real nucleus of Spanish colonial power. As colonial power waned in metropolises across Spanish America, in Havana colonial rule was flourishing. Revenues from expanding sugar production in the early to mid nineteenth century financed not only the westward expansion of the city, but the facade of present-day Havana. Amidst the grandeur of colonial expansion, however, tensions between criollos and peninsulares were already visible in the spaces and uses of the metropolis. The political divisions between the two groups of habaneros would be the first of its kind to reveal the symbolic aspect of urbanization in Havana. Just as the colonial government found ways to reinforce colonial rule with monuments, streets, and public works dedicated to the power and function of its administration, in the wake of independence subsequent administrations would similarly engage in a battle over public space. Less than three months into the U.S. occupation, the administration authorized the immediate removal of the statue of Isabel II from the Parque

Central in Havana. The names of the *Paseos* and *calzadas* constructed under the colonial administration also came under attack as their meanings and uses changed in the Republican era.³⁶⁷

The decision to expand the city outside of the walls created the extent of urban possibilities capitalized on in subsequent years. The contradiction, however, came when the space of urban possibility lay exclusively in the extramuros and symbolically excluded the intramuro and its residents. Henceforth, the struggle over urban space was marked by habaneros' preoccupation (and colonial concern) over their own position and within the developing metropolis.

The preoccupation with social and political displacement extended into various areas of the public realm. The flurry of public works projects undertaken under the administration of Tacón were followed with measures to ensure the sustainability of the colonial urban project. Maps, censuses, the subsequent urbanization of *repartos* and the standardization of neighborhoods all ensured that the colonial government would oversee the appropriate manner in which urbanization would unfold and the position of habaneros within the city.³⁶⁸ Thus, the mid nineteenth century vision of a modern Havana aimed to unite two cities, intramuros and extramuros (facilitated by the 1863 demolition of the walls), into one

³⁶⁷ For a discussion of the attempt to erase traces of the colonial past from the topography of Havana, see Iglesias Utset, *Las metáforas del cambio en la vida cotidiana: Cuba 1898-1902*. Utset discusses the politics behind the renaming of streets, as well as the uses of English, the place of the American flag, and “Yankee” celebrations in Cuba from 1899 to 1903. Notably, however, the inverse attempt to legitimate and / or discredit colonial rule and the Republican administration had similarly used symbols of the United State to do so; English words, for example, had made significant inroads in Cuba to as generic terms to designate certain consumer products. Recreational activities, as well, alternately reflected approval and disapproval of the political situation in Cuba. See Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban: Culture, Identity and Politics*.

³⁶⁸ While initial legislative measures affected Cuba as a whole and were responses to social and demographic change, the subsequent passage of ordinances specific to Havana reflect those aspects of social and demographic changes that proved especially threatening to city administrators in Havana. The decline of the institution of slavery, the growth of a population of free people of color, the increase of vagrancy, were all considered changes with potential social ills that threatened the future of a cultured city.

cohesive area. The plan, however, entailed yet another redefinition of city and subject that excluded aspects of Havana no longer reconcilable with a modern vision of urbanization.

On what seemed the brink success, the urban project in Havana was disrupted by the onset of the struggle for independence. Upon close observation, however, evidence of the struggle had been previously etched into the urban topography in the form of the new neighborhoods that emerged in late nineteenth century Havana. The waning of colonial rule was visible in the contested nature of these spaces before any of the physical effects of the armed struggle were felt in Havana Province. The growing influence of the United States was similarly visible in neighborhood topographies, as the “garden-beautiful” styles of North American suburbs were recreated in different areas of the city.

The 1899 political transition from Spanish colonialism to a military occupation did indeed transform the topography of the city. In the former intramuros, between the old Paseo de Isabel II and the harbor, the population of Spanish bankers, shopkeepers, and clerks who in the course of a century had made the intramuros a nucleus of colonial power was forever changed. For those who stayed (and many did, with only a minimal amount of animosity directed towards them by criollo habaneros), their place within the city was redefined by the new paradigms of the United States. The old battles between criollos and peninsulares responsible for etching neighborhoods into the topography of Havana were no longer applicable; the “space wars” among the different social classes were similarly subsumed under new social hierarchies and more “modern” ideologies.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁹ For a symbolic analysis of how the urban landscape was reinscribed in the Republican era see Iglesias Utset, *Las metáforas del cambio en la vida cotidiana: Cuba 1898-1902*. For a political analysis or geographic analysis of urban change, see Coyula, Scarpaci, and Segre, *Havana: Two Faces of the Antillean Metropolis*, Le Riverend, *La Habana, espacio y vida*.

The military occupation marked the imposition of a new urban project that centralized urban growth in the hands of the new North American administration and divorced urbanization from its previous history. The topographical changes that took place and the shift in urban trajectories after the 1899 political transition were nonetheless indelibly marked by the city's colonial legacy. The colonial era had taught habaneros to redefine their urban positioning in accordance with the changes affecting the city. Therefore, in the midst of the military occupation and throughout the early years of the Republican era, habaneros followed old methods of negotiating social and political change when they used the expectations of their new administration and its values to their own advantage. The flurry of personal correspondence directed at Cuba's provisional governors following the 1899 political transition is indicative of habaneros' ability to manipulate strategies to demand the urban possibilities that the end of colonialism and the commencement of the provisional U.S. administration seemed to promise. When individuals such as Manuel Varona, the president of the powerful *Asociación de Proprietarios, Industriales y Vecinos del Vedado y Príncipe* complained to the provisional government and enumerated the shortcomings of each of the newly established urban departments,³⁷⁰ he was revealing the expectations that habaneros had of the new administration, as well as their willingness to hold that administration to its promise of modernity with respect to urban change.³⁷¹ Alongside the complaints of residents from affluent neighborhoods, individuals from up-and-coming areas of the city, such as Jesús del Monte and Víbora, also staked their claim on the new administration. Following the

³⁷⁰ "Quejas por la Asociación de Proprietarios, Industriales y Vecinos del Vedado y Príncipe, enviadas al Gobernador Provisional Charles Magoon," 1906, Fondo Secretaria de la Presidencia, Legajo 101, no. 95, ANC.

³⁷¹ For a discussion of the anti-colonial symbolic weight that the United States held during the colonial period, see Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban: Culture, Identity and Politics*.

success of their well-established counterparts in Príncipe and Vedado, the residents of Jesús de Monte and Víbora formed a resident committee to lobby for urban works in their own neighborhoods.³⁷² From the working-class neighborhood of Jesús Maria, Ambrosio Suero, Pablo Haro, Carlos Martínez, Hortensio González, Dionisio González, along with 200 other residents similarly organized into committee of *obreros* that demanded that improvements also be made in their own neighborhood.³⁷³

The paper trail housed in the Cuban archives for the era following the 1899 political transition provides some evidence as to the extent that the strategies devised by habaneros worked. Time and again, Provisional Governors and Republican administrators responded favorably to the petitions of neighborhood residents, escalating the extent of the urban works projects implemented and offices opened to deal with the urbanization.³⁷⁴ Ultimately, however, the urban project imposed upon Havana was an unsustainable one; only a few years into the Republican era, there are visible signs of the breakdown of urban centralization. Once comfortable with the direction of urban growth, habaneros held administrators responsible for the failures of urbanization, such as when it excluded them from the developing metropolis.

While habaneros used the new values of the Republic as ammunition to extract change, they also opposed attempts to foment change (even when it came under the rubric of urban modernization) when it threatened notions of urban self-determination and restricted

³⁷² “Correspondencia al Gobernador Provisional Charles Magoon,” 1908, Fondo Secretaria de la Presidencia, Legajo 67, no. 38, ANC.

³⁷³ “Declaración por los obreros del barrio de Jesús María,” 1908, Fondo Secretaria de la Presidencia, Legajo 96, no. 67, 2º expediente, ANC.

³⁷⁴ “Estadística detallada que contiene relación de los empleados de planificación y temporeros, en los distintos cargos que ocupan, en la Jefatura de Obras Públicas de la Ciudad de La Habana,” 1906-1907, Fondo Secretari de la Presidencia, Legajo 66, no. 8, ANC.

their own autonomy. When residents of Príncipe and Medina opposed the elongation of Calle 23 (one of the principal arteries that cuts through modern-day Havana), they took on the full force of the *Secretaria de Obras Públicas*, again writing a flurry of letters to President of the Cuban Republic Mario C. Menocal to stop the construction project.³⁷⁵ The plan, proposed by the Office of Public works, would have extended the street through the Cementerio de Colón, expropriating property and cutting through prominent neighborhoods in order to introduce the electric railway. Once the plan was carried through, the Associations foresaw similar projects being implemented throughout Havana, such as the elongation of Calle 12 that would have united the neighborhoods of Príncipe and Vedado. The Associations employed the rhetoric of the new Republic, focusing not on the expropriation of land that would have meant the end of any future neighborhood expansion, but focusing instead on the limited gains that a railway would mean in light of the detriment that it would cause to the sanitary conditions of the city.³⁷⁶ Neither the *Secretaria de Obras Públicas* nor the central government chose to respond to any of the initial claims of the Association. The increased pressure by the Association did, however, manage to suspend construction on the project to elongate Calle 23, forcing the Office of Public Works to deviate the street around the Colón Cemetery.

The power struggle that occurred between the Association and the *Secretaria de Obras Públicas* was not unique. As urbanization became increasingly centralized, the strategy first used by Vedado residents of garnering the collective strength and resources of its residents in order to oppose a central government flourished. In many Havana

³⁷⁵ “Memo e instancia de la Asociación de Propietarios, Industriales y Vecinos de los Barrios de Medina y Príncipe sobre la prolongación de la Calle 23 en el Vedado,” 1914, Fondo *Secretaria de la Presidencia*, Legajo 49, no. 38, 1º expediente, ANC.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

neighborhoods, associations were established regardless of the economic or political standing of its residents. In lieu of these, they used instead the resources at their disposal to oppose the policies of the new administrations and lobby for desirable changes to affect their individual neighborhoods. In Jesús María, for example, when urban departments showed no signs of acquiescing to resident demands for sanitary conditions, these formed not into an urban association of the type visible in more affluent neighborhoods, but formed instead the *Obreros del Barrio de Jesús María*, making a social distinction between themselves and other habaneros. In a statement issued to neighborhood residents of a similar socio-economic standing, the Obreros called for collective action against the government until their demands for better conditions and stable rent prices were met.³⁷⁷ In Jesús del Monte and Víbora, the inability of the new administration to expedite the renovation of the neighborhood and keep up with the upward social mobility of its residents led the Association to propose to the administration that it would absorb the costs of all public works projects if the administration would only allow them to enact the measures they saw fit.³⁷⁸ The moves of both neighborhood associations were reminiscent of those enacted by the first of its kind: the Asociación de Proprietarios, Industriales y Vecinos del Vedado y Príncipe. As in the colonial period, the Associations were created as a means of formal opposition to the direction of urban growth that habaneros found objectionable. It stemmed from the long tradition of urban development of which habaneros had been an intrinsic component of, helping to define the city in ways which that amount to centuries of urban conjecture.

³⁷⁷ "Declaración por los obreros del barrio de Jesús María," 1908, Fondo Secretaria de la Presidencia, Legajo 96, no. 67, 2º expediente, ANC.

³⁷⁸ "Correspondencia al Gobernador Provisional Charles Magoon," 1908, Fondo Secretaria de la Presidencia, Legajo 67, no. 38, ANC.

Nonetheless, the year 1899 did not witness a complete transformation of the urban project in Havana, even as the number and extent of public works projects transformed the physical city itself. The form of urbanization was not new. The introduction of a U.S. administration at the same time that the social conditions of Havana had discredited the colonial government raised the expectations of habaneros in the new administration, only to witness a re-articulation of the old project and a similar disillusionment as had occurred under colonial rule only a few decades earlier. The sustainability of the post-colonial urban project had assumed a limited extent of previous urbanization in Havana as well as habaneros' inexperience with urban growth. Indeed, the disjuncture between the Havana imagined by travel account writers and the city found by U.S. administrators on the eve of independence, transformed by social changes that had been decades in the making, was lost on neither newcomers to the city or those who were sent to administer it.

Impressions of the post-colonial city proliferated through accounts of war correspondents and authors who took special note of the condition of Havana and who for the first time conflated the (lack of) urbanization in Havana with that of the entire island. Where urbanization had once served to distinguish the city from the "picturesque" countryside, authors such as Frederick Remington, writing for *Harper's Weekly* in New York, reinforced the notion that Havana had been transformed into a city of rural indigents. In his stories and articles, hope for a normative urban existence lay within the administrative guidance of the United States. With a new urban plan in the works, Remington noted in 1899, Havana could soon aspire to "look like a Sunday morning in a New England village on a summer's day."³⁷⁹

³⁷⁹ Remington, *The Collected Writings of Frederic Remington*, 357. Although Remington's writing joins the tail-end of yellow press in the United States, his writing nonetheless joins other works, such as those of Isabella Witherspoon and Stephen Bonsal, which advance the nineteenth-century tradition of travel literature, although these were written at the intersection of "travel account" and fiction at the end of the genre's (travel account)

However, over a century of urban experience had taught habaneros the finer points of negotiating around unsatisfactory urban trajectories. The inability of the U.S. administration to fully appreciate the extent of urban autonomy during the colonial period was at first mediated by the extent of the public works projects that it did in fact implement. These, however, only served to further raise habanero expectations as urbanization was centralized under a new set Construction Ordinances for the city of Havana.³⁸⁰ The 1907 *Ordenanzas de Construcción para la Ciudad de La Habana y Pueblos de su Término Municipal* left all existing neighborhoods intact (from the 1855 and 1861 legislation) but further centralized urban growth in the hands of public officials. Less than a decade later, a special addendum to the Sanitary Ordinances was published that reproduced earlier attempts to spatialize habaneros by social class, albeit in a manner radically different from its earlier attempts. The 1913 *Reglamento de ciudadelas, casas de vecindad o inquilinato del Municipio de La Habana* differed from earlier proposals in that it did not relegate poverty to certain sectors of the city, but rather grouped newcomers and the urban poor into tenement housing in different areas of Havana as long as the housing establishments could be easily watched and

popularity. Literary theorist Mary Louise Pratt has attempted to explain the significances of such accounts on the psyche of both the writer and her subject. Pratt argues that the genre, specifically in the tradition of European travel writing about non-Europeans, serves the specific purpose of creating and producing the “rest of the world” for its readership.³⁷⁹ Pratt’s argument, however, extends beyond the literary creation of one cultural or ethnic group by another wherein agency lies, quite literally, at the pen of the dominant group. Like Michael Taussig, Pratt favors a process that goes beyond the dissemination of self and culture from one group to another. She argues instead that “transculturation” occurs among the creole subjects of travel literature which entails a strategic selection *by* from among the materials transmitted *to* them. Thus, creoles are able to mold dominant and metropolitan values and ideologies to serve their benefit, and convey these through various practices that are then reflected by the writers themselves. In the case of the portrayal of Havana at the end of the nineteenth century, foreign writers and habaneros were similarly implicated in this process of reciprocity in creating a new, post-independence Havana. Not only were they influenced by their own political positioning, such as Witherspoon was influenced by the interventionist politics of the United States, but by the agendas of habaneros and their city officials, and the image of urbanity that these wished to both embody and convey. See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 2003) and Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*.

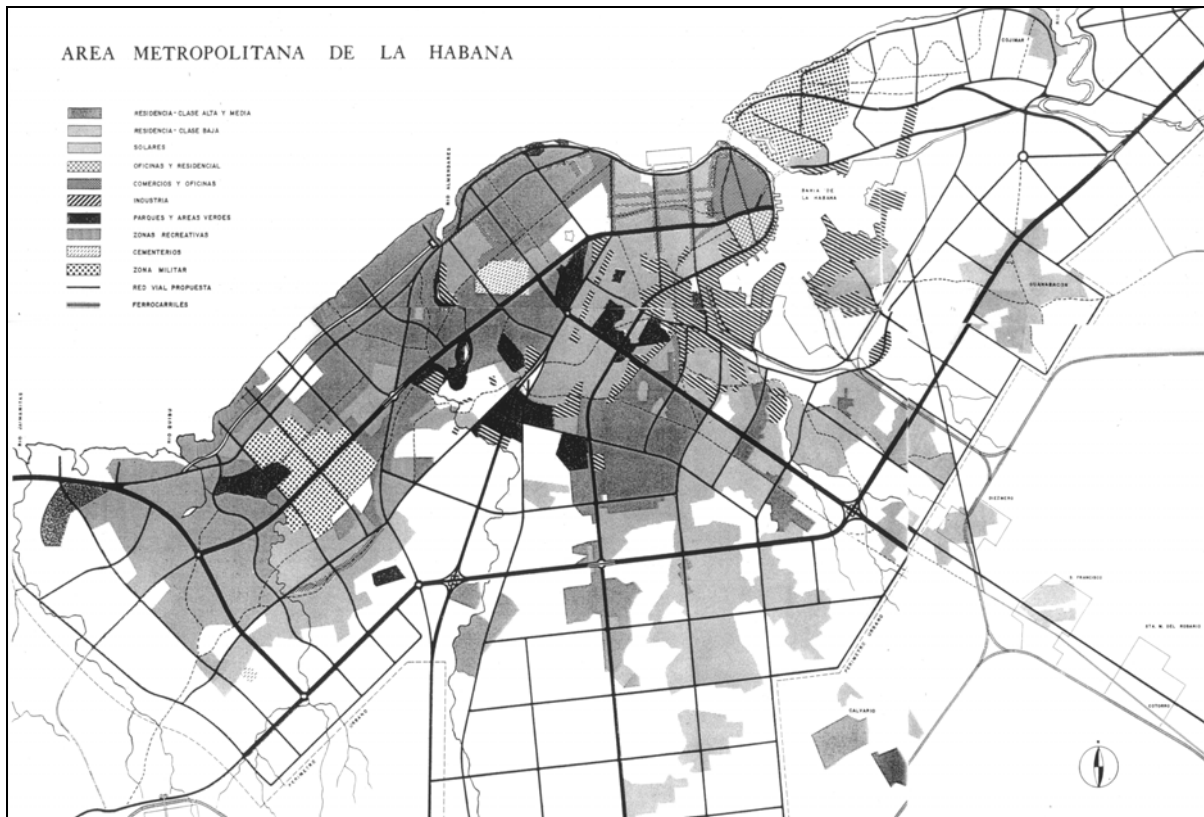
³⁸⁰ Ingeniero Aurelio Sandoval, *Ordenanzas de construcción para la Ciudad de La Habana y pueblos de su Término Municipal*, (La Habana: Imprenta Avisador Comercial, 1907).

monitored.³⁸¹ The result was another redefinition of the urban topography that not only preserved the different layers of habanero history, but that did so behind the facades and veneers of modern urban buildings. As late as 1959, the trajectory of urban growth remained intact within the various neighborhoods of the city, so that the triumph of the 1959 Revolution found Havana a city in which a new urban project was desperately needed to redefine social progress in the modern metropolis. (See Map 6.1)

³⁸¹ Municipio de La Habana, *Reglamento de ciudadelas, casas de vecindad o inquilinato con la parte pertinente de las Ordenanzas Sanitarias* (La Habana: Municipio de La Habana, 1918).

Map 6.1

Metropolitan Area of Havana, 1959. The map is shaded to show the social-economic demographics of each neighborhood.



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