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Tourism, Stakeholder Networks and Sustainability: The Case of the Viñales Valley, Cuba

Presented by

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Viñales de tus bohíos
Tus valles y tus montañas
De tus salubres entrañas
Nacieron los versos míos
Tus arroyos y tus ríos
Fertilizan el sendero
El sinsonte y el jilguero
Le cantan a tu balumba
Que fue cuna y será tumba
De Benito el Viñalero.

*Décima** (poem) from Vivian M. González González (Gonzalez 1995)

(*see explanations p. 44)

Viñales, from your huts
Your valleys and your mountains
From your healthy entrails
My verses were born
Your streams and your rivers
Nourish the trail
The mockingbird and the goldfinch
sing to your bounty
which was crib and will be grave
of Benito, the Viñalero

(Free translation by the author of the thesis)

ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of the Cuban tourist industry into the island's main currency generator fostered the emergence of new tourist stakeholders, from both the public (state-owned tourist facilities) and private sectors (micro-enterprises or *cuentapropistas*). It is crucial to understand how new participation and new organisational structures in the industry can shape and enhance the long-term sustainability of tourism in Cuba. A case study of an emergent alternative tourism destination in Western Cuba (Viñales Valley) reveals complex and striking relationship patterns between stakeholders. In particular, the degree of participation in the industry by the region's various tourism entities is highly uneven, with state entities dominating, as expected. My discussion of the findings suggests that Cuba could draw from its experience in creating well-organized networks of mass organizations to foster a climate of trust and the increased participation among tourist stakeholders.

RÉSUMÉ

L'ascension fulgurante de l'industrie touristique à Cuba au point de devenir la source principale de devises étrangères de l'île a mené à l'émergence de nouvelles entités impliquées dans cette industrie, que ce soit du secteur public (les installations touristiques de l'état) ou du secteur privé (les micro-entreprises ou *cuentapropistas*). Il est donc crucial que l'on comprenne comment cette nouvelle participation dans l'industrie peut aider à façonner et améliorer la durabilité à long terme de l'industrie touristique à Cuba. Une étude de cas de la Vallée de Viñales, une destination touristique alternative en émergence de l'Ouest cubain, permet de révéler des modèles de relations entre entités du tourisme. En particulier, on se rend compte de l'inégalité de la participation des diverses entités de cette région au tourisme, avec une dominance des organisations publiques sur le secteur privé cubain. La discussion des résultats de recherche suggère que Cuba gagnerait à utiliser son expérience dans la création de réseaux bien structurés d'organisations de masse, en vue de favoriser un climat de confiance et d'améliorer la participation des entités du tourisme.

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Montreal, August 31, 2000

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACRONYMS AND TRANSLATIONS

ACRONYM	TERM IN SPANISH	TERM IN ENGLISH / DESCRIPTION
CITMA	*Ministerio de Ciencias, Tecnología y Medio Ambiente*	Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment
IPF	*Instituto Nacional de Planificación Física*	National Physical Planning Insitute
MINTUR	*Ministerio de Turismo*	Ministry of Tourism
GSP		Government service provider
VSP		Volunteer service provider
PP	*Poder Popular (Municipal)*	Municipal Popular Power or government
	Cuentapropista	General term for one who is self-employed. The *cuentapropistas* include: *casa particular*, *paladar* and *transportista*.
	Casa particular	Private accommodation/bed & breakfast
	Paladar	Private, home-based restaurant
	Transportista	Private taxi
	Mogote	Karstic hummocks or pincushions are characteristic of the landscape of the Viñales Valley
	Casa de la Cultura	Municipal Cultural Centre

DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS USED

- **Ecotourism:** Used here in the broadest sense of the term. It includes all tourist activities that have a natural attraction component (e.g. hiking, caving, birdwatching, etc.).
- **Stakeholder:** According to *The Collins English Dictionary* (1998), it is "a person or group not owning shares in an enterprise but affected by or having an interest in its operations, such as the employees, customers, local community, etc." In this case, the tourist industry as a whole is considered as an enterprise and its stakeholders are the organizations (private and public) that are affected by or have an interest in it. In the context of this research, there were 15 stakeholder organizations interviewed. These organizations are grouped under stakeholder groups, as defined below.
- **Stakeholder group:** Five stakeholder groups were defined for the purpose of this research: (1) government service providers; (2) tourist micro-enterprises or *cuentapropistas* (as called in Cuba); (3) volunteer service providers; (4) policy-making organizations; and (5) local residents. The analysis of inter-stakeholder relationships in the Discussion section (p. 78) is based on these categories.

- **Tourism industry sustainability:** It is referred to here as the long-term survival of the tourist industry, or, in other words, the economic sustainability of the industry. As for the social and environmental concerns that generally underlie the concept of sustainability, they were purposely not studied here since the focus the thesis is the economic dimension of Cuba's tourist industry. Social concerns are, however, incorporated in this industry sustainability approach. The principle of cooperating industry stakeholders is one of the pillars of this research. This reflects the growing tendency in the field of tourism to adopt holistic approaches that take into account the many tourist stakeholders (public, private and community) in order to work towards the goal of developing a sustainable tourist industry.
- **Social network:** A set of actors and the relations that hold them together. Actors can be individual people, or they can be aggregate units, such as departments, organizations, or families. The key is that the actors exchange resources which then connect them in a social network (Haythornwaite 1999). The concept of network is used here to understand inter-stakeholder relations in the tourist industry.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, tourism has helped Cuba re-emerge from the profound economic crisis that struck the island in 1989 when the Socialist Block was dismantled and both aid and trade ceased almost completely. Since 1994, tourism has been at the centre of the recovery period known as the "Special Period in Peacetime" (*Periodo especial en tiempo de paz*). Major efforts have been directed towards the development of strategic economic sectors, tourism being a principal beneficiary.

In 1994 the central tourist institution, INTUR, was broken into several public corporations, each of which was required to be competitive and financially viable. This represented a new approach to public management in Cuba. It was preceded by the implementation of innovative reforms one year earlier. The use of the American dollar by Cubans, for example, had already been legalized in 1993 and self-employment, called *cuentapropismo* in Cuba, was permitted in a number of areas of activity, including tourism-related ones such as home-based restaurants, homestays and private taxis.

This restructuring has had major repercussions on the Cuban tourist industry it set out to reinvigorate. In particular, it led to the emergence of a range of new public and private-sector providers of tourist services (referred to as "tourist sector" in the text). These individuals and firms are now competing for a market niche in order to ensure their survival. Succeeding in such an environment is challenging for the smaller and less established players.

Given this context of economic change and the fight of the tourist sector for survival, it is important to explore the sustainability of the Cuban tourist industry from a supply-side perspective. In this research, a choice was made to adopt an economic/tourist industry survival perspective to the concept of sustainability; the environmental and social dimensions that are

indirectly implied. This choice was made based on the understanding that tourism is Cuba's mainstay and that as such, the industry's survival has the potential to improve social well-being. Environmental sustainability needs, however, particular attention which this work was not meant to do.

The relatively recent emergence of new stakeholders has meant that little attention has been paid to them in either Cuban or foreign tourism literature. In particular, there was no study referring to the emerging structure of the Cuban tourist sector at the time this research was undertaken, in November and December 1997. Nor has there been any suggestion of how this new structure can shape the long-term sustainability of tourism in Cuba. This research is particularly timely, now that based on half a decade of experiencing often uneasy multi-stakeholder involvement in tourism, the Cuban State is now attempting to harmonize it and develop a more sustainable industry for the new millennium.

The four central objectives of this thesis are:

(1) to identify the key stakeholders involved in the tourist industry of an emergent case study area (both public and self-employed service providers), with a focus on the service providers and the policy-making organizations;
(2) to analyze the role they all play in the local industry;
(3) to define the type of linkages, networks that connect them; and
(4) to understand the impact of such linkages and networks in the sustainable development of tourism in the case study area and, consequently, in other emergent tourist destinations in Cuba.

The thesis uses a case study of an emergent tourist destination in Cuba (Viñales Valley) to examine how tourism is organized in Cuba and how this structure, in turn, influences local development. The case study lies in the westernmost province of Pinar del Rio (fig 1.1) and features ecotourism and agro-tourism types of assets (e.g. caving, hiking and tobacco farm visit). The case represents a typical mix of stakeholders and actors whose interactions and networking influence local development outcomes.

Figure 1.1.1 The case study area

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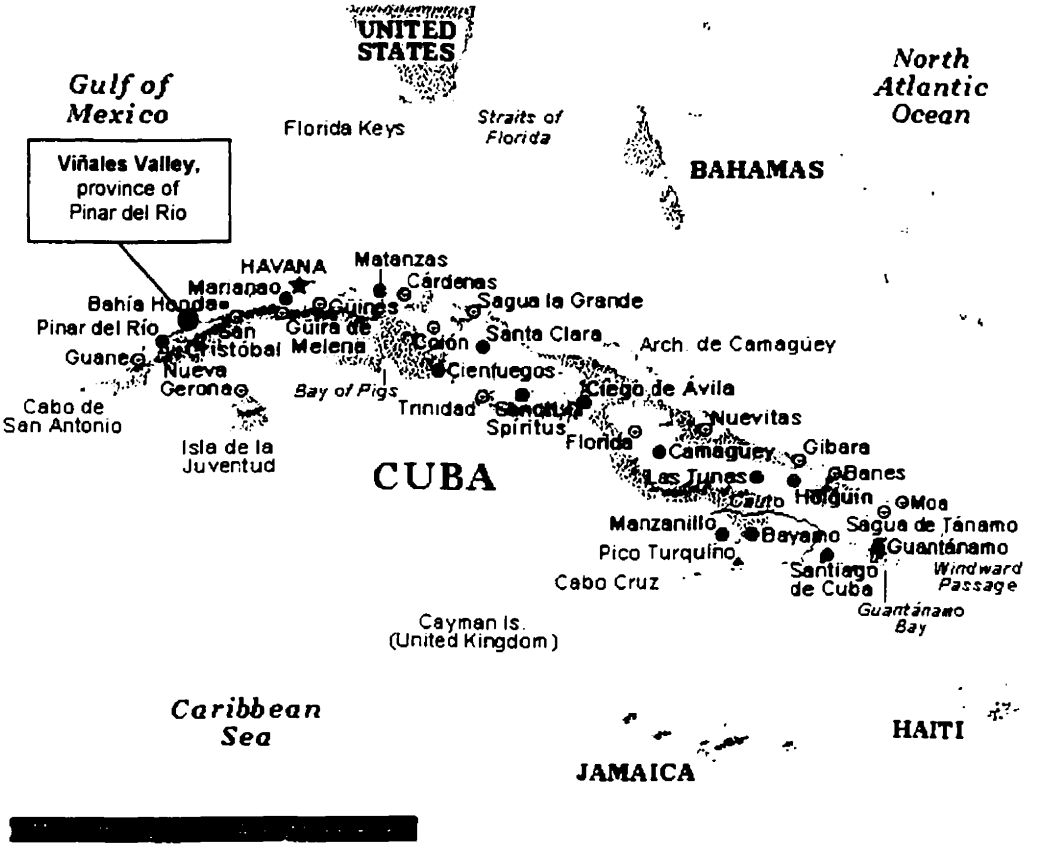

This case study was developed by:

- Building on existing tourism and sociology literature to construct the contextual backdrop;
- Establishing a research methodology embodying primary data collection from semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with key stakeholders;
- Exploring the role these key stakeholders play in the local tourist industry, both individually and within more or less formal trading networks; and
- Identifying, tabulating and analyzing stakeholder perspectives on tourism development in the region.

The thesis begins with chapter 2 which looks into approaches in the tourism literature to the concept of tourist industry sustainability. One of the key elements that emerge from the literature is the importance of understanding the relationships that exist between the various industry stakeholders. Stakeholder cooperation networks is thoroughly addressed in the sociology literature, and some of its main concepts will be introduced here.

Chapter 3 then presents the Cuban tourist industry and the historical events which have shaped it, with an emphasis from the post-revolution of 1959 period to today. Today's challenges facing this industry are also discussed with regards to the lack of diversity of the Cuban tourist product and its competing markets in the Caribbean.

In chapter 4, we first discuss the qualitative methodological approaches selected, the central one being face-to-face interviews, and the advantages and limitations of using such a methodology. The stakeholder groups to be interviewed are also identified: (1) government service providers; (2) tourist micro-enterprises or *cuentapropistas* (as called in Cuba); (3) volunteer service providers; (4) policy-making organizations; and (5) local residents. The case study area, the Viñales

Valley, is then presented as an emergent tourist destination in Cuba with several stakeholder groups interacting, from the public and private sectors, and from the local, provincial and national scales.

The results of the interviews with stakeholders are then discussed in chapter 5. The patterns of inter-stakeholder relationships that emerge in the Viñales Valley demonstrate the uneven degree of participation of the region's various tourist entities, and in particular, the predominance of state entities over the micro-enterprises. Chapter 6 concludes with a review of the findings of this study with regards to the strengths and weaknesses of the current system of tourist services provision. The conclusion also suggests areas for improvement whose implementation has the potential to successfully support the sustainable development of the Viñales, and by extension, the Cuban tourist industry.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In the last two decades, new trends in industrial production approaches have been reshaping the world's industries, including tourism. There has been an explosion of inter-sectoral joint ventures, as well as a booming privatization trend fuelled by the break up of the Soviet Union and increased investment in post-socialist countries (Smith 1994, Alter 1993, Murphy 1985). These processes are bringing new players into the tourist industry arena and generating a new set of opportunities and challenges which need to be addressed.

2.1 UNDERSTANDING THE TOURIST INDUSTRY

The tourist industry is particularly complex, diverse and dynamic. It is one of the fastest-growing and largest of world industries. A large percentage of its component organizations includes seasonal and unofficial enterprises and services, creating the challenge in its study and measurement. A multiplicity of stakeholders is involved, emerging from a variety of sectors (private, NGO, government, and community) and active at different geographical and/or political scales (local/municipal, regional/provincial, and national) (Elliott 1997, Robson 1996). The activities can be grouped as belonging to the tourist attraction, transportation, accommodation, tourist information, support facility and/or infrastructure sectors (Pearce 1995, Gunn 1994).

Numerous definitions of tourism exist. In the 1980s, there was considerable concern about finding a definition for tourism. To cite an example of this issue and debate, Leiper developed a framework for defining tourism in 1979, which was amended by Gunn in 1980 and then rediscussed by Leiper on the same year. A number of schools of thought exist, some of which consider tourism to be an industry because it combines demand, suppliers and product (Smith 1998, Gunn 1994 Murphy 1985), while others –particularly in economy – do not acknowledge that tourism produces a distinct industry product *per se*. They rather tend to regard

tourism as an amalgamation of industries (Murphy 1985). Finally, some refer to tourism as a leisure activity – an activity which takes place away from the visitor's home – rather than as an economic activity (Mathieson and Wall 1982). This research *does* define tourism as an industry focussing on the supply-side (tourist services) rather than on the demand (tourist market). Smith, for instance, defines tourism as:

> ...the aggregate of all businesses that directly provide goods or services to facilitate business, pleasure, and leisure activities away from the home environment. (Smith 1988, 183)

This definition has the advantage of reinforcing the fact that tourism service providers have a common objective: that of making the visitor's experience the most enjoyable and complete experience possible (Murphy 1985). This may appear to be simple and obvious, but in such a highly fragmented industry, it is important to acknowledge the profound inter-relationship existing among stakeholders. This definition remains narrow, however, in that it refers only to service providers coming from the business sector, while NGOs, the community, and government also provide services in various capacities.

2.2 GOVERNMENTS AND TOURISM

In general, the key role that governments have to play is in the coordination of tourism development. Government's interest in tourism stems from its concern with the tremendous economic significance of this industry: taxes are paid by enterprises, employment is generated (often in economically depressed areas) and revenues (foreign currency) accrue to public enterprises. Tourism is thus a highly political economic activity. The coordinating role of governments includes responsibility for:

- planning, coordinating and controlling tourism development to maximize social and economic benefits while minimizing costs;

- ensuring that a relative unity and cohesion exists among stakeholders in order to develop a harmonized destination image (Elliott 1997, Murphy 1994);
- reducing administrative red tape and legislative burdens on the tourist industry by providing "level playing field" (Elliott 1997); and
- fostering cooperation among tourism stakeholders and individual creativity and innovativeness (Gunn 1995).

Governments are not neutral; they have their own interests and values to pursue. This influences the manner in which tourism is planned, managed, promoted and controlled (Hall 1998, Hall 1994, Hall and Jenkins 1995). In the case of a socialist country such as Cuba, the state may be strongly interventionist, ensuring that tourism stays in line with state objectives and ideology, as well as concerns for social equity. In the former GDR (and to a certain extent in Cuba still), there was an emphasis on group recreation and holidays that took place in accommodations provided by a particular workplace or union; this was done to promote social coherence and political indoctrination in tandem with popular recreation (Hall 1994, Hall and Jenkins 1995).

Overall, dependency between the public and the private sector in tourism tends to be highly pronounced. Tourist enterprises can be owned publicly while being managed privately (e.g., the hotel management joint ventures in Cuba), while other, state-owned tourist organizations can be managed as private enterprises with little or no concern for public interest (Elliott 1997). In Cuba, the government plays a major role as a tourist service provider; the state fully owns the national tourist corporations which operate hotels, restaurants, transportation enterprises and travel agencies. Since the breakdown of the Soviet bloc in the 1990s and increased investment in formerly socialist countries, the privatization trend has become a worldwide phenomenon. Large, medium and small-sized enterprises are popping up everywhere, thereby increasing the diversity of

tourist enterprises in those countries.

A growing number of locals have become able to participate in the booming tourist industry and to draw benefits from it for their community (Smith 1994). In conjunction with this phenomenon, the tourist market is changing. The "new" tourist is more educated and demanding, looking for a more personalized and "authentic" travelling experience, custom-made trips are increasingly preferred to mass-developed packages (Poon 1993). Travellers enjoy and thus popularize small-scale tourist services such as home stays (Smith 1994). There has been – especially in the last decade and as a result of these global processes – a tremendous multiplication of tourist stakeholders. This creates a need for a strong coordination inside the industry, in order to maximize the benefits of tourism to the regions and the country while ensuring the protection of nature's endowment and society's heritage – in effect, the protection of what constitutes the resource base of tourism (Murphy 1985).

2.3 APPROACHES TO SUSTAINABLE TOURIST DEVELOPMENT

It is a challenge to develop a sustainable tourist industry, not only because controlling a multitude of economic, social and environmental factors is in itself difficult, but also because the definition of sustainable tourism is fuzzy, broad and of little practical use (Wall 1997, Robson 1996, Müller 1994, Theobald 1994). A growing number of researchers have explored in theory the marriage of tourism and sustainable development and have proposed a variety of interpretations of the concept (Milne 1997; Wackernagel and Rees 1996; Ashworth and Dietvorst 1995; de Kadt 1995; Murphy 1994; Gunn 1994; Hunter and Green 1994). Ecological approaches – such as tourism carrying capacity – suggest that a growth of tourism activity should only occur within acceptable, pre-defined limits (sometimes established from mathematical models) (Manning 1995, Williams and Gill 1994, Canestrelli and Costa 1991). Some specialists restrict the definition of

sustainable tourism, including only alternative forms of tourism, such as ecotourism, nature tourism, and rural tourism (Ceballos-Lascurain 1996, Cater 1994, Whelan 1991, Place 1991). Others question the viability of these "ecological" forms of tourism: paper titles such as "Is ecotourism sustainable?" (Wall 1997) and "Alternative tourism: Pious hope or trojan horse?" (Butler 1990) are quite explicit in their questioning. Using nature-related forms of tourism to define the whole concept of sustainable tourism is limiting in that it excludes other types of tourism – such as urban or congress tourism – from being sustainable.

There are a number of definitions of sustainable tourism development (1989) that provide an understanding of the concept. In particular, Rees' definition of sustainable development has concrete applications to tourism:

> Sustainable development is positive socioeconomic change that does not undermine the ecological and social systems upon which communities and society are dependent. Its successful implementation requires integrated policy, planning, and social learning processes; its political viability depends on the full support of the people it affects through their governments, their social institutions, and their private activities. (Rees 1989, 13)

This definition does not, of course, provide grounds to decide the point at which specific goals are reached. To this end, some researchers have developed indicators that are meant to assess the level of sustainability of a particular tourist destination area (IISD 1993, Inskeep 1991).

However, limiting an understanding of sustainability to measurements of pressures and stresses caused by tourist activities, to measurements of the state of the natural resource base, or to measurements of the impact and consequences of industry activities, can represent only a snapshot in space and time of the ecological, social and economic environment of a tourist destination. This snapshot speaks little about the complex meshing the environment and tourist

industry factors that act upon society. Furthermore, some specialists observe that genuinely sustainable tourism is not necessarily measurable. It is, rather, an ideal target which may not be attainable, but for which we must aim (Milne 1997).

Although an array of broad and fuzzy conceptions of sustainable tourism exist, researchers generally agree on one principle. In the last two decades, there has been a clear tendency towards holistic approaches that take into account the many tourist stakeholders (public, private and community) in order to work towards the goal of developing a sustainable tourist industry (Milne 1997, Robson 1996, Gunn 1995, Williams and Gills 1994, Conway 1993, Murphy 1985). From this general tendency, we can recognize three closely related lines of thought.

Firstly, because of the predominance of "top-down" approaches – incidences in which the destination community has been, for a long time, consulted last regarding tourism development issues that concern it – a number of tourism researchers, starting with Peter Murphy in 1985, have called for a community approach, encouraging leaders to involve their communities in tourism planning and management. The increasing popularity of alternative forms of tourism (such as ecotourism) has triggered the adoption of more participatory approaches to tourism planning and management in certain regions of the world (see Ceballos-Lascurain 1996,. Cater 1994, Whelan 1991 and Place 1991 to name a few).

The second line of approach is to integrate tourism planning with other planning domains that a government is responsible for. A general criticism made by tourism academics was that tourism planning was being undertaken in an isolated fashion, removed from regional and national master planning (Murphy 1985, Müller 1994, Gunn 1995). Today, integrated or holistic planning has become more widespread, facilitated by both goodwill of planning authorities and technological advances such as geographical information systems.

Referring to the tremendous increase in the number of participants in the tourist industry and denouncing the lack of cohesion in this highly fragmented industry, many tourist planners, managers and specialists are advocating a third line of thought, namely a call for an industry-wide multi-stakeholder coordination process, the focus of this thesis. NGOs, businesses, and government entities at the municipal, provincial, national, and even international level are simultaneously involved in the tourist product development process. As joint producers of the tourist experience, their efforts must be coordinated in order to maximize the benefits and minimize the negative impacts of tourism. The recognition by stakeholders of this interdependency is another prerequisite to the development of a more sustainable industry. It is well stated by Gunn that

> The more each one learns about the others, the more successful he can be in his own enterprise no matter whether it is run by commercial business, non-profit organization, or government. Tourism cannot be planned without understanding the interrelationships among the several parts of the supply side (1994, 33).

The development of dynamic collaborative processes is especially crucial in tourist destination areas that are experiencing strong growth and change due to tourism itself (Elliott 1997, Conway 1997, Jamal and Getz 1995, Laws 1995). Successful collaborative processes are therefore at the basis of the long term survival or sustainability of the tourist industry.

2.4 STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION AND NETWORKS

In response to the concern for sustainability, some specialists present the key conditions for successful stakeholder cooperation – they promote the virtues of developing collaborative mechanisms for ensuring sustainable tourism development, or present strategies for ensuring flourishing inter-stakeholder collaboration (Jamal and Getz 1995, Alter and Hague 1993). It

seems, however, more logical to first look at the characteristics of the *existing* inter-stakeholder relationships or networks. As some researchers have understood it, these organizational networks emerge naturally and their structure, nature, and degree of organization can play a crucial role in developing a sustainable tourist industry. These authors recommend focussing on the institutional arrangements of tourism, seeing this as a domain in need of greater attention (Milne 1997, Hall and Jenkins 1995). Pearce (1995) is one of the few who has contributed to an understanding of the organizational dimension of tourism with his multiple geographical scales framework. He points out that it is crucial to look at the tourist industry in a systemic and systematic manner, and to identify and understand the interrelationships and interplay that exist among the multiple facets of the tourist industry. Studies must also look at the institutional environment in which tourist activity takes place.

Pearce (1995) proposed a comprehensive, matrix-like methodology that he used to develop an island-wide tourism plan for Sarawak, Indonesia. As an acknowledgement of the multi-faceted and dynamic nature of tourism, Pearce's model looks at the tourist system in a systemic manner. His perspective is geographically-wide, including the regional to the local scales, and sectorally-wide, involving the various sectors of the industry (accommodation, attractions, transportation, etc.). Pearce explores the structure and functions of a wide range of industry stakeholders, in order to reveal potential gaps or overlaps, as well as strengths and synergies that may exist among them. The following table shows the breadth of sectors and stakeholders comprised in this framework.

Table 2.4.1 Framework for interorganizational analysis (Pearce 1995; p. 236)

Functions / Agency	Marketing	Visitor servicing	Develop -ment	Operations	Planning and policy	Research	Regulations	Training
State tourism agency								
National tourist organization								
Private sector organization								
Development corporations								
Other government agencies								

Two important shortcomings of this method, in the context of a master's thesis such as this, is that it involves costly and time-consuming large-scale analyses, and it requires close cooperation with state agencies. The principles, however, remain valid, and this thesis has adopted them as a basis to analyse the Viñales Valley tourist industry.

In particular, the study of inter-stakeholder relationships constitutes a key element of this thesis. Most of the literature pertaining to this field – which is also called organizational or social networks – is dominated by sociologists, who provide an articulate and comprehensive perspective on the matter (see Galaskiewicz 1979; Alter and Hage 1993; Wasserman and Galaskiewicz 1994; Grabher and Stark 1997). The primary component of a social network is the individual tie one organization has with another, forming a dyad which is in itself tied to other dyads thus forming tryads, and so on, with the end result being a network which is embedded in an institutional system that contains a myriad of other networks (Galskiewicz and Wasserman 1994). An interesting contextualization of this concept is made by Alter and Hague (1993) who extrapolate the idea of the "ultimate" institutional network as being the United Nations. The UN is a network

of countries, each composed of its own national networks, which can be broken down to the smallest unit of relationship between social entities in a country. With the breakdown of government institutions and industries that has occurred in the last decades, it is crucial to be able to understand all of the pieces of a global system.

Organizational networks emerge to satisfy needs of money and information, and to provide for the moral support of organizations. Through networks, organizations are capable of securing these resources with and through other actors in the group. It is interesting to note that the influence or power of a stakeholder is not related to the quantity of resources held individually, but to the quantity of resources securable via network connections (Galaskiewicz 1979). It is clear that networks act as a stabilizing force for organizations, reducing turbulence by allowing individual organizations to be more flexible and innovative by joining with others to address demands and pressures placed upon them (Jamal and Getz, 1995, Alter and Hague 1993, Galaskiewicz 1979). In studies on networks in post-socialist countries, Grahber and Stark (1997) insisted that local network ties reduce the uncertainties and risks facing start-up ventures. They act as buffers and reduce the "liability of newness", a common weakness that new firms are prone to, as is the case for the new small enterprises (*cuentapropistas*) in the Viñales Valley, Cuba.

In practical terms, networks can take many forms. They can be formal or informal, *ad hoc* or permanent (Reed 1997). Alter and Hague (1993) have developed a detailed typology to classify networks, based on the type of relationship – competitive or symbiotic – existing between component organizations, the number of organizations involved, and the level of cooperation. Limited cooperation generally involves the granting of preferred subcontracts and referral sources. Joint ventures are considered to be a sign of moderate cooperation, and cartels a sign of broad cooperation. The level of cooperation in a network relationship is directly related to its potential to

become a highly-evolved cooperative structure. As new kinds of tourism businesses become established and organize into networks, the organizational environment changes and evolves into a more complex system (Reed 1997). The most important exchanges that take place in a network are not always tangible, but are instead often based on values such as friendship, trust and loyalty. This is particularly the case in environments such as the post-socialist countries (or tribal societies) where patterns of economic exchange are closely linked with ties of kinship and friendship (Grahber and Stark 1997; Smith 1994; Alter and Hague 1993).

Future studies in the field of social networks should focus on the strength of network ties. Loosely coupled networks are composed of nodes of weakly tied elements. These networks are flexible and adaptable – they can respond to changing market demand and can exploit new market opportunities in the disruption of established distribution patterns. Furthermore, research by Mark Granovetter's (1973) on the strength of weak ties showed that when an individual is looking for a job, the chances are high that he has the same contacts or strategic information that his close friends or relatives have. They will have overlapping information, whereas a friend of a friend has a better chance of providing new information to this individual since they are not directly related. Granovetter's theory shows that in environments where survival depends on contacts, weak ties become an essential tool to get by and find information and resources that would not, otherwise, be available.

Although too many weak ties, however, do not favour social cohesion (Grahber and Stark 1997), tight networks have a limited organizational flexibility. They:

> maintain a segmented system of circumscribed action and response. That limits the potential of managing to respond creatively to the new environment and the problems it poses (Grahber and Stark 1997, 12).

We could easily relate this observation about tight networks to the case of a centrally planned country such as Cuba. Mateo Rodriguez (1996) observed that in Cuba, while there are deficiencies in many economic structures and networks due to an excessive centralization of decision-making systems, constituting an obstacle to territorial and individual initiatives, there also exists a well-articulated network of local and mass organizations that are deeply rooted in the community.

One great research need indicated by an increasing number of authors is for studies in tourism to begin to incorporate the evolving literature on networks and alliances. How do networks form and what are the dynamics that characterize them in a tourist destination area? What is the role that networks play in sustaining small enterprises (Milne 1997)? And, in more concrete terms, how can we devise procedures which are capable of dealing with complex decision-making contexts such as these inter-stakeholder networks (Wall 1997)?

There is no doubt that in order to understand the behaviour of a network, we must understand the threats and uncertainties the network is exposed to in its environment: inflation, competition, state laws and regulations. This is the primary reason why contextual studies must precede and feed into research on networks (Galaskiewicz 1979). This observation relates to the second objective of this thesis, to define the type of linkages, networks that connect stakeholders in the case study area.

CHAPTER 3 THE CUBAN TOURIST INDUSTRY

The Pearl of the Caribbean, as Cuba is often referred to, has more than a century of experience with international tourism. In response to a series of political events, the tourist industry has witnessed booms and busts in the last sixty years. Today, it truly is the "heart of the economy"[1]. What are the circumstances that have transformed the face and fate of the Cuban tourist industry? This chapter begins by recounting the salient moments of tourism development since the 1950s. We then discuss the current context and some of the challenges and opportunities with regards to Cuba as a Caribbean destination; and the structure of the Cuban tourist industry.

3.1 TOURISM IN CUBA: THE BOOMS AND BUSTS SINCE THE 1950S

Cuba is the largest island of the Caribbean and the closest to the United States. The island was, prior to the 1959 Cuban revolution, the United States' primary Caribbean trading partner and favourite tourist destination. The number of tourist arrivals in 1957 reached 272,266 visitors (87% were American). The total receipts were US $56.9M in that year (the equivalent of $346M in 2000 according to AIER 2000) , and this made tourism Cuba's second foreign currency earner after sugar (Villalba 1993). The Cuba tourist industry was at that time shaped by and for foreigners, especially Americans, as a tropical paradise for prostitution and gambling (Hinch 1990).

The Cuban revolution (1959) shaped a new Cuban political, social and economic landscape. In response to its alignment with the Soviet Union in 1962, the United States imposed a trade embargo on Cuba, which is still in place today. Among other sanctions is a ban on American travel to the island, which has seriously affected international tourism to the island, but which has been slightly relaxed in the last decade with increased academic exchanges between the

two countries and Cuban-Americans travelling to Cuba. Tourist arrivals dropped to approximately 4,180 tourists in 1961, a 98.5% decline from the 1957 levels (Villalba 1993).

After the Revolution, Cuba turned to the Soviet Union for economic support. In 1972, the island became a member of the Soviet trade block, the CMEA (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance). The ties with the CMEA countries were strong and pervasive and Cuba came to rely on them for over 80% of its imports at the end of 1980s (Zimbalist 1992). Cuba's economic development model was integrated to the CMEA's development model which main characteristics were (March-Poquet 2000, Brandwayn 1993):

- exports specialization on few primary products;
- imports of domestic needs products from the CMEA countries with favourable terms of trade (the Soviet oil was bartered for Cuban sugar at lower prices than world market);
- limited trade with capitalist states; and
- financial, commercial and technical support to the least developed CMEA countries such as Cuba.

This strategy contributed to generate important growth in the Cuban economy. Such an all-encompassing development strategy extended to all of the Cuban economic and social activities, including tourism. Foreign visitors to Cuba during this period were essentially from socialist countries and an insignificant number of them were from friendly countries such as Canada, Spain and Mexico. With the country's adopted socialist ideals, tourism development shifted away from international tourism to focus on domestic tourism *for* the Cuban people.

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[1] As reported in Godinez (1998), Vice-president Carlos Lage stated "*Yo no diría que el turismo es uno de los sectores más importantes, el turismo es el corazón de la economía*" (I would not say that tourism is one of the most important sectors, tourism is the heart of the economy).

Strong incentives for Cuban travel within the island were put in place with the objective of promoting the growth of a Cuban nationalistic or revolutionary feeling and to "tighten the bonds of civil solidarity" (free translation from Villalba 1993, 125). The State was offering very affordable rates to nationalized tourist facilities across the country. New three-star hotels were built and alternative modes of tourism such as camping were promoted. Camping centres were built and hotels were renovated for the Cuban clientele. Most of the tourist facilities were built in the more popular beach locations. However, some important nature destinations such as the Viñales Valley were given camping facilities (the Campismo Dos Hermanas) and three hotels, Hotel Los Jazmines, Hotel La Ermita, Hotel Rancho San Vicente. These four facilities were built in the early 1960s. Today, the national corporation Campismo Popular manages Campismo Dos Hermanas whereas the hotels are managed by Horizontes Hoteles.

By the mid 70s, the State felt a need for economic rationalization and revenue generation and this became an incentive for the reactivation of international tourism. The new national tourist agency Instituto Nacional del Turismo (INTUR) was given this mandate, with responsibilities ranging from tourist planning and policy development to marketing and data collection. As a result of efforts in promoting international tourism, the first organized tourist groups from a non-socialist country, Canada, arrived in Cuba in 1972. Following this event was a growing inflow of foreign organized groups to the island to enjoy its beach and its sun. Although Havana attracted an increasing number of tourists interested in the capital's remarkable historic and cultural sites, the promotion and popularity of beach destinations such as Varadero and Guardalavaca, on the northern coast, contributed to making Cuba a typical 3S (sun, sea and sand) type of destination, as is the case for most other Caribbean destinations (Honey 1999, Villalba 1993, Espino 1991).

In the early 1980s, a series of crises seriously eroded Cuba's fragile stability. These include the world sugar market prices crisis, the rise in international interest rates, the decreasing

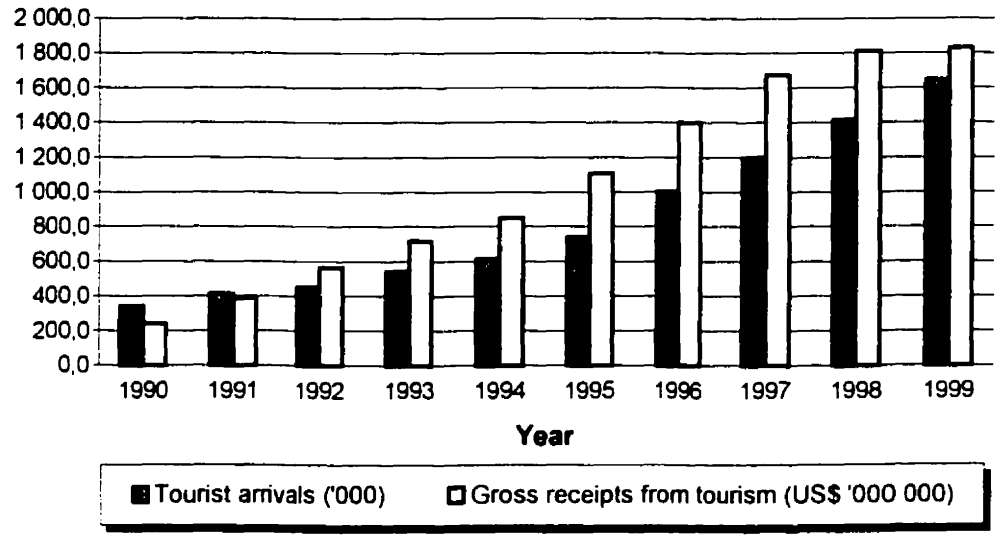
availability of hard currency liquidity and financing by creditors from Western countries, and the insufficient level of Cuban sugar outputs relative to commitments to the CMEA countries. These events all announced the beginning of Cuba's economic and social hardships (Pérez-López 1990). A series of economic 'rectification' measures (*campaña de rectificación de errores y tendencias negativas* – campain to rectify errors and negative tendencies) were therefore implemented in 1986, which included a greater emphasis on foreign trade (Brandwayn 1993). In this context, tourism became increasingly important in the country's development agenda. By 1987, the industry was the country's third largest earner of hard currency with 111.7 million convertible pesos (at parity with the US dollar) (Zimbalist 1992).

The collapse of the communist block in 1989 gave the *coup de grâce* to Cuba, marking the start of a profound economic crisis from which Cuba is still trying to emerge today. In August 1990, the Cuban government decided to adopt emergency measures. These were contained in an economic austerity program called the Special Period in Peacetime (*Periodo especial en tiempo de paz*) (Perez-Lopez 1992). Among other measures the program included : (1) severe food rationing; (2) the reduction of oil consumption; (3) the legalization of the use of American dollars for Cubans; and most importantly (3) the promotion of foreign investment through joint ventures and production sharing arrangements – with a special emphasis on tourism exports (The Economist Intelligence Unit 1996b, Brandwayn 1993, Zimbalist 1992). These measures were designed to bolster key growth sectors of the Cuban economy and in 1994, tourism overtook sugar for the first time as a foreign exchange earner (EIU 1995b).

In 1997, the GDP was $19,386 million of which 31.3% came from commerce and tourism, closely followed by manufacturing (EIU 1999a). Tourist arrivals in that year were 1.2 million, while gross receipts were 1.54 billion (Crespo and Díaz 1997). These figures represent a 73% increase in visitors and a 85% increase in gross receipts compared to the 1989 figures. By the

year 2010, Cuba officially expects to receive 10 million tourists and generate gross profits and tax revenues of US$ 5 billion (some economic specialists have come up with less ambitious estimates) (Blanco 1998). The following figure (3.1.1) details the growth of tourism in Cuba from 1989 to 1997.

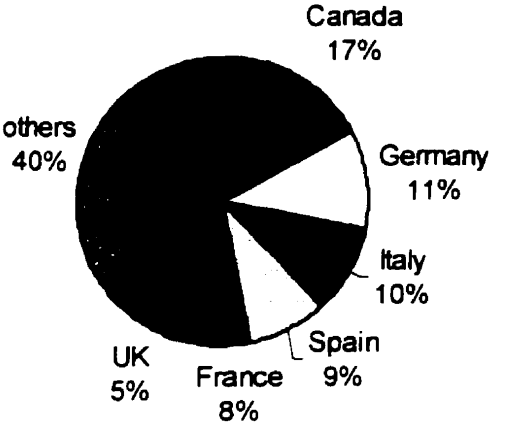
Figure 3.1.1 Tourist arrivals and gross receipts in hard currency from tourism.



Sources: Crespo and Díaz 1997 (for 1990 to 1997 tourist receipts, and for 1995 to 1997 tourist arrivals), Price Waterhouse 1994 (1990 to 1992 for tourist arrivals), Suddaby 1997, 123 (for 1993 and 1994 tourist arrivals), EIU 1999b (for 1998 values), EIU 2000a (for 1999 revenues) and EIU 2000b (for 1999 tourist arrivals). Note: Unlike other countries, Cuba includes revenues from other sectors in the tourist industry (airline travel, entertainment and culture and retail sales of national goods) (EIU 1996c). The estimated net income to Cuba is 33% of the reported gross figure (Espino 1993), which takes into account the inflation rate of the year reported on.

Cuba's main tourist generating country has been Canada since the mid 1970s, although Italy apparently overtook Canada in 1996 (Dominguez 1997). The following figure (3.1.2) shows the origin of the 1,6 million tourist who traveled to Cuba in 1999.

Figure 3.1.2 Origin of tourists travelling to Cuba in 1999

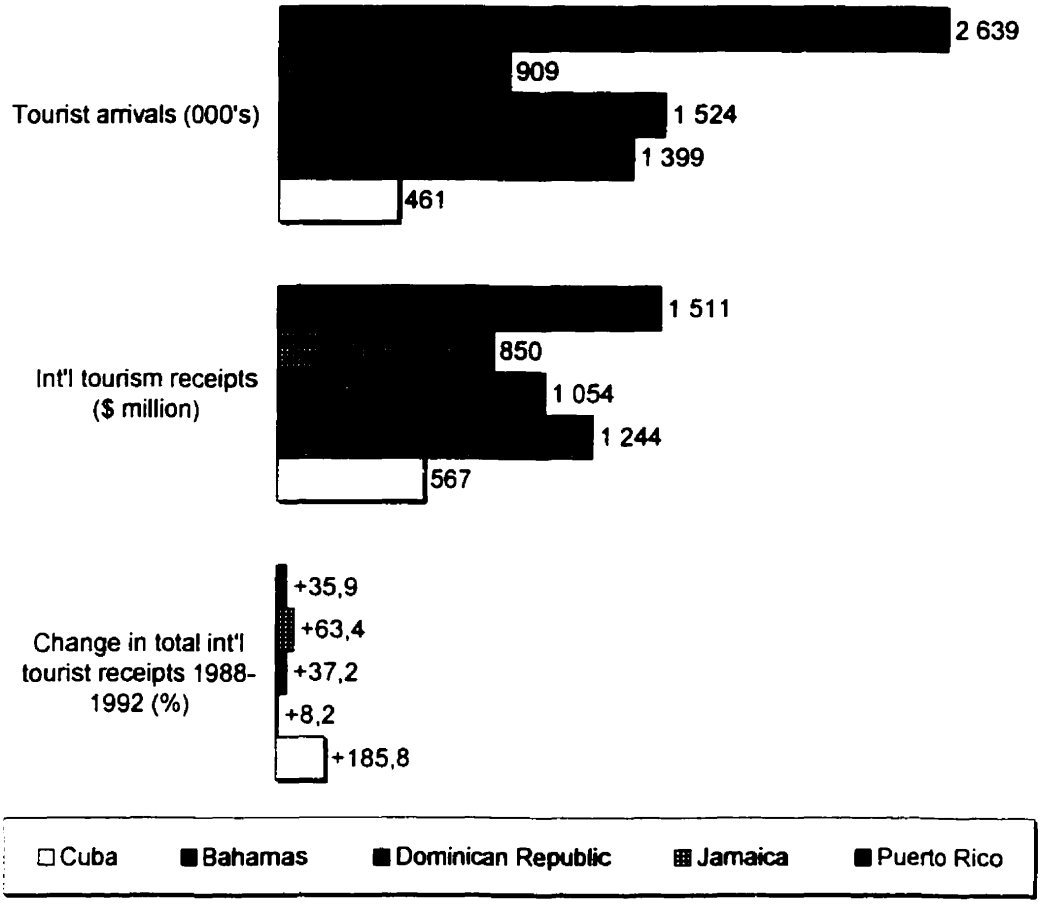


Source: Data from EIU 1999b

3.2 CUBA, THE PEARL OF THE CARIBBEAN

While Cuba was, in the 1950s, the centre for tourism in the Caribbean, the island had to leave behind its share of the US market when it was isolated from that market by the American trade embargo. But with the revival of international tourism in Cuba since the 80s, Cuba has demonstrated impressive progress in regaining part of the Caribbean tourist market. From 1988 to 1992, the country's international tourist receipts grew by 186% and became in 1992 the fifth destination in the Caribbean for tourist receipts. The first four destinations are fierce competitors: Puerto Rico, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and Bahamas (Garcell Cortizo 1994) as is shown in chart 3.2.1 on the following page.

Figure 3.2.1 Importance of tourism in the five largest tourism players in the Caribbean in 1992: Cuba, Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Puerto Rico



Source: Data from *Price Waterhouse* 1994 (p. 108)

This chart shows that in 1992, Puerto Rico was the most visited Caribbean destination, capturing 38% of the total arrivals (2.6 M visitors) in these five countries, while Cuba was fifth with 7% of the tourist market (461,000 visitors). As for Cuba's performance with respect to international tourist receipts, it also ranks fifth. It captured only 11% of total receipts of the five countries (567SM) while its closest competitor, Jamaica, collected 16% and Puerto Rico, the

strongest destination in that year gathered 29% of international receipts (1.5SB). However, Cuba has outperformed the four other countries in terms of increase in international tourist receipts, with an increase of 186% from 1988 to 1992. Far behind is Jamaica with 63% growth. These figures show how Cuba's tourism promotion offensive has been fruitful, although competition is fierce among these players. More recent articles report that Cuba is today a serious rival to the other Caribbean islands (Dominguez 1997). In fact, Jim Hepple, deputy director general of the Bahamas' tourism ministry declared in 1998:

> We have already seen the impact of Cuba, the Bahamas has lost one-third of its Canadian visitors and 10 percent of its European visitors to Cuba, representing some $50 million in annual business. (Hutt 1998)

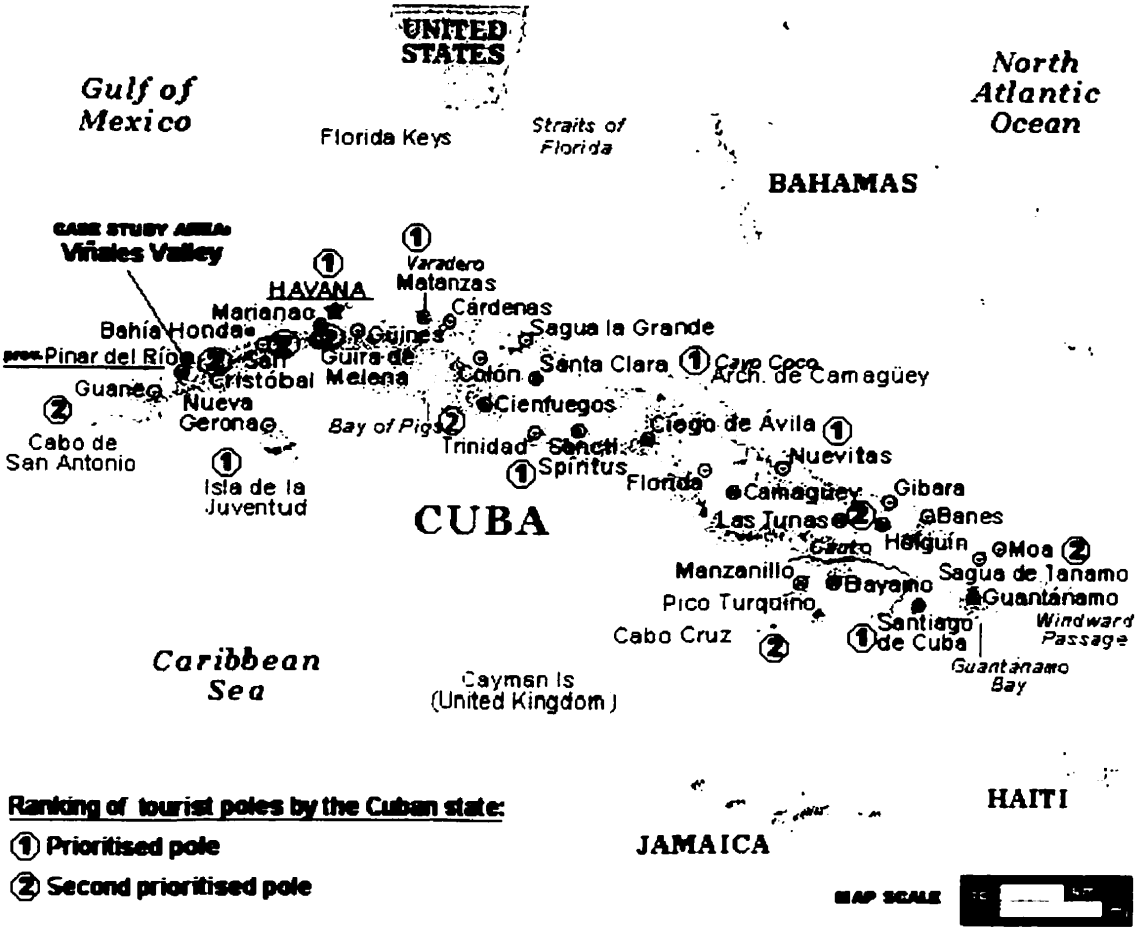
With its 5800 km of coastline, 289 white fine sand beaches and more than 1,600 small islands and keys, it is not surprising to see Cuba enjoying an excellent reputation as a beach destination (Salinas and Estevez 1996, Honey 1999). This is reflected in the choice, by the National Planning Institute (Ledo 1997), for the eight prioritized tourist destinations in Cuba. These are mainly related to beach tourism: Havana; Varadero; Jardines del Rey (Cayo Coco); North of Camaguey (beach of Santa Maria, the keys, etc.); North of Holguin (Guardalavaca); Santiago de Cuba; South Coast (Cienfuegos and Sancti Spiritus); Archipelago of Los Camarreos (Isla de la Juventud and Cayo Largo).

The following eight prioritized tourist poles are nature-related niche destinations (such as adventure, eco-, caving tourism). Although they are considered important, the niche destinations are far from overthrowing the traditional beach destinations. In 1997, the secondary prioritized poles included: Guanahacabibes (Pinar del Rio); Viñales, Soroa, northern keys (Pinar del Rio); Saguá (north of Villa Clara, Pinar del Rio); Caibaquien (east of Villa Clara); North of Las Tunas; Baracoa; South of Granma (Pilón, etc.); Cienaga de Zapata. These sixteen prioritized poles are

shown in figure 3.2.2 below.

Figure 3.2.2 The prioritized tourist poles in Cuba in 1997

Source: Base map from Microsoft Corporation©. 1997-2000 and data from Ledo 1997



Being different and demonstrating it

Some specialists see a major limiting factor to international tourism's growth in Cuba: there is a lack of differentiation of the Cuban tourist product from that of other Caribbean islands. This, allied to the low diversity of the Cuban tourist product itself create serious problems, among

them being a low travel repeat rate. Cuba's repeat rate ranges from 8 to 19 % compared to 36 to 39% in Barbados (Simon 1995; Miami Herald 1998). Also, low product differentiation does not contribute to creating a nationally distinct destination image of Cuba because its primary attractions – sun, sand and sea – can be found on all the Caribbean islands.

Another limitation of the Cuban tourist industry is that it is still strongly focused on mass, packaged tourism as a source of mass income. Some analyst have called Cuba a one-dimensional destination. It is not because Cuba has few options to offer in terms of its tourism products but because tourists' main travel motivations is for mass, 3S tourist experiences (Simon 1995). Although there have been significant improvements in the last decade, there are still few attractions other than sun, sea and beach. Some trade and tourism development specialists call for the development of activities such as golf courses and water sports, or for niche tourism activities such as cave, cycle, and health/spa tourism. Such activities would attract higher-spending tourists and more repeat visitors, who tend to have more destination allegiance than budget-type tourists (Hutt 1998; Miami Herald 1998). In that sense, Berman criticizes among other things the lack of diversity of Cuba's tourist services and products:

> Cuban resorts tend to offer the basic amenities -food and beverage operations are simple; recreational activities are limited, in most cases, to the pool and beach area; nightime entertainment is strictly on-site; and shopping is non-existent. For a tourist, there is very little to do in Cuba other than enjoy the beaches and the tropical climate. ... Cuba's one competitive advantage over any other island destination in the Caribbean is that Cuba is cheap, cheap, cheap -in both senses of the word. The lodging products that are being developed are neither world-class resorts nor do they provide the amenities that today's demanding resort guests expect. There's no comparison between Cuba and D.R., Puerto Rico or Jamaica. (Berman 1994)

This competition that exists between Cuba and the other Caribbean tourist destinations is

made fiercer because of the geographical proximity of these destinations to the US tourist market. It is further exacerbated by three notorious blocking measures the US imposes on Cuba, one of which dates from the revolution (Hinch 1990; Espino 1993). The latter prohibits bilateral trade between the US and Cuba and it includes a travel ban of Americans to the island, which seriously prevents Cuba from fully participating in the Caribbean tourism economy (Garcell Cortizo 1994). The second blocking measure, the Toricelli bill of 1992, prohibits any commercial transaction with Cuba by a subsidiary of any US corporation based in a third country. The most recent blockade is the Helms Burton Act, which was enacted in 1996. It further heightens the barrier to economic development by attempting to halt all foreign investment in Cuba. Punishments are severe for violators: The crime of "trading with the enemy", or in other words investing in Cuba, is punishable by up to 10 years in prison and a fine up to $250,000 if committed by an individual or $1 million if committed by a corporation (Alarcón[2] 1999). Because foreign investments have been a key factor in the recovery to date, these barriers have the unavoidable effect of slowing down the response of the Cuban economy to the revitalization measures of the Special Period (Casals 1996).

Finally, Cuba, as is generally the case for developing countries, suffers from severe economic leakage from tourism expenditure (De Holan and Phillips 1997). Although tourism has been its champion industry to date, statistics from 1991 show that the net income from tourism is about 36% of the gross income (110SM net *vs* 300SM gross income) (Espino 1993). Earnings from tourism are projected to continue to rise but the industry's appetite for expensive imports is seriously curtailing the potential benefits Cuba can reap from international tourism. Further leakage is caused by factors such as the foreign exchange cost of capital investment, payments abroad in the form of profits or royalties to foreign travel agents, promotion and publicity abroad

[2] Ricardo Alarcón is the President of the National Assembly of the People's Power (*Poder Popular*) of

and overseas training of personnel (Espino 1991). The solutions to this trade balance problem lie essentially in reducing imports in all sectors (of course, lifting the embargo would reduce the cost of imports) and establishing effective linkages with other sectors of the Cuban economy, particularly agriculture, services and retailing (Zimbalist 1992, Espino 1993).

Despite the many challenges Cuba has to face, the island possesses tremendous assets as a tourist destination: a rich cultural and historical background, safe travel possibilities compared to other Caribbean destinations, and a specially bountiful natural resources base (Macaulay 1994, Garcell Cortizo 1994):

> One of Cuba's key product advantages is clearly its physical environment. Due to its size and its configuration, Cuba offers both superior beaches and other natural resources ranging from mineral springs to offshore keys and presenting significant potential for ecotourism (Simon 1995, 35).

These characteristics have the potential, if well exploited, to differentiate Cuba as a tourism destination among the other Caribbean destinations, and they can constitute a base on which a new tourist destination image is built.

The Cuban government understands the importance of diversifying the tourist product and as a result, important efforts have been made in the last few years to take remedial measures. There have recent strong attempts to develop value-added tourist packages and stand-alone excursions that package or independent travellers can purchase. In particular, tours increasingly include niche products and destinations with offerings including health, cultural, congress and especially nature tourism (Honey 1999, Salinas and Estevez 1996, Ministerio de Comercio y Turismo 1994). As a testimony to its commitment to developing nature tourism, the government

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Cuba. He wrote an article on the US embargo in a special issue of Cigar Aficionado on Cuba in May 1999.

formed the National Commission for the Development of Ecotourism in 1991, which involves key ministries, research centres, national tourism corporations and environmental NGOs (Salinas and Borrego 1997).

3.3 TOURISM AS PART OF CUBA'S CENTRALIZED SYSTEM

With the adoption of a socialist ideology, Cuba also adopted a highly centralized and bureaucratic decision-making structure and planned economy. The Communist Party of Cuba or PCC, with branches from the national level (*Comité National del PCC*) to the neighbourhood level (Committee for the Defence of the Revolution, *Comité de Defensa de la Revolución* or CDR), is closely involved in all important decision-making in the country. It works closely with the National Assembly of the People's Power, the state's legislative body and supreme authority that has representation from the national to the municipal level[3].

The municipal assembly of the People's Power or *Poder Popular Municipal* analyses, discusses, supervises, inspects as well as controls municipal affairs, from social and economic to judicial and political (Roman 1999, Malinowitz 1997, Dilla *et al* 1995). It is composed of delegates who are directly elected by the population in a given neighbourhood electoral division. These delegates are the people's closest representatives of the state. The important forum where the population and its respective delegates meet is the Meetings to Render Account (*rendición de cuenta*), which is normally held every six months. These community meetings are designed as a means to exchange information, where the population formulates demands and the government answers requests and issues that are raised. The sociologist Mona Rosendhal spent four years in Cuba conducting doctoral research and participated in a number of such meetings from which she has insights on the dynamics of participation. She comments in her ethnographic study *Inside the*

Revolution: Everyday Life in Socialist Cuba (Rosendhal 1997) that on the occasion of accounts-rendering meetings, the population is encouraged to comment, question or criticise openly, as long as it is based on concrete examples. However, although municipal delegates take initiatives for solving problems and conflicts, "the Party and the officials of the *Poder Popular* set the limits on how these initiatives should be treated". Their intervention may be motivated by wider understanding of the political and economic context by party and *Poder Popular* officials than the delegates themselves, or because higher levels of government impose a decision on the municipality which local officials can not change. However, while delegates express their understanding of the point of view of the leaders, they complain sometimes about "the capriciousness of decision making" (Rosendhal 1997, 144). A number of Cubanists have called for new participation fora to be opened if Cubans are to be truly involved in decision-making processes. According to Malinowitz (1997), this is only possible if the paternalistic attitude of the state in solving individual problems fades and gives place to people organizing collective demands. However, a Human Right Watch report indicates that while Cuba's constitution includes broad statements of fundamental rights, there are other legal provisions that grant the state extraordinary authority to penalize individuals who attempt to enjoy their rights to free expression and association. In reality, this implies that beyond government-backed "mass and social organizations", free association is virtually impossible (Human Right Watch 1999).

Another obstacle to participation is that due to strong centralization, the municipal *Poder Popular* has minor decision-making power as opposed to that of the provincial or national *Poder Popular*. Typically, the activities under municipal control are the delivery of basic social services. Productive activities generally remain under the control of the provincial and national government,

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[3] For a complete analysis of the Cuban government structure, see Roman 1998 and Dilla *et al* 1992.

as is the case for tourism (Malinovitz 1997). This explains why most municipalities are devoid of a Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR) representative, a situation condemned by certain municipalities with a growing interest in tourism, such as Viñales (interview with the vice-president of the Viñales municipality's *Poder Popular*, 1997).

The growing importance of the tourist industry as Cuba's economic revival industry has led the Cuban government to take serious measures to make this industry more efficient and capable of responding quickly to the international market. Tourism is highly favoured over other sectors and the highly centralized decision-making dynamics has enabled the country to mobilize resources for the support of priority sectors such as this one, even to the detriment of others. Although this practice has not satisfied everyone, it has been effective in enabling Cuba to survive the many hardships of the 1990s (Dilla *et al* 1992, Zimbalist 1992, Dubesset 1995).

In 1994, the only national institution responsible for tourism development, INTUR, was dismantled and broken down into a number of national corporations, including, among the most important (Dominguez 1997; INTUR 1993):

- recreation and restaurants corporation (Rumbos Recreación y Turismo);
- artist shows enterprise (Artex);
- tour operator (Cubatur) and travel agencies (Amistur, Rumbos, Cubatour, Sol y Son and Gaviota);
- tourist transportation enterprise (Transtur);
- hard currency stores (Caracol);
- importation and distribution of goods to hotels (Abatur); and
- hotel chains (see table 3.3.1).

The hotel sector is the most diverse in that it holds hotel chains which cater to various tourist segments. To illustrate this, a list of the new hotel chains is provided in table below.

Table 3.3.1 Hotel chains created starting in 1994

Corporations created	Market segment
Gran Caribe	International tourism. High-end tourist facilities (five-stars)
Gaviota	International tourism. Speciality tourism: mountain, health, hunting and fishing tourism.
Hoteles Horizontes	International tourism. Three-star hotels. Close to 30% of its facilities specialize in alternative tourism (nature, hunting and health). In the Viñales Valley, the three hotels belong to Horizontes: Hotel Los Jazmines, Hotel La Ermita, and Rancho San Vicente.
Habanaguex	International tourism. Old Havana sector exclusively.
Isla Azul	National tourism. Two-star hotels.
Campismo popular	National tourism mainly and beginning with international tourism. Camping sites with chalets (cabañas) across the country. In Viñales, the Campismo Dos Hermanas is one of their facilities.

Each of these enterprises is responsible for its own economic sustainability and for negotiating with overseas partners for agreements involving management, marketing or injection of foreign capital, with prior approval by MINTUR (De Holan and Phillips 1997, EIU 1999b). In January 1998, there were 21 joint ventures with more than US$M 667 of foreign investment (Granma 1998b).

The national tourist development strategy is overseen by the MINTUR, with its small staff of 60 specialists at its Havana head office. However, MINTUR works closely with other ministries, especially with the national Physical Planning Institute (IPF) and the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment (CITMA) on sectoral issues via committees or sub-contracted work. Both of these ministries support MINTUR in its planning mandate by undertaking feasibility studies or environmental impact assessments for new tourist facilities for example. In conducting such studies, the two ministries often conduct surveys to find out about

community perspectives on a particular development initiative. It is one of the few occasions of encounter with the population, as is demonstrated in the results of the present study.

All state enterprises, including the tourism ones, are governed under the principle of "double subordination". In Cuba, this means that each enterprise is controlled locally, by the municipal *Poder Popular* with respect to administrative performance, and provincially, by their ministry for "methodological" guidance (Roman 1999, Malinowitz 1997, Poder Popular 1997). In practice, this implies that the Cuban tourist corporations that are active in the province regularly meet with the tourist ministry representative (the *delegado de turismo)* in each of the 14 Cuban provinces. They also meet with the provincial representatives of other ministries that are directly or indirectly related to tourism (Dominguez 1997). Contrary to most Cuban firms, the tourist corporations generally enjoy greater autonomy because of the requirement of performance and financial sustainability that is imposed on them. However, the tourist firms still maintain strong linkages with MINTUR at all levels of the public administration system. The following table (3.3.2) summarizes some of the key features of the Cuban tourist industry.

Table 3.3.2 Summary of the key features related to the Cuban tourist industry today

Sources: Drawn from Crespo 1998 (p. 46) except for the employment figure which is from Dominguez 1997 (p. 11).

Issues	The Cuban context
Infrastructure development	Done only by the government (*vs.* the private sector also as in Mexico)
Private sector participation	Yes, only foreign entities or persons under leases, joint ventures or contract. Foreign entities are allowed to use land but can not own the property.
Destination marketing	The destination resorts are mostly marketed as all-inclusive or prepaid packages. The urban destinations such as Havana offer the European plan (for Free Independent Tourists) as there are a number of business.

Issues	The Cuban context
National tourism	Cubans are normally not allowed to use foreigner's tourist facilities, with the rationale given of hastening economic recovery in the Special Period. There are accommodations for Cubans (lower end).
Number of rooms in 1997	An estimated 27,400 of which 59% are four and five-star.
Occupancy rate in 1997	63.9%
Employment by national tourism corporations	130,000

Official statistics reported approximately 130,000 workers in the tourist industry in 1997 (Dominguez 1997). While Cuban workers are highly educated compared to most developing countries, tourism workers are probably the most university-educated. The industry acts as a magnet for Cuban workers as it allows them to earn at least three times the average monthly salary in Cuba, 250 pesos, slightly more than US$12[4] (Peters 1998). More and more professionals move to tourism to make a decent living and that is why it is not surprising to see medical doctors or engineers becoming taxi drivers or waiters (Malinowitz 1997, Peters 1998).

Most of the 130,000 workers reported are essentially employed by the tourist corporations. This number does not count, however, the members of a relatively new group of players in the Cuban tourist industry, the self-employed workers or *cuentapropistas* of which a certain number work in tourism. In 1993, as part of an emergency plan to give Cubans a source of income to survive the profound crisis of the first years of the Special Period, the state liberalized self-employment as well as the use of dollars for Cubans. As a result, a number of micro-enterprises emerged from underground activities, although many still operate illegally.

The purchase of a permit is required to legalize the own-account work (translated as *trabajo por cuenta propia*, hence the term *cuentapropista* for the individual who engage in this type of work). From the 157 types of *cuentapropista* activities, three are directly related to catering to tourists: "gastronomic services" (home-based restaurant or *paladar*), private taxis (whose driver is a *transportista*) and bed & breakfast or *casa particular* (Ritter and Turvey 1999). *Cuentapropista* businesses are family-run and small and it is for that reason they can offer personalized services (Suckling 1999). The degree of comfort and the variety of services offered for example in a *casa particular* accommodation can not be compared to that of a government-run hotel. In any case, *cuentapropistas'* services are increasingly popular and the good ones are now included in travel guides (see Stanley's *Lonely Planet Cuba*, 1997). Because today's new tourists are increasingly interested in enjoying a full travelling experience which includes meeting the people of the locality they are visiting, they will tend to chose small-scale type of tourist service that permit this contact. Although official statistics seem unavailable on the accommodation rate in private homes, more than 20% of all tourists stayed in them in 1997. *Paladares* (home-based restaurants) are also very popular given the mediocre quality of most government-run restaurants (Honey 1999).

The prices charged in micro-businesses are also an incentive for travellers: they usually range from 30 to 50% lower than those charged at a regular tourist facility. But a recent Internet update of the Lonely Planet guidebook (Stanley 1999) reported that the prices charged in private homes, private restaurants and taxis have nearly doubled from the 1997 rates due to high taxation. In effect, taxes are an issue for *cuentapropistas* today. Because self-employed work is seen as a "necessary evil which conflicts with the state's Marxist dogma" (Ruisanchez 1998, 101), the state

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[4] The buying power of $US12 in Cuba is higher than in the United States or Canada. In Cuba, most components of the basic food basket are strongly subsidized by the state. This being considered, the buying power of tourism workers is very high compared to that of other workers.

wants to ensure that all Cubans know that the *cuentapropistas* turn over a part of their profits to society. The taxes must be paid monthly and the amount is fixed regardless of the earnings during that month (Rivera 1998). For example, the monthly tax for a room in a private home is US$100 in a non tourist area whereas it is US$250 in a tourist zone (Stanley 1999). These taxes were established by the state with the objective of controlling a potential outbreak of micro-enterprises. Although some *cuentapropistas* are able to generate fortunes by Cuban standards, it is not the case for all of them. Therefore, in order to be able to pay the tax, *cuentapropistas* had to increase their rates to a level slightly lower than that of an official tourist facility. This is having the effect of driving some legal *casas particulares* out of the market (the fine for illegal *casas particulares* is high). This, in turn, satisfies the state hard-liners and others who have been concerned by the growing polarization in Cuban society between those with access to dollar income and those without.

Self-employed work is strictly controlled in Cuba. The rules range from dictating sanitary and safety standards to forbidding the employment of support staff outside of family members. Below, a few of these rules are outlined, that apply to tourist *cuentapropistas* (as prescribed under law no. 174). All of these regulations are enforced through spot check visits by inspectors from the relevant ministry (Ritter and Turvey 1999).

Table 3.3.3 Major rules that govern self-employed work (cuentapropismo) in Cuba

REGISTRATION AND FEES
◆ In order to enter self-employed work, the individual must register as such. Only retirees, housewives and laid-off workers are allowed to be a self-employed worker. Regularly employed workers in the State sector must ask for permission of their work centres.
◆ When a *cuentapropista* is unable to pay its monthly tax to the *Oficina Nacional de Administración Tributaria* –ONAT (National Office of Taxes Administration), the permit is withheld until the payment is made. If the tax is not paid for two consecutive months, the permit is revoked and the individual must repay the cost of the initial permit in order to be granted re-entry.
BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND NETWORK FORMATION
◆ A *paladar* can not have more than 12 guests at a time, can not sell fish, seafood or beef (they are reserved for official restaurants selling to international tourists).
◆ Because the *cuentapropista* business is a family-based business, it can not be run from a location other than the self-employed worker's home and must use only family members as employees.
◆ It is strictly forbidden to organize a producer co-op or association without a formal authorization.

Innovating without mutating

Cuba's challenges are paramount and they require solutions that may conflict with each other : while the government works at maintaining the social gains from the 1959 revolution (universal access to health services, to a basic food basket, to education, etc.) by ensuring that a centralized socialist government is in place, it is obliged to open itself to foreign investment and to capitalist activities such as tourism in order to ensure its economic survival. These strategic moves must be made cautiously in order to ensure that the fragile stability is maintained. However, some of the strategic economic measures that were implemented in the last decade have the potential to disturb this relative peace if their consequences are not understood and well managed. They are considered by many observers as divergent economic strategies, as a hybrid of capitalism and socialism (Pickel 1998, The Dallas Morning News 1998). Some of the striking contradictions are (Zimbalist 1992, González 1992):

- the split between the centrally-planned and controlled domestic market versus the much freer exporting and foreign exchange earning sectors (such as tourism); and
- the growing gap between the domestic and external economies, i.-e. local non-convertible currency (peso economy) versus hard currency.

Apart from causing serious difficulties to the establishment of backward linkages between the two economies and therefore feeding the economic leakage process, the dollarization of the economy is creating serious social tensions. An evident "tourist apartheid", as many call it, has been building between the new *bourgeoisie* of Cuban society who have access to dollars i.e. the tourism workers overall and those who have family outside of Cuba[5]. In the meantime, the majority of Cubans who do not have access to dollars must live on a meagre ration provided by the state and have to "*resolver*" (a term often used in Cuba since the beginning of the special period and which means to resolve, to find a way to survive) (Habel 1997, Brandwayn 1993, Pickel 1998).

The *cuentapropistas* are not fully welcome by Cuban authorities, nor are they recognized as valuable interlocutors in the tourist industry. For the Cuban state, *cuentapropismo* is perceived as a destabilizing factor and the seed of capitalism which reaches the Cuban household (EIU 2000b, Gayoso 1999, Smith 1999). Furthermore, the state sees a part of its foreign currency income diverted from its centralized treasury to the benefit of tourist *cuentapropistas* (an estimated SUS 20 Million went to private homes in 1997 according to Malinowitz 1997). It is predictable that in this context, the integration of *cuentapropistas* into the national tourist industry will probably be quite a feat.

[5] Cubans often say, jokingly, that the ones who have family outside of Cuba have "fé" (the abbreviation for *Familia en el Exterior*). *Fé* in Spanish means hope.

CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY AND CASE STUDY AREA

4.1 THE CASE STUDY AREA

In order to answer the research question posed here, the case study area needs to be an emergent tourist destination in Cuba. According to Jamal & Getz (1995), it is easier to study the organization of tourist services in an emergent tourist destination such as the Viñales Valley than in a more mature tourist destination (Varadero, Cuba for example). These authors explain that emergent destinations are characterized by the existence of nascent and ill-defined inter-organizational processes among the service entities. Emergent destinations tend therefore to be a smaller and simpler system in which the study of inter-stakeholder relationships is easier to perform (Galaskiewicz 1979).

The choice of an appropriate study area was made with geographers from the Faculty of Geography of the University of Havana under whose guidance my fieldwork in Cuba was undertaken. The area selected is the Viñales Valley in the westernmost province of Pinar del Rio (see figure 1.1). The Viñales Valley is still one of Cuba's lesser known tourist regions which has great potential for nature-based tourism thanks to its remarkable cultural and above all, natural attractions (ITG Cuba 1997a; De la Uz Herrera 1996; Price Waterhouse 1994).

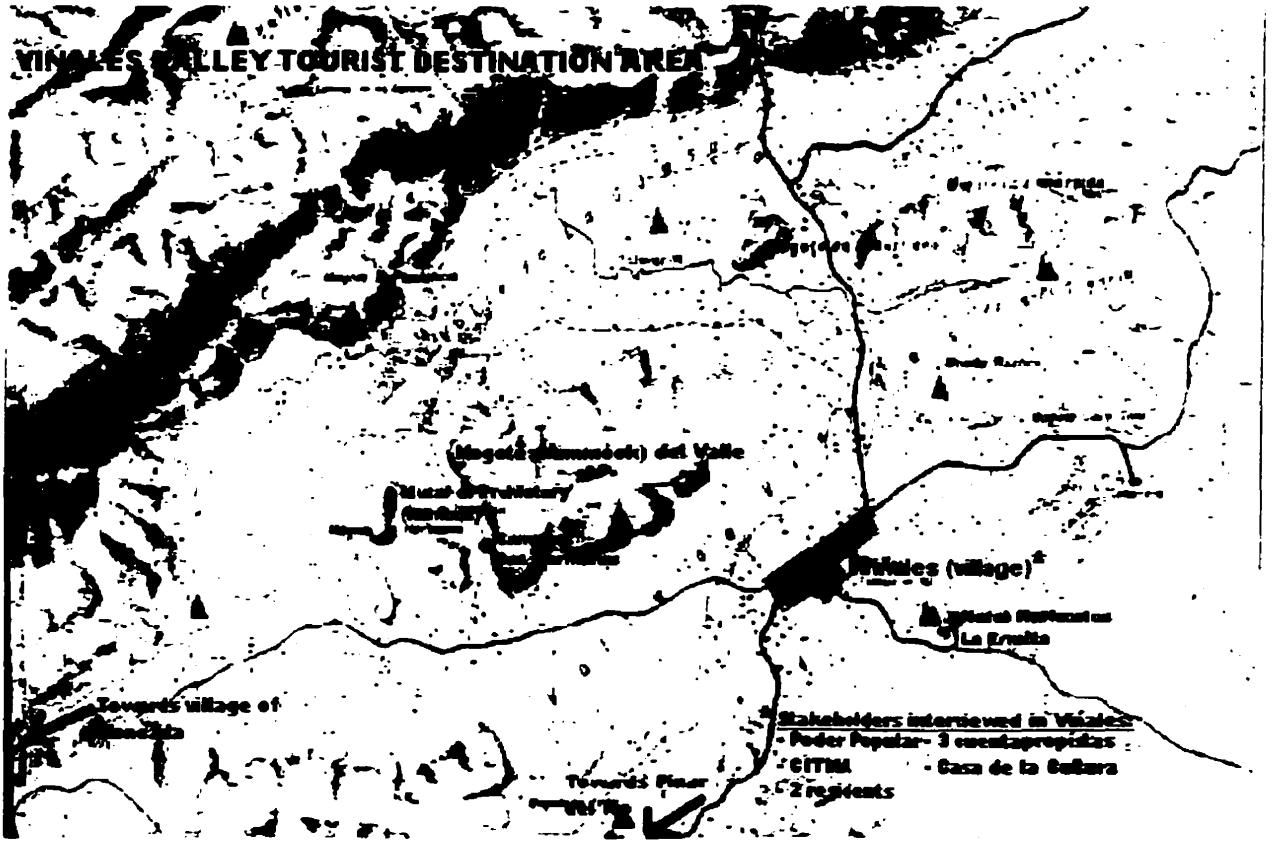
This region is an interesting case study for a number of reasons. The Viñales Valley belongs to the tourist pole of Viñales which is one of 15 "ecotourism poles" proposed by the National Physical Planning Institute (IPF) of Cuba. This classification means that, aside from its three hotels that already exist, the Viñales Valley is targeted by the State to have an increased hotel room capacity on its territory and to benefit from joint marketing with other ecotourism poles (Ledo 1997).

Located 212 km west of the city of Havana and 26 km north of Pinar del Rio, capital of

the eponymous province (22° 37' N, 83° 42' W), the quaint village of Viñales is nestled in an astounding valley surrounded by impressive karstic hummocks or *mogote* (figure 4.1). The village is the administrative centre of the municipality of Viñales and was founded in 1875 after being a large agricultural property for several decades (Melero 1996, Equipo Municipal de Historia de Viñales).

Figure 4.1.1 The Viñales Valley, a 132 km²-sized tourist destination area

Source: Drawn from the Atlas Nacional de Cuba 1970



Its approximate 25,000 population is essentially involved in agriculture (tobacco, coffee, chicken meat/eggs, staple crops) either working in state farms or as small-scale private farmers.

Another large portion of the Viñales municipality population is employed by the public services sector. The private service entrepreneurs or *cuentapropistas* make only a small portion of the active population, with a few entrepreneurs dealing exclusively in dollars (the *casas particulares*, the *paladares* and the private taxis). Along with these small scale tourism entrepreneurs, the dozen state enterprises which are currently involved in tourism (restaurants, hotels, bus companies, etc.) testify to the growing importance of tourism in this rural municipality since the early 1990s (De la Uz 1996)

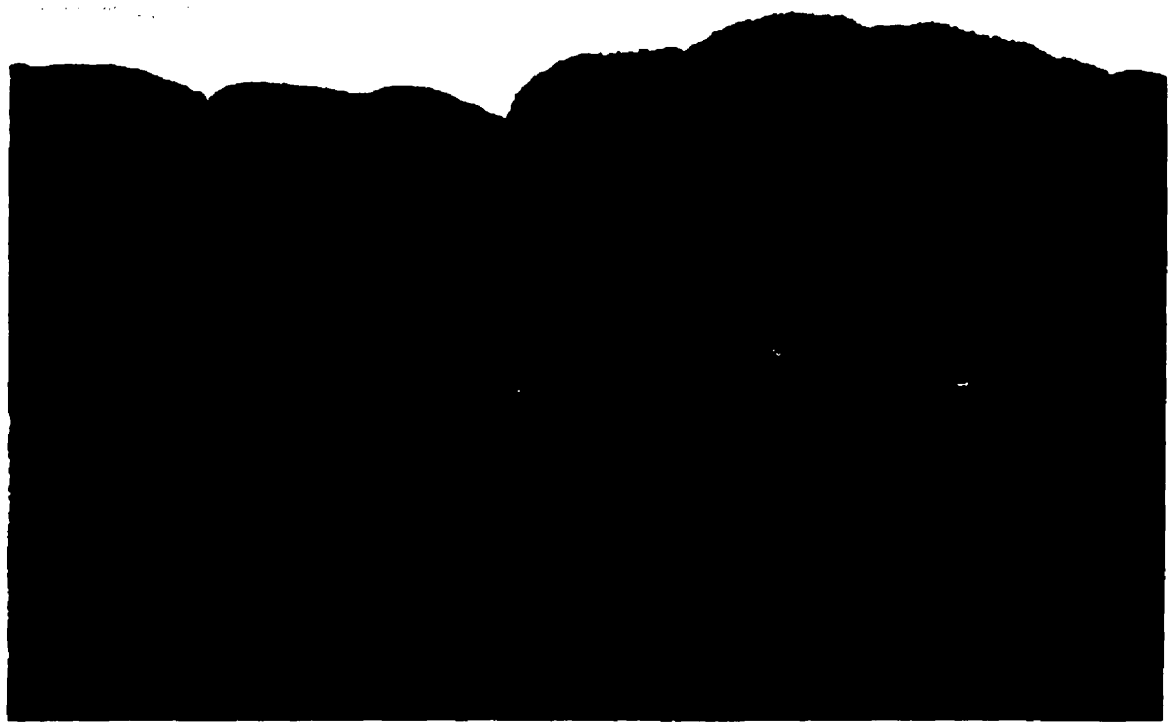
Tourism is not new to the Viñales Valley. The region, in effect, saw a boom of both Cubans and foreign tourists as early as the 1940s and this, thanks to the interest of famous Cuban and foreign tourists in the valley's impressive landscape, the warmth of its people and the richness of its culture. The explorations of the Cuban scientist Don Carlos de la Torre y Huerta at the beginning of the 20th century had revealed the presence of rare Jurassic ammonites (round stones encrusted with fossilized prehistoric snails) which started to attract some eminent American scientists. The ammonites are today one of the main themes of the gigantic tourist attraction the *Mural de la prehistoria*, a mural painted on a face of a *mogote* in the valley by Logivildo Gonzalez, a disciple of Mexican painter Diego Rivera, between 1959 and 1976 (Cameron 2000).

In the culture and arts domain, Cuban painter Domingo Ramos (locally called the "painter of the valley") impressed the visitors to an art exhibition in New York in the 1920s with a painting of the valley's majestic landscape and unique hummocks – art critics said of him that such a landscape was the fruit of his imagination. Internationally renowned Spanish writer Gabriel Garcia Lorca said of the Viñales' dramatic landscape (1930s) that it was "a type of telluric [seismic] drama". He spoke highly of the valley, which became known in Spanish literary circles of the time (Azcuy 1988).

Cavers came to know the valley thanks to the late geologist Dr. Antonio Nuñez Jimenez who explored dozens of caves in the valley. With its 47 km of known tunnels on eight levels, the Gran Caverna de Santo Tomás is the longest cave system in Latin America: it is much sought-after by adventure travelers to the valley.

Fortunately, the natural and cultural assets of the Viñales Valley have been preserved through time and the valley remains as pristine as it was decades ago. As a testimony to this and to encourage its conservation, UNESCO declared it in November 1999 a World Heritage Site because of its

> outstanding karst landscape in which traditional methods of agriculture (notably tobacco growing) have survived unchanged for several centuries. The region also preserves a rich vernacular tradition in its architecture, its crafts, and its music. (UNESCOPRESS On-line 1999a)



Source : Rumbos promotional brochure of the province of Pinar del Rio (1997)

As a tourist destination today, the Viñales Valley is being rediscovered by tourists exploring Cuba's interior (Honey 1999). "For Europeans, and especially the French, Viñales has become a new discovery, the eighth wonder of Cuba" (Granma 1997). The following excerpt from the website of Horizontes Hoteles (1999) describes well the imposing tourist assets of the region:

> The Viñales Valley, one of Cuba's greatest natural attractions ... is the finest example of a karst valley in Cuba, where *mogotes* [karstic hummocks], knolls with rounded tops and steep slopes, contrast harmoniously with the flat surface of the valley where they stand. Deep in the valley bottom you find cultivated lands – mainly tobacco, taro and bananas – and scattered peasant houses, all forming a rural landscape of great beauty. The surrounding Sierras abound in caves, making it an area of speleological interest ... The flora is an important element in Viñales. Cuban endemic plants found there include a kind of palm tree (*Myrmecyas calocoma*) – a living Jurassic fossil that can only be found in a small area of Pinar del Río. There are also many endemic animal species, especially birds like hummingbirds, the Cuban trogon (*Priotelus temnurus*), [and] mockingbird (*Myadestes elizabeth*).

Aside from the natural beauty of the valley, Viñales also attracts tourists with the cultural liveliness of its population. In effect, the sense of pride of the local community for its culture is noticeable to any visitor who spends more than one day in the area – the case of an increasing number of tourists. Among the most popular activities that locals and Spanish-speaking tourists can attend, the *Noche del Patio Decimista* takes place weekly, in a nice, flowered yard by the main street of the village ("night of the forum for decimists", decimists being the individuals who tell *decimas*, a popular form of poetry that is improvised and which is characteristic of the province of Pinar del Río). The Department of Culture (Sectorial de Cultura) through its cultural centre (Casa de la Cultura) supports the holding of such cultural activities. The other municipal cultural services and facilities that are sometimes used by tourists include a library, a movie theatre, a bookstore (which sells regular books in pesos for Cubans and fancier books in dollars for tourists), a museum (promotes local history and heritage to the Cuban population), and an art gallery which is adjacent to the *Casa de la Cultura* to commercialize local artists' work.

Among these services, the *Casa de la Cultura* was one of the most involved with tourism at the time of the field research. With the double aim of sharing local traditions and generating some dollars, their project *Cultura-turismo* features the activity *El Patio* where volunteer local artists present traditional dances and music to tourists. The show is presented when hotels, which sell the tickets to tourists, request one. Demand for the show seemed to be high, as it was one of the very few activities the Viñales Valley's "nightlife" was capable of offering at the time of this research.

In general, tourist activities are mostly offered by the accommodation facilities: hotels and camping. There are three hotels in the Viñales Valley for a total capacity of 306 rooms (includes the three-star hotels Los Jazmines, La Ermita, and Rancho San Vicente) which belong to the state chain Hoteles Horizontes (Ledo 1996). They were built in the early 1960s for the use of Cuba tourists and were then refurbished in the 1990s to welcome foreigners almost exclusively (Honey 1999). In recent years, Horizontes has made substantial efforts to promote tourism in the Viñales Valley (Granma 1997; TTG Cuba 1997b) and these efforts are slowly paying dividends: one of the two hotels in the valley, the Hotel La Ermita has progressed from an annual average of 27% occupation rate in 1995 to a 42% in 1997 with a 67% high in July 1997 (Hotel La Ermita, interview in 1997). These figures are the result of a team effort: "Cuban agencies (tour operators) such as Amistur, Rumbos, Cubatour, Sol y Son and Gaviota also work closely with us" (Granma 1997). The national corporation Campismo Popular manages the only camping facility in the valley, Campismo Dos Hermanas . The camp site has about 20 chalets (*cabañas*) and is nestled between impressive *mogotes*, near the tourist attraction *Mural de la prehistoria.*

Rumbos Group is a Cuban tour operator, which contributes to the diversification of offerings in Cuba. In the Viñales Valley, Rumbos currently owns and manages, among other facilities, a number of restaurants (*Finca San Vicente, Palenque, Casa de Don Tomas*), attractions (*Cueva*

del Indio – a cave to be visited by foot or by motor boat, the *Mural de la Prehistoria)*, and *Casa del Veguero* farm and restaurant.

In the non-state sector, a number of *cuentapropistas* cater to international tourists. According to the municipal *Poder Popular* of Viñales (interview with vice-president in 1997), there were some 24 *casas particulares* and two *paladares* which legally catered in dollars – (although illegal *cuentapropismo* activity was severely punished, it was a country-wide problem, at the time of the fieldwork).

In the non-state sector, there are also a very few volunteer tourist service providers (VSPs) whose involvement in tourism was tolerated. VSPs do not have a legal status as tourist service providers and are not allowed to charge for their services, contrary to the *cuentapropistas* who pay taxes. One of the most well-known tourist attraction in Viñales (which I qualify as a VSP) is Carmen and Caridad's "bountiful botanical garden" where a diversity of fruits, medicinal and ornamental tropical plants from Cuba and abroad flourish to the delight of foreign visitor's eye and taste. This garden is the pride of Viñaleros and a number of Cuban journalists have written about it (Guerillero 1999, Revista Sol y Son 1995, Jaula 1988, Contreras 1988). The other popular tourist attraction of the Viñales Valley is the community of Los Acuaticos. As their name suggests, its members believe in the curative power of the water. Although the community is ageing, it still frequently welcomes visitors who take up the challenge of walking across the Sierra del Organo mountain or *mogotes* range with a local ecotour guide (either a local VSP tour guide or an official tour guide) to meet with them. As is the case for most VSPs, they welcome gifts that visitors may bring them, as a token of their appreciation.

Because most international tourists are based in beach destinations or Havana, most of the visitors to the Viñales Valley purchase a one-day tour. These typically depart Havana, cost SUS

44 with lunch and tour the valley's attractions:

- A tobacco factory;
- A typical Pinar del Rio rum *Guayabita del Pinar* factory;
- A panoramic view of the valley from the hotel Los Jazmines' lookout;
- Some sightseeing of the village and the botanical garden of Carmen and Caridad;
- The *Mural de la Prehistoria*, the *Palenque* and the *Cueva del Indio*; and
- Dinner at one of the state restaurant (Rumbos').

Other tours such as Cubamar's Maravilla excursion include a guided walking tour in the valley along a natural path to discover the diverse fauna and flora (Honey 1999, personal experience 1997). Furthermore, a number of volunteer local guides occasionally lead tourists along the natural paths of the valley. Any incursion in these paths by tour operators, local guides or hotels guests for ecotourism purposes was going to be regulated by the Ministry of the Science, Technology and the Environment (CITMA) in order to minimize environmental impacts and generate funds to maintain the paths (Interview with CITMA representative 1997).

The number of free and independent tourists (FITs) in the Viñales Valley is growing. Some of them come by bus from Havana or Pinar del Rio or rent a car and lodge either in hotels or in a *casa particular*. Local private and state enterprises commented in interview that FITs tend to spend between two and three days in the region. Tourist service suppliers indicated their wish that FITs stayed longer as it would support their business and the local economy. In order to achieve this, efforts must be dedicated to allowing and encouraging a diversity of complementary tourist attractions and activities to develop. As a small-scale business owner summarized the opinion of a number of interviewees (both private business owners and representatives of state organizations on an unofficial basis):

> Tourists love to visit the Viñales Valley but there are not enough activities to keep them interested for a couple of days. And at night they are bored because the official bars close early" (interview with a *cuentapropista* 1997).

There is no doubt that in order to develop the Viñales Valley as a successful and sustainable tourist destination, it requires the elaboration of a concerted destination management strategy that involves the various players at the local, provincial and national level.

4.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE USE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

The selection of a set of research methodologies, whether they are quantitative or qualitative in nature, involves trade-offs of some sort. Each method has its characteristics which can represent strengths or weaknesses depending on the research theme and context (Walle 1997).

Qualitative research is most appropriate when existing models are not well developed, when few informants are available, when time pressures do not permit formal ("scientific" or quantitative) research methods, and when the study is of an exploratory nature (Merriam 1988 in Creswell 1994, 145; Getz & Jamal 1994). On this matter Walle (1997) argues that in some cases, the use of qualitative research methods rather than quantitative ones can shorten the time required in the field. These characteristics fully apply to the present research –with few available informants and limited time to conduct the fieldwork and a need to capture the richness of unsuspected meaning that events and processes represent to the interviewees (Silverman 1993 in Dann *et al* 1988, 4).

A number of options for qualitative data collection methodologies are used by anthropologists and sociologists, such as participant observation, the diary method (see Staikev 1986 in Dann *et al* 1988) and in-depth interviews. In the present research context, it was considered that more valuable data would be generated if focusing on a case study area and conducting semi-structured, face-to-face in-depth interviews with purposively selected

respondents.

The most efficient method for obtaining appropriate information on institutionalized norms and statuses and when informants cannot be directly observed is to conduct interviews (Creswell 1994, Zelditch 1962 *In* Fielding & Fielding 1986). In particular, the semi-structured interview technique avoids the rigidity of pre-defined questions and allows the researcher to question the interviewees in a creative manner on pre-defined themes. Since the themes discussed are consistent from one interview to the other, it facilitates data analysis such as comparisons, frequencies, trends, etc., and result interpretation (Fielding & Fielding 1986; Seidman 1991). Researchers working in Cuba have also preferred unstructured or semi-structured interviews in order to better adapt their research to the local context (Roberts 1999, Martin de Holan & Phillips 1997). Of course, the information obtained from semi-structured interviews is more readily analysed qualitatively than quantitatively, given the absence of standardized questions to which quantitative and categorized answers are given. As a side note on this matter, it is worth noting that the only article found on a methodology for measuring Cuban public opinion (Roberts 1999) points to the fact that government approval is required – and known to be highly bureaucratic and difficult to obtain – for any opinion study.

4.3 SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION

The secondary data collected focuses on both the theoretical body of literature supporting this research (as reported in chapter 2) as well as the contextual information that composes the backdrop to this work (i.e. the social, political and economic contexts of Cuba). The theoretical review pertains to the themes of the tourist industry/tourist system, sustainable tourism development, the role of local stakeholders in tourist development and stakeholder networks.

The documentary material referring to the Cuban context was collected from both Cuban and non-Cuban sources (newspapers, both printed and web-based, magazines, government records and international statistical reports). Particular attention was paid to collecting local press clippings on Viñales as they provide important background on the community context, local events and local elites (Hunter 1995). Many articles were borrowed and photocopied from the municipal library of Viñales. Other Cuban academic articles were provided to me by University of Havana professors as well as by an ecotourism specialist of a Cuban hotel chain. Finally, I acquired printed tourist brochures and online maps of the Viñales Valley from Cuban and Canadian tour operators (through their local offices and their websites).

4.4 PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION

The primary data were gathered in two stages. I made a short exploratory trip to Cuba and to the case study region, Viñales, in May 1997 to make contact with Cuban researchers and key stakeholders in the research setting. Language was not a barrier to communication as I am fluent in Spanish. This trip allowed me to select my study area in co-operation with Cuban specialists from the University of Havana, to adapt my research objectives to the actual local and national contexts and to initiate field research preparation. Most of the data were collected during my second trip to Cuba in November-December 1997.

From my arrival in Cuba in early November and prior to formally initiating this research, my objective was to familiarize myself with the case study area and initiate contacts with key informants. I obtained from the Faculty of Geography of the University of Havana a letter stating that my work formed part of a larger co-operative research project between the Department of Geography, McGill University and the Faculty of Geography, University of Havana. The purpose of this letter was to legitimize my work to local authorities and potential interviewees.

I wanted to prepare as much as possible prior to travelling to Viñales so that I would limit any delay and disturbance to my fieldwork. I arranged for my accommodation, food and local transportation with the help of advisors from the Faculty of Geography and Martin Luis, a geography researcher who has researched Viñales for over a decade and who guided me in this region (he was my "key informant", as this person is often referred to in qualitative research). He introduced me to both my living and research settings in Viñales.

The logistics of doing research in Cuba are completely different from what can be experienced in North America. In particular, one must realize that for foreigners in Cuba, lodging is only allowed in licensed private homes (as explained in chapter 3) or official hotels (more expensive for long stays). The purchase of food is made from the "dollar store" (where there is no fresh meat or vegetables available) or from the farmer's market (very poorly supplied in Viñales at the time of the fieldwork). Cubans receive a ration, which foreigner are, of course, not entitled to receive. I usually made meal arrangements with my host for food.

I brought my bicycle because public transportation is almost non-existent and hitchhiking, though very popular, is not reliable in the rural area of Viñales where there are few motorized vehicles on the roads.

As is thoroughly explained by Bailey (1995), gaining entry in a given research setting is a complicated process and one must take special care to "ask permission to enter", otherwise fieldwork can be jeopardized. My introduction to key stakeholders in Viñales was done in a number of ways. I was lucky to meet on my second day in the area a cultural coordinator at the *Casa de la Cultura* (municipal Cultural Centre) who offered to introduce me to work companions and superiors. Because of this chance encounter I met important local stakeholders including the director of the municipal Department of Cultural Services right at the beginning of my fieldwork.

The "snowball" effect continued when one of the individuals at the *Casa de la Cultura* introduced me to staff of the municipal museum and library.

During my first week in Viñales I also met with local authorities in order to formalize my presence in the area. In the qualitative research literature local authorities are often referred to as gatekeepers (Bailey 1995, Creswell 1994). They are the individuals who grant or deny researcher access to the research setting (in formal and informal ways). They also control, to a certain extent, what are the data and information the researcher has access to (Burgess 1991 in Bailey 1995). Because of the long-lasting political war with the United States, Cuban authorities act as strict gatekeepers and as such, they pay particular attention to limiting foreign intrusion into local affairs as a means of protecting national interests. For a foreigner in Cuba, conducting research is a delicate matter and one must take special care to ensure transparency at all times. In order to convince gatekeepers to grant entry, they require a reasonable explanation of the goal of the study to feel comfortable about granting entry (Bailey 1995). It is for this reason that one of the first interviewees I met was the vice-president of the *Poder Popular Municipal* (equivalent to the vice-mayor) of Viñales.

As another step towards familiarizing myself with Viñales in the first few days, I spent time walking through the village, observing the local environment and chatting with locals. People were generally interested to hear about my work on the study of tourism in Viñales, and most of them wanted to know more about the topic, especially those who were personally involved in the industry.

4.5 CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEWS

The primary data presented in this thesis was obtained in a series of semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted in November and December 1997 in Cuba. The following explains

the steps taken to capture valid and meaningful interview data on the Viñales tourist system and its inter-stakeholder dynamics. The steps include: (a) designing the interview guide required for semi-structured interviews; (b) selecting and contacting the interviewees, (c) conducting face-to-face, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and (d) leaving the research setting.

Prior to the fieldwork, a semi-structured interview guide was designed. In order to understand the organization of the tourist services supply sector in the Viñales Valley, I sought : (1) to identify the key stakeholders (both public and self-employed service providers) involved directly or indirectly in supplying tourist services in the Viñales Valley; (2) to analyze the role they play in the industry; and (3) to define the type of linkages, networks that connect them. Once the informants were identified (through the snowball method), the objective was to explore their personal perceptions, attitudes, experiences and beliefs. Therefore, the interview guide (see Appendix A) was designed in four parts which generally covered the following realms: (1) interviewee profile, (2) profile of his/her organization (3) relationship with other Viñales Valley tourist stakeholders, and (4) perspective on the future of tourism in the Viñales Valley. The interview questions were then refined to fit the reality of the three main stakeholder groups: policy/planning sectors of government, tourist services providers (private and public), and community members.

The questions were purposely designed to understand the administrative /jurisdictional /structural issues rather than political and social themes which are difficult to address directly in this particular research setting. The role that the stakeholder interviewed played in the local industry was then explored. However, as the interview progressed and the interviewee felt more at ease, observations on societal issues were made (for similar observations on conducting interviews in Cuba, see Martin de Holan & Phillips 1997).

During the six weeks I was able to stay in Viñales, I interviewed 22 individuals from a total of 15 stakeholder organizations (in some cases, I interviewed more than one individual per organization; for example, I interviewed 3 persons of the *Poder Popular* of Viñales). These organizations were classified into to the following stakeholder groups:

- **service providers** – they include the official/government service providers such as state hotels or restaurants, the *cuentapropistas* or family-based enterprises such as home-based restaurants and bed & breakfasts (*paladares* and *casa particulares* respectively), and the volunteer service providers such as local tourist guides or some home-based tourist attractions) in the Viñales Valley;
- state **policy-making organizations** – they include municipal government authorities as well as representatives from the ministries of the environment and of physical planning; these ministries are usually hired by the Ministry of tourism(MINTUR) to undertake most of its planning and environmental management tasks – MINTUR was not interviewed due to time constraints; and
- **local residents** of the municipality of Viñales, Pinar del Rio province.

The following table lists the stakeholders interviewed.

Table 4.5.1 Research interviewees

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	DESCRIPTION	NO. OF INTERVIEWEES
Tourist service providers interviewed:		
Official/government service providers	◆ Accommodations: Horizontes Hotels, Campismo popular (camping facilities) ◆ Tour operator and restaurant/tourist attractions owner/manager: Rumbos Grupo de Recreación y Turismo ◆ Municipal tourist attraction: Casa de la Cultura (municipal cultural centre).	6
Cuentapropistas	They are family-based enterprises, which provide tourist services. ◆ *Paladares:* home-base restaurants ◆ *Casas particulares:* bed & breakfast ◆ *Transportistas:* private taxis	5
Volunteer service providers	They are local residents involved in tourism on a voluntary basis. ◆ A local tourist guide ◆ A private property made into a tourist attraction	2
Policy-making organizations interviewed		
	They are government entities which are involved in establishing policies, planning and developing tourism in Cuba. ◆ National Physical Planning Institute (IPF) ◆ Provincial Physical Planning Institute (DPPF) ◆ Municipal *Poder Popular* (municipal government) ◆ Municipal office of the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment (CITMA)	5
Local residents interviewed		
	◆ They are the hosts of the tourist destination. ◆ Two residents of the village of Viñales * ◆ Two residents of the village of Moncada * * Both villages belong to the municipality of Viñales.	4

In order to build a relationship of trust and confidence with the informant, I always initiated the contact by introducing my research work and myself. I mentioned that my research was for a Master's thesis in a Canadian University in conjunction with the Universidad de la Habana, Cuba. At all times I carried the certification letter the Faculty of Geography had provided me with, in case of need. To each informant I briefly explained the purpose and topic of my research and ensured confidentiality i.e. that the interviewee would remain anonymous and the information collected would not be used for purposes other than for this research. Finally I mentioned that I would take written notes.

In most cases, I then made an appointment with the individual for later in the week either at their office (for most government-based organization spokespersons) or at home (for all other individuals). One has to keep in mind that the location in which the interview is conducted (whether home or at the workplace) has an impact on its degree of formality and will, in turn, influence the discourse of the informant and the content of the interview (Hunter 1995). The "official" answer is to be expected when the interview takes place in the workplace because the public aspect of the interviewee's life is subject to the scrutiny of others (Seidman 1991).

I conducted all of the interviews in Spanish. In an attempt to immerse myself in the local setting, I took care to learn some of the "local patois" (Hunter 1991). I feel that this was appreciated and led to favourable interview outcomes.

The interviews took between 45 minutes and two hours. All of the informants were interviewed at least once. In four cases, I met people more than once to further discuss issues revolving around tourist development in Cuba and the Cuban situation in general. I usually commenced the questioning session with a "grand tour question" (Bailey 1995) which gave me a broad overview of the context, and continued with the formal semi-structured interview. While I

made an effort to keep the interviewee focused and I avoided leading questions or attitudes, I tried to be as communicative and understanding as possible to maximize communication quality and "close the distance during the interview" (Bailey 1995, 78; see also Seidman 1991).

As Hunter rightly comments, it often requires candid disclosures from the researcher to elicit candid disclosures from the interviewee (1997). In this sense, I used my newness as a researcher in the Cuban context to my benefit. "Please explain to me" questions sounded completely normal to the interviewee and he/she usually gladly explained me how "things worked" instead of assuming that I knew. This helped me to understand underlying beliefs and perceptions.

As regards the effects of the researcher's gender and cultural background on the rapport with the informant, a wealth of literature exists focussing on women researchers. Positive or negative discrimination towards the female researcher is often reported and it can interfere with many aspects of the interviewing process, including denial of access of the female researcher to male dominated settings, sexual overtures or sexual harassment, and differential treatment (Bailey 1995). As Warren (1998) comments, gender is one characteristic among others that influences, either positively or negatively, the fieldwork. In my case, I did not feel diminished or affected by the fact that I was a young woman. Because of my hypervisibility as a foreign woman in a Cuban rural town, I took great care, however, to look as casual as possible in order to mingle with local women, as ethnographers often suggest (Bailey 1995).

My ethnicity had greater influence on my fieldwork experience than my gender. Warren (1988) brings an interesting emphasis to this phenomenon:

> "whiteness and foreignness permit women fieldworkers more cross-gender behaviour than that allowed to native women [because] in a world where colonialism has left its mark on so many cultures, a

> fair skin and Caucasian physical characteristics set the anthropologist off not only as a foreigner, but also as someone of a higher status than the "natives". Fair skin is both attractive and distancing in the double status and relational systems within which postcolonial people live." (Warren 1988)

I understand the "distancing" behaviour that Warren refers to. The fact that I was a foreigner, but also from a non-socialist country, a *capitalista*, created a double distancing effect with some people and a double proximity effect with others. This reflects the growing polarization in the last decade of Cuban society in all regards, including their relationship with foreigners. My reaction to both attitudes was to respect the distance the informant wanted to maintain with me and avoid as much as possible, even in informal and friendly circumstances, holding discussions on politically or socially sensitive topics.

4.6 DATA REGISTRATION AND CODING

Field notes are the "backbone" of data collection and analysis. Siedman (1991) categorizes field notes into five groups:

(1) *Mental notes* are the active effort of remembering important observations in the field;
(2) *Jotted notes* are used as a memory cue for mental notes;
(3) Analytical ideas and inferences as well as
(4) Impressions and personal feelings arise during fieldwork; and
(5) *Things to think about and to do list* acts like an agenda the researcher must review regularly.

At the end of a day of interviews, I would often jot down ideas and comments to complement the interview material collected. Particular care was devoted to taking notes, the reason being that they were the only formal record of my fieldwork experience and results. Although I had with me the material necessary for tape-recording the interviews, I decided, once in Cuba not to use this method. Cuban researchers advised me, and I personally confirmed it once in the field, that given the prevailing national security concerns in Cuba, tape-recording inhibits

interviewees and affect interview results. When reporting interview results, I take care not to give information that enables the identification of the informant, either by using a pseudonym (Lofland & Lofland 1995) or by grouping informants in categories and reporting on the behaviour or characteristics of the group.

When in the field, I found it challenging to systematically analyse the interviews on the same evening they were conducted. Not only was I usually tired after a day of interviews and observations and a return home hitchhiking, but minor incidents such as electrical shortages were common and simple daily activities such as the preparation of meals were demanding given the basic living conditions I was experiencing. Nevertheless, I always re-read the interviews when I had some free time during the day in Viñales, which helped me to make links between the results and understand some of the trends emerging from the data.

Finally, the data collected was transcribed into a matrix format. This tool facilitated the recognition of emerging trends and divergence in perceptions of the interviewees. The discussion of research results in the next chapter is based on these observations.

CHAPTER 5 STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIP IN THE VIÑALES VALLEY

This study focuses on the relationship networks that exist between key stakeholders in the development of tourism in the Viñales Valley. The chapter describes the role that these stakeholders play in the Viñales Valley and it analyses the networks they form to ensure their own sustainability and that of the tourist destination.

5.1 CO-OPERATION NETWORKS FOR EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Before looking in depth at the local tourist industry, it is important to identify which are the key stakeholders involved in the tourist industry of the case study area (both public and self-employed service providers).

Each of the five key stakeholder groups (private service providers or *cuentapropistas*, government service-providers, volunteer service providers, policy-making organizations, and community members) plays a distinct role in the local industry. The characteristics of each groups as well as the relationships they maintain within their group and with other stakeholder groups are outlined below. This will help establish the type of stakeholder linkages and networks that exist, whether they are formal or informal, strong or weak, extensive or not. Moreover, patterns of relationship among certain groups and with other groups are likely to emerge. These will have an impact on the possibility of developing sustainable tourism in the Viñales Valley and, consequently, in Cuba.

5.1.1 Service providers

The local tourist system is diverse and complex. Within the service providers group, the stakeholders interact in different manners for essentially two purposes: to offer the widest range of tourist services: accommodations, restaurants, attractions, transportation, information/promotion (Gunn 1994) and to ensure their sustainability as a service providing entity.

The first group, the **government-owned (official) service providers (GSP),** are nation-wide tourist-oriented enterprises which usually offer a broad range of international-class services by themselves. The *Casa de la Cultura* is a municipal entity which was only starting, at the time of the interview, to be involved in tourism on a local basis. It was included in the GSP group because it is a government entity which provides tourist services. In general, GSPs benefit from a network of public enterprises which supports them in catering for tourism. For instance, Rumbos facilities and Horizontes hotels will generally host a convenience dollar store of the Caracol chain for the tourists. All GSPs have access to Empretur for the construction of tourist facilities and to Transtur for ensuring group transportation services. Finally, food is supplied to them by Abastur and Fruta Selecta exclusively – indeed official hotels and restaurants are forbidden to purchase food products from local farmers. GSPs also partner with other stakeholders (government or otherwise) in order to offer secondary services such as entertainment and adventure activities in the region. A good example is Horizontes. Its hotels are capable of offering a diversity of visits for its tourists: the tours may include official attractions such as the ones commercialized by Rumbos (e.g. Cueva del Indio), the folk music and dance show organized by the *Casa de la Cultura*, or non-commercial attractions such as the cave system Gran Caverna de Santo Tomas in the neighbouring community of Moncada or the garden of Carmen and Caridad in the village of Viñales. This access to a wide range of partners is probably why one interviewee from this group confidently declared:

> "our strength [implicitly compared to *cuentapropistas*] is that we can offer all the services the tourist needs, from accommodation and food to the enjoyment of the setting".

The marketing of services for most GSPs is essentially done centrally through their respective head office in Havana. However, the *Casa de la Cultura* relied on Horizontes Hotels to

market its cultural show to tourists.

The second service provider group, the **cuentapropistas**, provide home-based services and enable tourists to establish a direct contact with the local community through the business owner. *Cuentapropistas* use networks primarily to ensure the marketing of their service and, to a lesser extent, to broaden the offer of tourist services. Through networking, the *cuentapropista* business is able to gain a greater visibility which ensures a regular flow of new clients. As a result of networking for example, a private taxi from Viñales carrying its clients to Havana will advise them to stay at a partner's (friend or family member) bed & breakfast in that city. In exchange, the private taxi driver will generally receive free room and board. By the same token, the Havana bed & breakfast owner recommends clients who wish to travel to the province of Pinar del Rio to use the partner Viñales taxi driver. This type of relationship is not formalized because *cuentapropistas*, as per their narrow legal scope of action, are not allowed to enter into formal agreements. Because of the apparent volatility of these networks, the benefits that result from them are not always readily perceptible. But it is clear from the interviews that all the *cuentapropistas* enter into more or less established relationships with others and form networks in order to ensure their survival.

But to the great despair of *cuentapropistas*, street hustlers were also part of the network at the time of the interview. Hustlers are called *jineterns* in Cuba, the masculine variant of *jinetera* or prostitute – this designation reveals the derogatory image Cubans have of them. In Viñales, there were a dozen (estimated) street hustlers at the time of the interview. The usual tactic of hustlers is to wait for incoming visitors at the entrance of the village (for those who arrive by car), or at the village bus station. Hustlers offer tourists a diversity of services, from bed & breakfasts to private restaurants, private taxis and other "parallel" services such as those of a prostitute or *jinetera*. The hustler then escorts the tourist to a selected *cuentapropista* and charges, illegally, a fee for the service

rendered (it can go up to 5$ per night per tourist in the case of a bed & breakfast).

All of the *cuentapropistas* interviewed expressed their aversion toward hustlers. But *cuentapropistas* said they are a necessary plague (or mafia). As one bed & breakfast owner said this is especially true when a *cuentapropistas* starts in the business and still does not have a steady clientele. The difficulty is, as many interviewees mentioned, that taxes are high, and they must be paid monthly regardless of the revenues generated otherwise the *cuentapropista* permit is taken away. In order to avoid this problem, *cuentapropistas* feel compelled to use all possible means for ensuring a steady clientele, hence the importance of networking in general and street hustlers specifically.

As is the case for government-owned service providers (GSP), partnership among *cuentapropistas* allows them to expand the offering of services to tourists. One of the bed & breakfast owner interviewed offers a range of services, from bicycle rental to tours of the region, all of this through friends. However, contrary to the GSPs, *cuentapropistas* are legally forbidden to charge for these services which are not approved *cuentapropista* activities by law. This, of course, has not stopped the practice of illegal diversification. Again, because of the legal impediments, these partnerships between *cuentapropistas* are not formalized which render these networks somewhat volatile. To illustrate this, one bed & breakfast (B&B) owner complained in interview that a partner B&B who use to send her overflow of tourists is now referring them to, ironically, the milkman who also owns a B&B and who barters the service rendered with milk products.

The third group, the **volunteer service providers (VSP)**, are in fact local residents involved in tourism. The VSPs interviewed occasionally engaged in tourist guiding services or offered visits to their property. These are not, in both cases, recognized by the State as legal *cuentapropista* activities. The networks that VSP form with other tourist stakeholders are therefore influenced by this informal status –they tend to be very precarious. For instance, VSPs do not

overtly expand their offering of services nor their visibility through networking. In order to attract clients, they depend solely on past patrons for referrals or on an informal and concealed network of friends. The tourist attraction owner who was interviewed is more fortunate than other VSPs in that thanks to a long-lasting international fame, many official tour operators bring tourist groups on a regular basis.

Another implication of their illegal status is that VSPs are not considered as official tourism stakeholders by the State. The relationship VSPs have with local authorities is therefore one that any other citizen would have. Finally, although volunteer service providers (VSP) are not allowed to charge for the services they provide, they often receive tips from tourists as a token of their appreciation. The topic of money was avoided by both VSPs in the interview –they clearly did not feel at ease about speaking openly on this as it is a very delicate issue. In fact, their involvement in tourism is somewhat dependent on the goodwill of local authorities who can shut down their activities at any time. It is probably with the double objective of maintaining a low profile and keeping away potential suspicions that both VSPs interviewed asserted that the reason they are involved with tourism is not for the potential benefits they can draw from it but because they have a passion for what they do (tour guiding on ecological trails and taking care of the property which is the tourist attraction) and they wish to share it with the visitors to the Viñales Valley.

The following table presents the range of services that are offered by all of the service providers interviewed.

Table 5.1.1 Tourist-related services provided by the interviewees (legend on p. 66)

GOVERNMENT-OWNED SERVICE PROVIDERS (GSPs) (1)	PRIVATE SERVICE PROVIDERS OR CUENTAPROPISTAS(2)	VOLUNTEER SERVICE PROVIDERS (VSPs)(3)
ACCOMMODATIONS		
More than 200 hotel rooms (3 stars) and 30 camping cabins in the Viñales Valley.	Each *casa particular* usually has 1 or two bedrooms. There were approximately 25 legal *casas particulares* in 1997.	
RESTAURANTS		
Most GSPs each own at least one restaurant.	There were 2 legal *paladares* for tourists in Viñales in 1997. A *paladar* has a maximum of 12 guests at a time. Some *casas particulares* also offer meals (which requires an additional permit), but to their guests only..	
ATTRACTIONS		
Some GSPs have tourist attractions *in situ* (ex. Cueva del Indio cave, Casa de la Cultura cultural show, horseback riding at the Campismo Dos Hermanas). Others partner with attraction providers and offer tours or excursions to them.	There are no attractions that are managed or owned by *cuentapropistas*. Dollar *cuentapropista* activities are strictly limited to food, lodging and transportation. However, one *paladar* had regular night entertainment with folk music for its guests, at no additional charge. Also, some *casas particulares* offer and charge for (illegally) bicycle rides or excursions.	The VSPs in the Viñales Valley are either involved with a tourist attraction (two VSPs were known to the researcher) or tour guiding services (between 5 to 10 local guides in according to one interviewee). Most of VSPs provide tourist services on an occasional basis. The exceptional cases that operate almost daily enjoy a higher degree of tolerance by local authorities.
TRANSPORTATION		
Some GSPs have their own tour buses but most of them partner with state transportation providers.	There were 2 legal tourist *transportistas* in 1997. They cater the Viñales Valley area but also travel out-of-province (for which a special permit is required).	
TOURIST INFORMATION		
The only information display was Rumbos on the village main plaza. It was said that a booth would be built in the coming years to offer a broad range of information. All of the tourist service providers offer, in different manners, tourist information. The state enterprises tend to have more systematized and official information (with brochures and information panels) whereas the *cuentapropistas* and the volunteer service providers usually offer more personalized, face-to-face information which is based on their own experience of the area.		

Legend :

(1) Includes the 3 Horizontes hotels in the Viñales Valley, the 5 Rumbos attractions and restaurants, the camping Campismo Dos Hermanas campground and the Casa de la Cultura, and their respective facilities.

(2) Includes a *transportista* (private taxi), a *paladar* (home-based restaurant) and three *casas particulares* (bed & breakfasts) and their respective range of services.

(3) Includes a local tourist guide and a local home-based attraction.

Some key observations highlight the importance that co-operative networks have for each service provider. First, the services that both the official and the non-official sectors offer are complementary: while the official sector (government-owned service providers) essentially offers "international class" (by Cuban standards) tourist services, the non-government service providers (*cuentapropistas* and volunteers) offer home-based, personalized services. Second, most of the fundamental tourist services and infrastructure that are needed to support the tourist industry are available in the Viñales Valley, except for tourist information services which were inadequate at the time of the interview

All the service providers use networks to a greater or lesser extent. Government-owned service providers (GSPs) are, to a certain extent, self-sufficient in that they are capable of offering a range of essential services (food, transportation, accommodation, tourist information and reservation services) within their own organization. For example, a Horizontes Hotel offers accommodation, it has at least one restaurant on site and it offers transportation for tours organized by the hotel. GSPs therefore use networks essentially to supplement their supply of tourist services (ex. a cultural evening activity offered in conjunction with the *Casa de la Cultura* in the village). However, the *cuentapropistas* make extensive use of networks primarily to ensure the steady referral of tourists and therefore ensure business survival, and secondarily to offer a broader range of tourist services than they could if working alone. As for the volunteer service

providers, they use networks in an uneven fashion: because they do not have a legal status that allows them to overtly announce their services, they tend to keep a low public profile unless they are well known and accepted by the local authorities.

5.1.2 Policy making organizations

Since this study focuses on understanding the organisation of Cuban tourist services supply, it is crucial to understand the role that government entities play in shaping the local tourism environment by regulating, planning and developing this activity. For the purpose of this study and in order to simplify terminology, these entities are called policy-making organizations (PM). PMs are public umbrella organizations which control and oversee, among other sectors, tourism-related activities. As such, they interact with tourist industry stakeholders. They sometimes interact formally, when the stakeholder is recognized as a legitimate participant of the industry (e.g. official tourist service providers and *cuentapropistas*). In other instances, they interact informally, when the stakeholder is a local resident (either involved in tourism on a voluntary basis –VSP, or not involved directly in tourism). For the three policy-making organizations interviewed, the following points summarize the key roles they play with regards to tourism (as they described it) as well as some of the key issues they raised in interview.

The **Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR)** is responsible for the overall development of tourism in the country. Most of MINTUR's mandate is fulfilled through contracting out to other government agencies since MINTUR is a very small ministry (60 staff members) with a very large budget. In particular, the IPF is largely involved in this work. Therefore, the interviews conducted with IPF and DPPF are adequately indicative of the responsibilities MINTUR has with respect to tourism development for the purpose of this research.

At the time of the interview, there was a provincial officer of MINTUR based in the provincial capital of Pinar del Rio, but there was none for the Viñales area specifically as is the case for other tourist regions in Cuba. In an interview, this was criticized by the *Poder Popular* (PP) representative who claimed that because the Viñales Valley is becoming an important tourist destination, there is an increasing number of players whose work needs to be well co-ordinated for an effective development of tourism. The coordination task is currently ensured by the PP who finds it increasingly burdensome and believes that it would be beneficial for the region to have a MINTUR representative to take it over.

Physical Planning Institute (IPF)–national and provincial departments is responsible for a number of aspects of the tourist development process. Overall, IPF has the responsibility of elaborating a five-year (general) master development plan for each province with a tourist development component.

In a more specific manner, IPF has the mandate from the Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR) to study the tourist potential of a given destination. In certain cases, there is a need for an impact assessment, in which case IPF undertakes consultations with the local communities. IPF also controls, plans and manages tourism-related foreign investment.

The municipal government entity or **Poder Popular Municipal (PP)** controls all of the economic activities in the region. With regards to tourism, the PP meets at least monthly with all official tourism-related entities (*entidades turisticas*). It is an opportunity to review their respective income against target (please note that the mechanisms of administrative and financial control are complex since each of these entities have double subordination: geographically with the local or provincial government, and sector-based within their own organization). These official entities include the state tourist facilities (hotels, restaurants and attractions) and the dollar enterprises

(which sell in dollars and are therefore commonly called "dollar enterprises" by some interviewees). The dollar enterprises include Artex (arts and crafts selling) and CIMEX (which owns Rapido fast foods, Cupet gas stations, Caracol convenience stores, Photoservice).

In an interview, the PP claimed that 2% of the tourist income generated on its territory was meant to return to the municipality. The PP representative repeatedly mentioned that there were ongoing discussions, unsuccessful up to then, with higher authorities to make this rule effective for Viñales. These funds could be reinvested in the community through the improvement of roads and municipal infrastructure, purchase of ambulances and education. In fact, the interviewee remarked: "if tourism does not contribute financially, what will it do to help the community?" The recovery of funds from tourism was described as a way to increase the links of tourism with the community and therefore contribute to community development. Examples were given of two well known cases in Cuba where this type of arrangement is working out well: in Old Havana and in Trinidad (central Cuba).

The PP also grants permits to applicants for microenterprises (*cuentapropistas*). Regarding the *cuentapropista* businesses, the interviewee said: "We accept *paladares* [home-based restaurants] because it's another option for work, but basically it goes against our principles because it creates personal enrichment" the PP said. This quote reflects the prevalent negative view official organizations have of *cuentapropismo*, which in turn gives a hint of the tremendous objection and barriers that *cuentapropistas* must overcome in the current context in Cuba.

Another role of the PP is to ensure that the norms applying to *cuentapropistas* are respected, with regards to hygiene, maximum number of guests, justification of employees being family members, justification of the origin of supplies, etc. This task is conducted jointly with the National Office for the Administration of Taxes (ONAT) and the municipal Department of Health.

Finally, the PP coordinates a municipal environmental commission. Some environmental aspects of development including tourism activities are discussed. Members are all the municipal departments (Cultural department, public works, etc.) and the local offices of national ministries (Physical Planning Institute, ministries of Sports and Recreation, Health, Forestry, etc.).

Overall, the PP collaborates closely with the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC) to regulate illicit activities related to tourism on the PP's territory.

The main responsibilities of the **Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment (CITMA)** with respect to tourism are threefold. First, CITMA must ensure that environmental and heritage conservation laws are respected. Second, it issues environmental conformity permits for new developments–this also applies to the development of new ecological trails. Third, CITMA develops environmental education and training program for Cubans (in co-operation with the Ministry of Education) and for tourists (with the various tourist facilities). For instance there was a project in place where information panels on a clean environment were going to be developed and placed at the entrance of the Cueva del Indio cave where tourists wait in line and often litter.

5.1.3 Local residents

The third group of stakeholders is local residents. They are the hosts in the tourist destination and as such, they either benefit or suffer from tourism. Because they reside in the tourist destination, their input is therefore necessary and invaluable. The perceptions on tourism that were gathered from the four local residents interviewed in this research give a flavour of the current thinking of the Viñales Valley community on tourism in the region. While two of the residents lived in Viñales, the other two lived in Moncada, a village of the municipality of Viñales which is located 15 km west of the town of Viñales.

The population of Moncada tends to have limited contacts with tourists. The latter get exclusively to Moncada to visit its well-known cave system, the Gran Caverna de Santo Tomas. Beyond the cave, the village has little to offer to the tourists. One of the Moncada respondents is a lady in her 50s who has already been asked to prepare meals, on a few occasions, for groups of German tourists visiting the cave. The other interviewee is an older man (60s) who has had very little but enjoyable contact with tourists. Both of them were positive about the potential benefits that tourism could bring to their community.

On the other hand, the two respondents of the town of Viñales have had a lot more interaction with tourists. One lady lives at a crowded intersection at the exit of the village—she regularly gives directions to tourists. She was referred to by one contact as being someone with a lot of contacts with tourists. She was unfortunately introvert and did not want to show disagreement with regards to tourism-related issues. In the question on her interest in expressing her comments on tourist development, shall the possibility of a committee arise, she replied that she would not like to do so, because she, in general, does "not like to voicing [her] concerns".

The other resident interviewed from Viñales is more outspoken. He is himself a *cuentapropista*, but only for services in pesos to Cubans. He has both a *guarapa* (sugar cane juice) counter with his son on the street and has a tire repair shop. His clients are tourist bus companies, Turistaxis (state tourist taxis), locals, and of course, tourists. He does not earn dollars, unless some rare tourist thanks him for a quick fix on a rented car. Overall, it is clear that this resident benefits indirectly from tourism in the Viñales Valley. According to his estimates, tourism in the Valley has grown by 8 to 10 times from 1987 to 1997. He further mentions that the tourists he most sees are the French (approximately 80%), followed by the German, Italians, Spanish and Canadian. He has often heard from tourists that they like Viñales and its people because they are peaceful, there is

little robbery and little prostitution. But this resident mentions that when most single male tourists get to Viñales, they are already accompanied by a prostitute.

The following table attempts to extract the major trends that arise in stakeholder networks for tourism entities in the Viñales Valley. When a relationship exists between two stakeholder groups, it is either considered: (1) formal (e.g. agreement signed between parties to work together, meetings that are part of the official agenda of the organizations, participation in committees, etc.); or (2) informal (that are links which are not officially approved or recognized by the state and are carried on an informal basis).

Table 5.1.1 Inter-stakeholders relationships in the Viñales Valley (legend p.84).

relationship with →		TOURIST SERVICE PROVIDERS			POLICY-MAKING ORGANIZATIONS (PM)	LOCAL RESIDENTS
		Government-owned service providers (GSP)	*Cuentapropistas*	Volunteer service providers (VSP)		
TOURIST SERVICE PROVIDERS	Government-owned service providers (GSP)	F				
	Cuentapropistas	**Ø (but cuentapro-pistas still refer clients to GSPs)**	IF			
	Volunteer service providers (VSP)	IF	Ø	Ø		
POLICY-MAKING ORGANIZATIONS (PM)		F	F	IF	F	
LOCAL RESIDENTS		Ø	IF	Ø	F	Ø

Legend:

F Formal relationship

IF Informal relationship

Ø No relationship reported in the interviews

The Viñales Valley tourist system is marked by dominating strong state institutions and fragile Cuban private sector participation. The networks through which stakeholders interact reflect this particular environment. The following describes the characteristics of inter-stakeholder relationships that stem from the preceding table.

Government entities (GSP and PM), in general, maintain many formal links with each other. Government-owned service providers (GSP) cater to each other on an official basis. For instance, the Casa de la Cultura is tied to Hoteles Horizontes by an agreement signed in 1996 for the on-demand delivery of a live, traditional music and dance show. Second, policy-making organizations (PM) regularly meet with GSPs under different circumstances, ranging from the review of GSP financial performance by the municipal *Poder Popular*, to the issuance of building and environmental permits by IPF/DPPF and CITMA respectively. It also includes municipal, provincial and national committee and commission meetings on various issues pertaining to tourism (e.g. MINTUR's ad hoc committee on alternative tourism). Third, policy-making organizations co-operate with each other on tourist development issues. For instance, MINTUR contracts out to the IPF a large portion of its tourism planning responsibilities.

GSP have informal ties with volunteer service providers (VSP). As the VSP are unable to establish formal agreements with other groups to overtly announce and charge for their service (they are not stakeholders recognized by the state), they depend on the continued interest and support of GSP (the state) in order to keep receiving visitors. For example, a Horizontes hotel displayed, in its lobby, a poster announcing its day tours, some of which included visits to VSPs such as the garden of Carmen and Caridad, the community of Los Acuaticos, etc.

GSP do not have ties with cuentapropistas, although cuentapropistas refer clients to government-owned tourist service providers. The two groups have a confrontational attitude about each other. It seems that *cuentapropistas* and GSP perceive each other as competitors

for the relatively few tourist dollars there are in the Viñales Valley. For instance, GSP and other government entities often commented in interview that the State does not like *cuentapropistas* which are home-based tourist services because they, overall, affect the international image the Cuban State is attempting to build of its national tourist product. In particular, one interviewee of the GSP group declared:

> "The problem with *cuentapropistas* is that they don't care about the tourist image of the region. They can say the [state] hotel is bad, the food is bad, they don't care about criticizing. As a result of this, the tourist has the impression that the Cuban tourist facilities are of low quality, and that's a big problem for Cuba. At the end, it's the state and the Cuban people who pay for all of that."

Another comment made by the same individual shows how *cuentapropistas* are perceived as a threat to national economic survival:

> "The Cuban government pays for the publicity done abroad, so when a high percentage of the tourist dollars go to *cuentapropistas*, it's not good for the country, the state ends up losing. That's why there are taxes now, to collect back some of this money."

Despite this animosity between the state and *cuentapropistas*, the latter still refer tourists to GSP's facilities. In fact, because *cuentapropistas* have a close contact with the tourist since they offer a personalized and home-based service, they play an important information role with their guests. According to the interviewees, it is common that tourists ask for advice on where to eat and what to visit in the region. Attractions such as the *Cueva del Indio* cave or restaurants such as Casa de Don Tomas – both belong to Rumbos– are naturals to suggest to the tourist. Furthermore, one of the bed & breakfast owners who also offers guiding services even said that as part of day tours, he brings tourists to some state facilities.

Cuentapropistas have many/intense, informal links with each other. *Cuentapropistas*

depend on each other in order to ensure a clientele. They tend to refer their clients to *cuentapropistas* with whom they have reciprocal benefit arrangements (e.g. a bed and breakfast owner refers its clients to a private taxi). This type of informal exchange of favors is a result of networking.

Cuentapropistas have few formal links with policy-making organizations.

Cuentapropistas meet with representatives of the policy-making organizations at the monthly meeting of the National Office for the Administration of Taxes (ONAT). The purpose of this meeting is to pay the monthly *cuentapropista* permit fee and to inform its holders of new rules/laws that apply to their business – it is not a forum for discussions or complaints. In fact, there was no equivalent of a forum, tourism committee or tourist operators association at the time of the interview.

The second type of encounter between policy-making organizations and *cuentapropistas* is when the different ministries play their regulatory role and inspect local businesses. As an example, the inspectors of the Ministry of Housing perform spot checks on bed & breakfasts to control the number of rooms being rented in proportion to the number declared. The inspectors of ONAT control the number of guests allowed at a private restaurant at one time – there can not be more than 12. Both types of encounters between the two groups are formal because they take place as part of the bureaucracy in place, and they tend to be top-down since they are required by the State.

Cuentapropistas have few, informal links with local residents. The only rapport reported in the interview with one *cuentapropista*, is a clandestine transaction where a private restaurant occasionally purchases fresh produce from farmers and fishermen. It is illegal in Cuba to buy fish or sell seafood. However, some home-based restaurants still offer them to certain clients in their back room.

Volunteer service providers (VSPs) do not have-formal links with the policy-making organizations. VSPs relate to policy-making organizations as community members but not as service providers. Because they do not have a legal status as service providers, volunteers indirectly participate in the tourist system as local residents. If they had concerns about tourism, they could contact their municipal delegate.

There are formal bottom-up consultations of local residents to the PMs (through their municipal delegate of the Municipal *Poder Popular*). The individuals interviewed were aware that they can discuss tourism issues, like any other question related to their community, with their respective municipal delegate. Of the four residents interviewed, the two Moncada residents said (hypothetically) that they were ready to discuss tourism-related issues with their delegate if they were asked "to bring new ideas" and "for the Revolution". But the two Viñales residents said they were not willing to discuss these issues with their delegate. One said: "I don't like to give my opinion; each one does what he/she wants" while another alleged that he will not give his opinion because he doesn't know much about the topic. Ironically, an individual who had recently been elected as a municipal delegate in Viñales (and who was interviewed as part of the PM group) said, on a personal basis:

> "It is not common for people to talk (...) but anyway, people here don't see tourism as being detrimental to them".

These meetings are called the meetings to Render Account (*rendición de cuenta*), they are normally held every six month and their purpose is for the population to formulate demands and the government answers to the requests and issues that are raised (Roman 1999, Malinowitz 199?, Dilla *et al* 1995).

There are top-down consultations set up by PMs for local residents as part of planning procedures. In the light of the interviews conducted with both local residents and

policy-making organizations, it appears that the role of local residents in tourist development is limited to specific circumstances such as public consultations where their participation is required. The representative of the provincial office of the Physical Planning Institute (DPPF) mentioned that surveys are sometimes conducted with communities, as part of the impact assessment processes for new tourist development projects.

There is not a known tourist development-related relationship between local residents. Local residents doe not discuss tourism-related issues with each other in formal meetings. There was no open forum, at the time of the interview, for public involvement in tourist development for the Viñales Valley. And since civil society associations are not allowed in Cuba, there is no existing body of citizens or business people (*cuentapropistas* in this case) which addresses tourist development issues.

5.2 DISCUSSION

The Viñales Valley tourist system is characterized by the dominance of state institutions and by the fragility of a newly emerging tourist private sector. This is presumed to be also the case with other emergent tourist destinations in Cuba; future case study research in other regions could confirm this. As was demonstrated in the previous chapter, networks through which stakeholders interact reflect this particular environment. State entities are involved in all aspects of tourism development, from planning and service delivery through to tourist product and destination development and marketing. Government tourist service providers (GSP) are generally large, nation-wide enterprises benefitting from strong formal relationships with other GSPs. Because they are official participants in the *national* tourist system structure, there are many state enterprises catering to them, greatly strengthening their positions in the tourist industry. Networks to which GSPs belong exist within a formal framework – agreements are signed in advance for a set period

of time, at set prices – rendering them quite rigid. As a result, they enjoy only limited flexibility to form new relationships with other stakeholders as need arises (Grahber and Stark 1997).

On the other hand, non-state entities such as the self-employed tourist providers (*cuentapropistas*) and volunteer service providers participate in tourism in a less formal manner. In general, *cuentapropistas* tend to have an extended network from which they are capable of deriving the resources they need in order to thrive in the local tourist environment (Granovetter 1973). Relationships within these large networks tend to be volatile since *cuentapropistas* cannot enter into formal agreements with one another, and the constraints – imposed by the legal and political environment – foster an atmosphere marked by insecurity and mutual distrust. Still, these networks allow them to survive. This parallels Grahber and Stark's comment (1997) that the role of network ties is to reduce uncertainties and risks facing emerging ventures.

More than is the case with most other tourist networks, *cuentapropista* networks are built upon intangible criteria such as family ties, friendship, trust and loyalty (Kuczi and Mallo *In* Grahber and Stark 1997, Smith 1994, Alter and Hague 1993). These constitute an advantage for *cuentapropista* networks in that they are made of weak ties due to their volatility. Weak ties are understood to be flexible, which allows inter-related entities to adapt *more* easily to changing demands and environmental circumstances *than* is the case with strongly-tied networks such as those of the GSPs (Grahber and Stark 1997, Galaskiewicz 1979).

Cuentapropistas are small-scale businesses and, as such, are able to establish particularly close contact with clients. This enables them to provide highly personalized customer service. As Smith rightfully indicates (1994), "homestays" and other non-traditional tourist services are increasingly sought by tourists throughout the world. In Cuba, the future and stability of micro-enterprises (*casas particulares*, home-based restaurants and private taxis) are threatened. The current

context in which *cuentapropistas* and official entities are minimally linked, with the state unfavourable to *cuentapropistas* (as shown by the results of this research), creates for them a rigid and constraining environment in which to develop (Ritter and Turvey 1999). This, in turn, poses a threat to the long-term survival of the industry as a whole since some important players are unable to function in harmony with it. It would be beneficial that the Cuban state find ways to support its tourist micro-enterprise sector, and to favour business and consultation linkages with state entities in general.

As for the volunteer service providers (VSPs), their involvement in tourism is more precarious than that of the *cuentapropistas*. They have no legal status, and their involvement is dependent upon the lenience of local authorities. However, in contrast with the *cuentapropistas*, VSPs do not depend on tourism for their survival; one could say that they are opportunistic, as they are able to benefit from tourism as opportunities arise. The tourism literature does not report cases of tourism volunteer service providers; this category has been created for this thesis, in order to classify tourist industry players that are neither illegal (they are tolerated by local authorities) nor legal (they can't hold a *cuentapropistas* work permit).

Because of the lack of cohesion in the tourist industry worldwide, two of the most significant roles a state must play are (1) to coordinate tourist development initiatives, and (2) to foster a relative unity and cohesion among tourist stakeholders (Elliott 1997, Gunn 1994, Murphy 1994). Policy making organizations in Cuba maintain top-down relationships with most tourist stakeholders, and oversee the tourist industry. These organizations regularly hold commissions or create ad-hoc committees to integrate the efforts of the various governmental agencies involved in tourism-related issues. This is a form of integrated planning which links tourism to other areas of national endeavour, as is recommended by numerous tourism specialists (see Murphy 1985 and

Gunn 1995). Policy-making organizations also hold meetings in which they consult with the community regarding specific development issues, as part of an impact assessment process. These meetings, in addition to regular municipal consultations and bi-annual meetings with the municipal delegates, constitute the main form of community involvement in the overall democratic process. However, despite the existence of a small number of discussion forums that are open to the population at large, it is worth noting that the local residents interviewed in the course of this research showed little disposition to and some apprehension of involvement in local affairs through such forums.

The results of this research show that there is little evidence that Cuba is engaging in a multi-stakeholder process such as described by Gunn (1995) or by Jamal and Getz (1995), in which the several participants in a tourist industry's supply side cooperate for the sustainable development of tourism. Cuba has acquired an expertise, since the Revolution, in fostering the development of mass organizations that are deeply rooted in the community, as reported by Mateo Rodriguez (1996). Extensive public organization networks also exist that allow constituent organizations to exchange goods and services. These public networks and government-supported mass organizations do, however, exclude an increasingly important player in the tourist industry: the micro-enterprise sector, which is tolerated rather than encouraged.

It is certain that both public and private tourist industry stakeholders, as well as the industry overall, would benefit from improved links with one another. In particular, efforts such as coordinating the quality of tourist services offered by the various stakeholders in the Viñales Valley, or attempts by CITMA to control the sustainable use of ecological trails in the Valley would be made easier if broader networks of public and private sector stakeholders existed.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

The central objectives of this research were: (1) to identify the key stakeholders involved in the tourist industry of the case study area (both public and self-employed service providers), with a focus on the service providers and policy-making organizations; (2) to analyze the role they all play in the local industry; (3) to define the type of linkages, networks that connect them; and (4) to understand the impact of such linkages and networks on the sustainable development of tourism in the case study area and, consequently, in Cuba. Existing geography of tourism and sociology literature was consulted initially to help to construct a contextual backdrop for the research. A research methodology was then established to collect primary data from semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with key informants from the stakeholder groups. Finally research data was then analyzed with the matrix-like method inspired from Pearce (1995).

The research has identified four key stakeholder groups that are involved in tourism in the Viñales Valley: (1) government tourist service providers (including state-owned hotels and tourist attractions); (2) *cuentapropistas* (micro-enterprise owners), (3) volunteer service providers (community members involved in tourism but not paid for services provided), and (4) the policy-making organizations (including the ministries of Tourism, of Planning, and of the Environment). Observable relationship patterns exist among these groups, as indicated below:

- Government entities (government service providers and policy-making organizations), in general, maintain many formal links with each other. They form a strongly-tied network that provides its members with stability but diminishes their flexibility, thus making it difficult for them to seize new business opportunities in rapidly changing markets.
- *Cuentapropistas* are related by many informal links, referring clients to each other. These networks are built on friendship, trust and loyalty. They are extensive but volatile and therefore

weak – because of their absence of formal links. This weakness of ties does, however, tend to create considerable flexibility to adapt to changing market demand. *Cuentapropistas* have few formal ties with policy-making organizations (for tax payment and regulatory purposes only), and have no direct ties with government-owned tourist service providers, to whom they may, however, refer clients. Finally, relationship between *cuentapropistas* and state organizations tend to be confrontational.

- Volunteer service providers have only informal ties with government-owned tourist service providers, who nevertheless will refer clients to them.
- Local residents and policy-making organizations are related by formal, bottom-up consultations – meetings between residents and municipal delegates of the *Poder Popular* – or by top-down consultations – policy-making organizations consulting local residents on issues that affect them (including tourism issues) as part of regular planning procedures. The end result is a relatively low degree of community involvement in planning, as outlined in tourism literature.

The patterns of inter-stakeholder relationships existing in the Viñales Valley demonstrate the uneven degree of participation of the region's various tourism entities. In particular, the predominance of state entities controlling the industry is typical of a centrally-planned country such as Cuba. The literature review demonstrated that sustainable tourist development requires that planning be done in a collaborative manner, one that requires an understanding and appreciation of the relationships between stakeholders (Gunn 1994). Successful advances in multi-stakeholder processes must, in the case of Cuba, be fostered by the State in order to generate a relative unity and cohesion among stakeholders, and to develop a harmonized tourist destination system and image. Progress can still be made to increase the involvement of non-state stakeholders in tourism planning and development, including the *cuentapropistas*, the volunteer

service providers, and the host community. Industry associations or multi-stakeholder committees can provide a forum for such consultations on tourism issues. These strategies would, in turn, encourage the sustainable development of the tourist industry. In order to accomplish this, Cuba would do well to draw from its experience in creating well-organized networks of mass organizations. This would facilitate the implementation of stronger participatory processes involving the community and the multiple tourist industry stakeholders. Implementing innovative multi-stakeholder cooperation strategies might also involve – for the state – the development of provincial or regional resources for tourists that would provide them with access to information on the diverse tourist services available in a region, from the small-scale private tourist services to ones owned by the state.

In terms of future research, there remain a number of outstanding issues, the resolution of which would benefit the sustainable development of tourism in the Viñales Valley, and in Cuba as a whole. On methodological grounds, a full application of Pearce's comprehensive matrix-like analysis could provide a wider perspective of the strengths, weaknesses, gaps and overlaps in stakeholder roles and activities in the Viñales Valley tourist industry. Should the research team prove to be capable of circumventing the challenges inherent in conducting a survey in Cuba, the survey approach may also provide an accurate portrait of community perspectives on tourism. In terms of theoretical approaches, studies in tourism would, generally, benefit from the adaptation of social network theories as proposed in sociological literature. These provide insights into several, little-explored aspects (in the tourism arena) of inter-stakeholder relationships.

Regarding the supply-side of the tourist industry in the Viñales Valley – and particularly of the tourist product – certain research gaps remain, as was pointed out by some stakeholders in interview. All of the state-run organizations interviewed believed that tourism in the Viñales Valley

has great potential. The following issues should, however, be addressed:

- The usual length of stay of tourists in the Viñales Valley needs to be increased from single-day excursions to multiple-day stays; and
- The ecotourist potential of the Viñales Valley is tremendous, but the destination needs to strengthen its image as an "active" nature-oriented destination – as opposed to a relaxing, nature contemplation destination – in order to attract the dynamic, adventure-searching tourists. On this matter, recent development of the Viñales National Park offers opportunities for creating new alternative tourist experiences (see FUNDESCAN 2000 for information on the current project on tourism in the Viñales National Park).

Cuba has positioned tourism as the island's mainstay industry for the new millennium; its sustainability is clearly a matter of crucial concern for the island. While undergoing numerous restructuring processes in the past decade, the Cuban tourist industry has found ways to create space for new players to participate in the delivery of tourist services, increasing the need for a better understanding of stakeholder relationships and cooperation. The valuable experience that Cuba has acquired in fostering community involvement in mass organizations (of women, youth, workers, etc.) since the Revolution could well be used to develop a multi-stakeholder participatory model for the tourist industry. Such a model would evolve within Cuban principles and ideology, and support the sustainable growth of this vital industry.

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APPENDIX A INTERVIEW GUIDE

THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION FOLLOWS THE ORIGINAL SPANISH VERSION

GUIA DE ENTREVISTA

(Noviembre 1997)

PARA UN TURISMO SUSTENTABLE EN EL VALLE DE VIÑALES

Entidades* turisticas a ser entrevistadas en elc curso de esta investigación.

*Una entidad turística es una organización involucrada en el turismo, que sea directamente o indirectamente.

AL NIVEL LOCAL	
Comunidades (semi-urbanas, rurales, campesinas)	Viñales Moncada Los Acuaticos campesinos privados
Attracciones	Cueva Santo Tomas Cueva del Indio Jardín de Caridad y Carmen Casa del veguero Comunidad Los Acuaticos Muro de la prehistoria *Futuro* Parque nacional de Viñales
Servicios (formales/informales): *alimenticios, hospedaje, turoperadoras, transportistas, etc*	Hotel El Ermita (HH) Hotel Los Jazmines (HH) Restaurante (Rumayor, Casa de Don Tomás, Mural de la prehistoria, Casa del Veguero) Turoperadoras (Rumbos, ...) Paladares (Inesita, ...) Cuartos a alquilar (...) Kioskos Transportistas Artesanos

Entidades del Gobierno	PP CITMA IPF
AL NIVEL PROVINCIAL	
Entidades del Gobierno	PP CITMA IPF
AL NIVEL NACIONAL	
Servicios	Cadenas Hoteleras (HH, ...) Turoperadoras (Rumbos, ...)
Entidades del Gobierno	PP CITMA IPF

A. PREGUNTAS PARA LAS ATTRACCIONES, LOS SERVICIOS Y LOS ARTESANOS:

Me gustaría que me hable de usted

1. Hace cuanto tiempo que ud. trabaja para esta organización?
2. Cual posición ocupa usted en esta organización? Sus cargos principales?
3. Vive en Viñales?
4. Es nacido(a) en Viñales? Si no, vino ud. a Viñales para este trabajo?
5. *(Cadenas hoteleras, Turoperadoras al nivel nacional)* Cual es el papel que ud. considera que la región turística de Viñales puede jugar en el turismo internacional a Cuba?

Me gustaría que me hable de su organización

1. Historia de la organización
2. Ahora: Sus principales actividades
   - en general
   - con respecto al turismo (si diferente)
3. Como los turistas llegan a conocer los servicios que ud. les ofrece? (publicidad directa, traidos por turoperadores, etc)
4. Si tiene varios medios, ordenar por orden de importancia

5. Con respecto a los servicios turísticos que ud. ofrece, cuales son los recursos que ud. necessita para llevar a cabo su actividad turística estrictamente? (abastecimiento de alimentos, recursos ambientales, culturales, etc)
6. Cuales son según ud. las ventajas de involucrarse en la actividad turística?
7. Cuales son las desventajas según ud. de involucrarse en la actividad turística? (impactos negativos sobre los recursos, la gente, de ganancia)
8. Futuro:

- Orientaciones, proyectos con respecto a la actividad turística
- Y ud. ve factores que lo/la limiten o impiden de atingir sus objetivos (proyectos) con respecto al turismo?

Y ahora con respecto a sus relaciones con otras organizaciones de la región

9. Ud. ha trabajado alguna vez en colaboración con otras organizaciones involucradas en el turismo en la región? (si/ no – favor poner en ordn de importancia)

CUALES SON?	NOMBRE
Hoteles	Si / No _____
Turoperadores	
· Cubanos	Si / No _____
· Estranjeros	Si / No _____
Restaurantes	Si / No _____
Paladares	Si / No _____
Casa particular	Si / No _____
Attracciones turisticas	Si / No _____
Comunidades	Si / No _____
Campesino	Si / No _____
PP Viñales	Si / No _____
MINTUR	Si / No _____
IPF	Si / No _____
CITMA Viñales	Si / No _____

Otras que no he nombrado al nivel de Viñales, de Pinar del Rio, de Cuba, internacionalmente?

_____

10. Existen mecanismos que permitan a las organizaciones involucradas en el turismo de reunirse para poder discutir y intercambiar ideas sobre el desarollo del turismo en el Valle de Viñales? Si sí, ud. esta involucrado en uno de ellos?

Finalmente, sobre Viñales como región turística

11. Como ud. caracteriza la región turística de Viñales? Cuales son las principales attracciones de la región?
12. Cual papel ve ud. que su organización juega en el turismo de Viñales? Cual producto distinctivo ofrece ud. al turista?
13. Las comunidades del Valle de Viñales estan involucradas de alguna forma en el turismo (Si / No; Como?).
14. Ud. ve que podría facilitar al desarollo turístico el involucro (o un mayor involucro) de las comunidades en el turismo (porqué)?
15. Como ve ud. el futuro del turismo en Viñales: muy malo / malo / sin cambio / muy bueno / excelente. Porqué?

PREGUNTAS A RESIDENTES DE COMMUNIDADES

1. Hace cuanto tiempo que ud. vive en Viñales? Es nacido(a) en Viñales?
2. En que trabaja ud.? Su esposo(a)?
3. Há algún miembro de su familia inmediata que trabaja en el turismo? Quién? En qué trabaja?
4. Hace cuantos años que ud. ve turistas llegar a la comunidad?
5. Ya ha tenido la oportunidad de hablar con alguno de ellos en algún momento? Y que piensa de ellos (le molesta o le gusta ver turistas, hablar con ellos)?
6. Usted ve algunos cambios notables que han sucedido en la comunidad desde que empezaron a llegar los turistas algunos años atras. Cuales (cambios positivos / cambios negativos)?
7. Ud. considera que el turismo trae ventajas a la gente de su comunidad en general (1=para nada; 5=mucho)

   · mejores calles _____

   · tiendas mejor abastecidas _____

   · mejores servicios a la comunidad _____

   · mas seguridad _____

   · beneficios económicos a la gente _____
8. Ud. considera que existen desventajas (sobre la gente, sobre el medio ambiente) de que haya turismo en su comunidad?
9. A quién ud. puede, si lo necessita, comunicar sus comentarios, ideas o críticas sobre el turismo en su comunidad?

10. Si existiese en Viñales un grupo de discusión sobre el turismo, a ud. le gustaría hacer parte de él para comunicar sus impresiones y ideas sobre la forma en la cual el turismo en su comunidad y en el Valle de Viñales de desarolla?
11. A ud. le interesaría involucrarse de alguna forma en el turismo? De que forma?
12. Ud. ya ha estado colaborando alguna vez con organizaciones que trabajan en el turismo? Cual? En que ocasión? *(Hoteles, turoperadoras, Restaurantes, Paladares, Casas Particulares, attracciones turísticas, MINTUR)*
13. Ud. cree que a los turistas les gustaría conocer a los residentes de la región?
14. Ud. se preocupa que el futuro del turismo en Viñales sea bueno

PREGUNTAS A LAS ENTIDADES GOBERNAMENTALES:

Me gustaría que me hable de usted

1. Hace cuanto tiempo que ud. trabaja para esta organización?
2. Cual posición ocupa usted en esta organización? Sus cargos principales?
3. *(Si organización al nivel local)* Vive en Viñales? Pinar del Rio?
4. *(Si organización al nivel local)* Es nacido(a) en Viñales? Si no, vino ud. a Viñales para este trabajo?

Me gustaría que me hable de su organización

Las principales actividades de su organización

- en general
- con respecto al turismo (si diferente)

Y ahora con respecto a sus relaciones con otras organizaciones de la región

1. Ud. ha trabajado alguna vez en colaboración con otras organizaciones involucradas en el turismo para la región de Viñales? (si/ no – favor poner en ordn de importancia)

CUALES SON?		CUALES?
Hoteles	Si / No	_____
Turoperadores		
· Cubanos	Si / No	_____
· Estranjeros	Si / No	_____
Restaurantes	Si / No	_____
Paladares	Si / No	_____
Gente que alquila cuartos	Si / No	_____
Attracciones turísticas	Si / No	_____

Comunidades	Si / No _____
Campesino	Si / No _____
PP Viñales	Si / No _____
MINTUR	Si / No _____
IPF	Si / No _____
CITMA Viñales	Si / No _____
IPF	Si / No _____

2. Otras que no he nombrado al nivel de Viñales, de Pinar del Rio, de Cuba, internacionalmente?

   _____

3. Existen mecanismos que permitan a las organizaciones involucradas en el turismo de reunirse para poder discutir y intercambiar ideas sobre el desarollo del turismo en el Valle de Viñales?
   - Si sí, ud. esta involucrado en uno de ellos?

Finalmente, sobre Viñales como región turística

1. Como ud. caracteriza la región turística de Viñales? Cuales son las principales attracciones de la región?
2. Cual papel ve ud. que su organización juega en el desarollo del turismo de Viñales?
3. Ud. ve que podría facilitar al desarollo turístico el involucro (o un mayor involucro) de las comunidades en el turismo (porqué)?
4. *(A'l nivel nacional)* Cual es el papel que ud. considera que la región turística de Viñales puede jugar en el turismo internacional a Cuba?
5. Como ve ud. el futuro del turismo en Viñales y porqué?

   muy malo malo sin cambio muy bueno excelente
6. Que tipo de trabajo de investigación científica podría ayudarle a desarollar su actividad con respecto al turismo en Viñales?

(english translation)

INTERVIEW GUIDE

November 1997

FOR A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE VIÑALES VALLEY

Stakeholders* to be interviewed in this research are are listed below.

*A stakeholder is an organization involved in tourism, either directly or indirectly.

LOCAL LEVEL	
Comunity (semi-urban, rural, famer)	Viñales Moncada Los Acuaticos Private farmers
Tourist attractions	Cueva Santo Tomas cave Cueva del Indio cave Jardín de Caridad y Carmen garden Casa del veguero Mural of prehistory *Future* National Park of Viñales
Services (formal/informal): *Food, accommodation, tour operators, transportation, etc*	Hotel El Ermita (IHI) Hotel Los Jazmines (IHI) Restaurants (Rumayor, Casa de Don Tomás, Mural de la prehistoria, Casa del Veguero) Tour operators (Rumbos, ...) *Paladares* (Inesita, ...) *Casa particular* (...) Street booths *Transportistas* Artisans
Government entities	Poder popular CITMA IPF

PROVINCIAL LEVEL	
Government entities	Poder Popular CITMA IPF
NATIONAL LEVEL	
Services	Hotel chains (Horizontes Hoteles, ...) Turoperadoras (Rumbos, ...)
Entidades del Gobierno	PP CITMA IPF

QUESTIONS TO TOURIST ATTRACTIONS, SERVICES AND ARTISANS:

About yourself

7. How long have you been working for this organization?
8. What is your position in this organization? Your main responsibilities?
9. Do you live in Viñales?
10. Were you born in Viñales? Otherwise, did you come to Viñales for this job?
11. *(Hotel chains, tour operators at national level)* What is the role that the Viñales Valley tourist pole plays in international tourism to Cuba?

About your organization

1. History of your organization
2. You main activities currently

- In general
- With respect to tourism (if different)

3. How do tourists get to know your services? (direct marketing, brounght by tour operators, etc.)
4. If you have different means of attracting tourists, please rank them.
5. With respect to the tourist services you offer, what are the resources that you need for the tourist activities only? (food supply, envirobnmental resources, cultural resources, etc.)
6. What are, according to you, the benefits of being involved in tourism?
7. What are, according to you, the inconvenients of being involved in tourism?
8. Future:

- Goals, projects with respect to with respect to tourist activities?

- Do you foresee difficulties that might prevent you from reaching your goals (projects) with respect to tourist activities?

Relationship with other organization in the region

1. Have you worked in cooperation with other organization involved in tourism in the region? (yes/ no – please rank)

WHICH ONES?		NAME
Hotels	Yes / No	_____
Tour operators		
· Cuban	Yes / No	_____
· Foreigners	Yes / No	_____
Restaurants	Yes / No	_____
Paladares	Yes / No	_____
Casa particular	Yes / No	_____
Tourist attractions	Yes / No	_____
Comunities	Yes / No	_____
Farmers	Yes / No	_____
Poder popular Viñales	Yes / No	_____
MINTUR	Yes / No	_____
IPF	Yes / No	_____
CITMA Viñales	Yes / No	_____

2. Other organization that are not mentioned in this list in Viñales, Pinar del Rio, Cuba, internationally?_____

3. Are there mechanisms that allow organizations involved in tourism to meet and discuss/exchange ideas on tourist development in the Viñales Valley?
   If yes, are you involved in them?

On the Viñales Valley as a tourist region

1. How would you characterize the Viñales Valley tourist region? What are the main attractions of the region?
2. What role does your organization plays in tourism in the Viñales Valley? What is the tourist product that you offer?
3. Are communities in the Viñales Valley involved in tourism? (Yes / No; how?)
4. Do you think that participation (or a greater participation) of communities in tourism could improve sustainable tourist development?

5. Your perception of the future of tourism in the Viñales Valley: very bad / bad / no change / good / very good / excellent. Why?

QUESTIONS TO LOCAL RESIDENTS

1. How long have you lived in Viñales for? Were you born in Viñales?
2. Where do you work? Your spouse?
3. Is there any family member that works in tourism? Whom? In what sector?
4. How long have you seen tourists arriving to the community for?
5. Have you ever had a chance to talk to them at some point? What do you think about them (you like it or it disturbs you?)
6. Have you observed noticeable changes in the community since the time tourists first arrived some years ago? What changes (positive / negative)?
7. Do you consider that tourism benefits to the people of your community in general (1=not at all; 5=a lot)

- Better roads _____
- Stores with more supplies _____
- Better services to the community _____
- Safer _____
- Economic benefits to the people _____

8. Do you see any inconvenients to tourism in your community (on people, the environment)?
9. Who can you communicate, if you need to, your comments, ideas or critiques with respect to tourism in your community?
10. If there was in Viñales a discussion group on tourism, would you like to be part of it and comment on how tourist development in the Viñales Valley is developed?
11. Would you be interested in getting involved in some kind of tourist activity? What type?
12. Have you ever cooperated with organization involved in tourism? Which? What was the event? *(Hotels, tou operators, restaurants, paladares, casas particulares, tourist attractions, MINTUR)*
13. Do you think that tourists would like to meet the people of this region?
14. Are you concerned about the future of tourism in the Viñales Valley?

QUESTIONS TO GOVERNMENT ENTITIES:

About your yourself

1. How long have you been working for this organization?
2. What is your position in this organization? Your main responsibilities?
3. (*local organization*) Do you live in Viñales?

4. *(local organization)* Were you born in Viñales? Otherwise, did you come to Viñales for this job?
5. *(Hotel chains, tour operators at national level)* What is the role that the Viñales Valley tourist pole plays in international tourism to Cuba?

About your organization

The main activities of your organization

- In general
- With respect to tourism (if differente)

On your relationships with other organization in the region

6. Have you worked in cooperation with other organization involved in tourism in the region? (yes/ no – please rank)

WHICH ONES?		NAME
Hotels	Yes / No	_____
Tour operators		
· Cuban	Yes / No	_____
· Foreigners	Yes / No	_____
Restaurants	Yes / No	_____
Paladares	Yes / No	_____
Casa particular	Yes / No	_____
Tourist attractions	Yes / No	_____
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CITMA Viñales	Yes / No	_____

7. Other organization that are not mentioned in this list in Viñales, Pinar del Rio, Cuba, internationally?_____
8. Are there mechanisms that allow organizations involved in tourism to meet and discuss/exchange ideas on tourist development in the Viñales Valley?

- If yes, are you involved in them?

On the Viñales Valley as a tourist region

1. How would you characterize the Viñales Valley tourist region? What are the main attractions of the region?
2. What role does your organization plays in tourism in the Viñales Valley? What is the tourist product that you offer?
3. Are communities in the Viñales Valley involved in tourism? (Yes / No; how?)
4. Do you think that participation (or a greater participation) of communities in tourism could improve sustainable tourist development?
5. Your perception of the future of tourism in the Viñales Valley: very bad / bad / no change / good / very good / excellent. Why?
