Inventing Havana in Thin Air:
Sound, Space, and the Making of Sonic Citizenship

by

Vincent Andrisani

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BES, York University, 2003

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Name:	**Vincent Andrisani**
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Title:	**Inventing Havana in Thin Air: Sound, Space, and the Making of Sonic Citizenship**
Examining Committee:	**Chair:** Milena Droumeva Assistant Professor, School of Communication, SFU
	Jan Marontate Senior Supervisor Associate Professor, School of Communication, SFU
	Barry Truax Supervisor Professor Emeritus, School of Communication, SFU
	Alejandra Bronfman Supervisor Associate Professor, Department of History, UBC
	Gabriela Aceves Sepúlveda Internal Examiner Assistant Professor, School of Interactive Arts & Technology, SFU
	Ana María Ochoa Gautier External Examiner Professor, Department of Music, Columbia University
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Abstract

The dissolution of the Soviet bloc (1989-1991) gave way to an acute economic crisis in Cuba known as the "Special Period in a Time of Peace". In Havana, the island's largest and most populated city, this historical moment consisted of widespread material scarcity, the dramatic increase of inequality, a housing crisis, and the re-emergence of the city's once-famed tourist geographies—all of which compelled residents to engage what is known colloquially as *la lucha*: the struggle to make ends meet. Although the worst of the crisis is now over, many of Havana's tenuous social, economic, and material conditions remain. This has prompted some to argue that the relationship between residents and the urban geography is conditioned by a logic of exclusion, and that the geo-social bond central to any notion of citizenship is fractured (Coyula, 2011; Ponte, 2002; 2011; Porter, 2008; Redruello, 2011). Yet, residents continue to spontaneously negotiate the precarity of everyday life, manifest in ingenuity with material objects, collective musical practices, or in individual maneuverings such as prostitution or street hustling (Del Real & Pertierra, 2008; Fernandes, 2011; Carter, 2008).

This dissertation argues that residents also negotiate the precarity of Havana's urban geography using tacit, embodied practices made tangible through sound and listening. It asks, what are some of the everyday sounds that comprise the city's acoustic environments? How do such sounds accommodate or resist prevailing power structures? And to what extent can sound and listening mobilize a democratic spatial and political presence? Drawing from several months of ethnographic fieldwork, I argue that in the neighbourhood context, residents generate place-based social formations known as "acoustic communities" (Truax, 2001) that stand in contradistinction to the exclusionary logic of everyday life in the city. Borrowing from existing research in urban theory (Sassen, 2008; Holston, 1998; Cadava & Levy, 2003; Isin, 2000), I conceive of these social formations using the term *sonic citizenship*, which I define as the communal production of acoustic spaces by those without sustained access to political power. During moments when sonic citizenship is enacted, we hear not only the political agency of Havana's residents, but also, the possibilities for the design of a future, more egalitarian city.

Keywords: sound; listening; space; everyday; community; citizenship

Dedication

For nonna.

Acknowledgements

Dissertations are invariably credited to one person, but very few have been written through the contributions of one person alone. There are so many people that, without whom, this project would never have been realized.

I'd like to begin by extending my infinite gratitude to my friends and family in Havana, many of whom today are in Miami. To my brother Pampi, who was never too busy to offer his time, his knowledge, and was always willing to talk about the spaces and places of his city. To my tia Margarita and tio Carlito, whose warmth and affection always made me feel so at home. And to my friends Dennis, Lohans, Omarito, Yosdenis, Anays, Aniwal, Mabel, Ained, and everyone else who I had the fortune of spending time with while I was in Havana; each of my experiences with you helped me to develop this project. Thank you.

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further refining my ideas, and reformulating them for pedagogical purposes in courses that I've instructed in the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University. Thank you to both the School and to all of the students who've helped shape my thinking.

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But just as life ends, so too does it begin. And so much of this project was completed with the inspiration of my little nephews Ethan and Niko. Although I'm far away, I love seeing their smiling photos, and the excitement and wonder in their eyes as they come to know the spaces and places that surround them. I hope that their fascination for learning allows them to continue to see and hear the magic in everyday life, now and always.

My partner Maggie has seen this project through both the best and the worst of it, which means that she's seen me through the best and the worst of it. She's been there to share the moments of excitement, and to listen to me lament during times of difficulty. For the time that she's taken to help me think through these ideas, and for encouraging me, always, thank you with all my heart.

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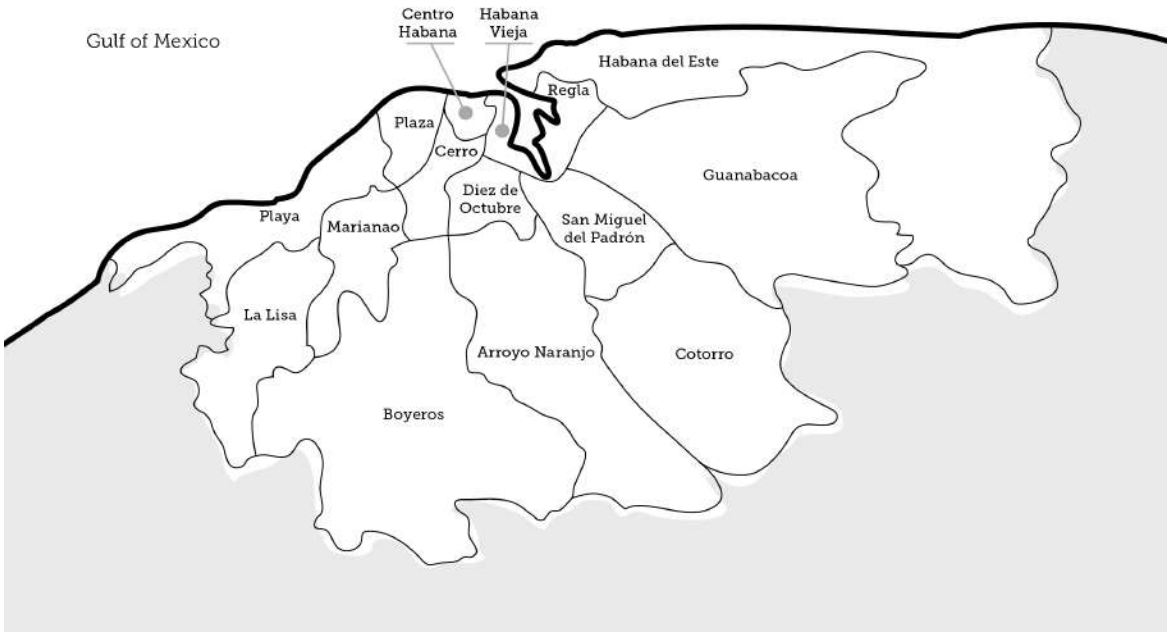

Chapter 1.

An Introduction to Sound and Listening in Havana

> *The Cuban street was always animated and garrulous, with its town criers, officious peddlers, candy sellers announced by bells bigger than the fruit stand itself, the fruit cars with their headdresses made of palm fronds like a Palm Sunday procession, hawkers of everything known to man, all in a farcical atmosphere à la Ramón de la Cruz.*
>
> —Alejo Carpentier, *The City of Columns, 1964*

I begin and end most days on the balcony of my residence here in the district of El Vedado. In the mornings, I bring with me oatmeal and tea, and sit at this white cast iron table either reading, writing, or simply thinking. Evening dinners are spent in the same place, and often include friends, with whom I'll recount the day and plan for tomorrow. From here, I've quietly observed and aligned myself with the rhythms of the neighbourhood; so much so that I can even approximate who is going to do what, where, and when. On weekday mornings, the young boy in the apartment below heads off to school at 7:45 sharp, accompanied by his grandmother. Abel, the landscaper who tends the spacious boulevard out front, begins sweeping at about 8 or 8:05. Once that's done, he trims the lawn until just before lunchtime, when it becomes far too uncomfortable to work in the midday sun. Come the evening, the better part of the neighbourhood has their television sets on, which are either tuned in to the nightly news broadcast or to the baseball game. Oftentimes, music can be heard playing in a nearby apartment, though if this neighbourhood offers any indication, these sounds certainly aren't as prevalent as one might expect in a city known for its vibrant musical culture. From my perch up here on the third floor, I've learned about, and I've become quite comfortable in, this small part of Havana. And I've done so simply by taking in both the sights and the sounds of the neighbourhood community.

While this balcony can often be a space of seclusion, solitude, and privacy, it somehow is also the liveliest part of the house. It's only a few weeks after my arrival, yet neighbours have already begun to either nod or wave in my direction as they walk past. Sometimes, they'll even shout up to me and say "*¡Oye, Vicente! ¿Qué bolá?*": "Hey

Vincent! What's happening?". Visitors to the apartment will do the same, since there is no doorbell, nor is there an intercom for them to use. This means that several times a day, people can be heard hollering up from the sidewalk below at either my friend Pampi, his mother Margarita, and for those who know I've installed myself here, I'll even get the occasional call. The protocol is that we toss the keys down to the visitors so they can let themselves in through the front door of the building. Inevitably, most of them miss, and so the crashing and clanking of keys splatting on the sidewalk is quite common. For those who aren't interested in coming up to the apartment, or for those who are simply passing by, the balcony is also a site for quick transactions. Whether it's to drop something off or pick something up, the exchange by way of hand basket and rope is always a reliable option. And this exchange is, much like the others, initiated acoustically. Simultaneously inside and outside the house, the balcony is a sort of liminal place; a space of transition that facilitates communication and contact in either direction.

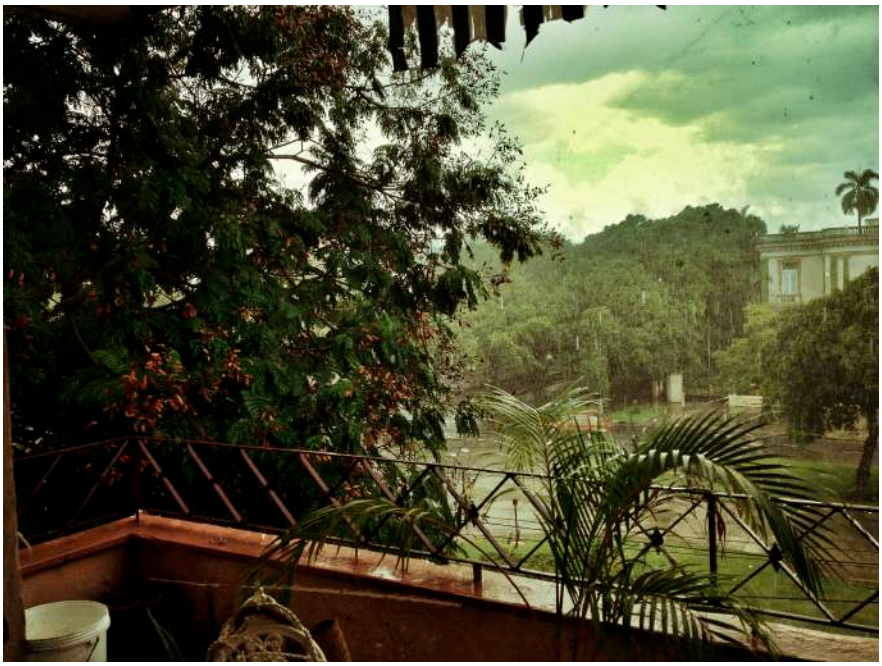

Figure 1: A view from the balcony during a rainstorm
Photo taken by author

The liminality of spaces such as the balcony forms a large part of what brings the neighbourhood to life. From inside the home, residents participate in conversations and events that take place in the streets. Conversely, those in the streets often feel obliged to get the attention of their friends or family indoors. This works for a number of reasons, none of which is more apparent than the architectural design of the homes themselves.

Seldom are windows fitted with panes of glass; instead, wooden shutters are used to shield residents from the hot Caribbean sun while still letting cool air pass through. Doors that are not in direct sunlight are also left open for the very same reason. Sound thus moves across spaces that are otherwise visually separate. What physical space divides, sound adjoins. At most any time of day, sound, and in particular, voices, can be heard and overheard, travelling above, around, and through the city's public and domestic spaces. The result is a level of sociability, shared intimacy, and a collective awareness that is simply not possible (nor is it necessarily desirable) in the social and physical spaces with which I am most familiar. By directly attending to—and through—spaces such as windows, doors, balconies and porticoes, listeners are afforded the opportunity to participate in communicative exchanges that traverse the boundaries of the built environment.

To listen in this way is to listen *trans-liminally*: across the spatial threshold through which sound passes as it animates the vibrant social life of Havana. Trans-liminal listening is a tacit, everyday mode of perception that is commonplace not only in neighbourhoods across the city, but in light of both the warm climate and the design of the architecture itself, in cities across the Caribbean more broadly. It is an embodied form of communication through which residents simultaneously demonstrate and cultivate an intimate understanding of their immediate social and spatial surroundings. To listen trans-liminally is to implicitly conceive of the built environment as a mediator—rather than an inhibitor—of sound, in turn making tangible the presence of the neighbourhood community. In the work of the World Soundscape Project (1977; 1978), this collective, participatory approach to communication is referred to as an *acoustic community*: a geo-spatial context in which sound plays a significant and positive role in the lives of inhabitants. In Havana, acoustic communities are most often comprised not of individuals who occupy one another's sight lines, but rather, of those who are within earshot. It is a rather sophisticated social formation, since it demands an intimate relationship with both the social *and* the physical spaces of the neighbourhood. More than a simple act of communication alone, listening trans-liminally is an enactment of local knowledge that enables residents to make use of their neighbourhood spaces—and the spaces of the city at large—in ways that are designed by and for the local population.

These images of dynamic, fully functional, and even vibrant neighbourhood communities sit oddly with most accounts of Havana. Scholars have tended to emphasize the city's adverse economic, social, and material conditions that, even at the best of times, make everyday life quite a struggle. Parts of Havana's housing stock are decaying and are badly in need of repair. Infrastructure such as the water delivery system is leaking, losing nearly half the existing supply before it even reaches residents. Roads have potholes, making them unfit for driving; sidewalks are uneven, making them unfit for elderly people, those with physical disabilities, and those with strollers. Public transportation is unreliable and mobility is a critical urban problem. The scarcity of material goods, including food items and basic necessities, makes even the smallest task a time and energy-intensive endeavour. And in light of Cuba's slow but steady reintegration into the global market—the most tangible evidence of which is the resurgence of the island's once-famed tourist economy—parts of Havana are not only being overrun by the presence of international travellers, but the limited access to Cuba's emergent open-market is creating rising levels of inequity amongst the local population. All of this creates the conditions for what residents describe as "*la lucha*": a noun *or* verb that means to fight or struggle. Used colloquially to reference the adverse social, material, and economic conditions with which citizens are faced, the term *la lucha* refers quite simply to the daily challenge to make ends meet.

Because of Havana's tenuous social, material, and economic conditions, and the constant need for residents to engage *la lucha* in the face of adversity, scholars have tended to describe the city as a site of both contradiction and failure. Such accounts construct Havana not as a city inhabited by and belonging to the local population, but rather, as a precarious landscape from which residents are disconnected, or are altogether excluded. Cuban architect Emma Álvarez-Tabío Albo (2011) has referred to Havana as a city "in midair"; Laura Redruello (2011), scholar of Latin American literature, calls it a "non-city"; Havana-based architect and urban designer Mario Coyula (2011) has referred to it as "dystopian"; anthropologist Amy L. Porter (2008) calls it a city of "fleeting dreams"; and historian Rafael Rojas (2011) claims Havana is "a discourse that cannot be narrated" (p. 123), making it altogether "illegible". At the core of each of these formulations is the idea that Havana's social, economic, and material conditions have disassociated inhabitants from the city proper, fracturing the geo-social bond that any notion of citizenship presupposes. This sentiment achieves its most succinct articulation

in the writing of Cuban essayist Antonio José Ponte (2002; 2011), who argues that Havana's decaying physical environment is symbolic of the decaying political agency of its subjects. So long as residents are surrounded by ruin, Ponte maintains, they will be unable to imagine and effect emancipatory change. How might we reconcile, then, the functionality, dynamism, and even the vibrancy of Havana's soundscapes with the logic of exclusion that conditions everyday life in the city?

The Making of Sonic Citizenship

I argue that in sound, Havana emerges not as a city falling into ruin, from which the local population has been unequivocally dispossessed or excluded. On the contrary, in sound and listening, we hear a city that, quite simply, functions according to the needs of residents themselves. That residents listen across the boundaries of the built environment to perceive, and when necessary, respond to sounds emanating from unseen locations demonstrates an intimate working knowledge of their social and spatial surroundings. It articulates a sophisticated relationship with both the attributes and idiosyncrasies of their neighbourhood's physical spaces, as well as with other residents with whom they share these spaces. Such an understanding emerges over time and with familiarity, and is an enactment of civic memory that forms the basis for membership and inclusion amidst the neighbourhood community. Inconsequential as they might seem, acoustic communities function as place-based social formations that stand in contradistinction to the logic of exclusion that otherwise characterizes so many aspects of everyday life in Havana. To listen trans-liminally within the context of the neighbourhood constitutes an act through which residents creatively and collectively lay claim to the acoustic spaces of the urban geography. Cultivated on the basis of social reciprocity and collective participation, acoustic communities give life to a city in which residents are firmly grounded, and that they fully inhabit. It is a means through which the local population can, albeit momentarily, enact a sense of autonomy and political agency amidst a geography that threatens to take it from them.

I refer to these everyday moments using the term *sonic citizenship*, which I define as the communal production of acoustic spaces by those without sustained access to political power. Citizenship, in this sense, is not an institutionalized status bound to the political architecture of the nation-state, but instead, is an informal social status that emerges according to the needs, desires, and the aspirations of the local

population. It is a form of cultural engagement and political participation found not in moments of organized dissent or doctrinal activism, but rather embedded in everyday, lived practices. Such practices exist both alongside and in response to the "imagined community" (Anderson, 2006) of the nation, but they gravitate around a more immediate, intimate, and localized geographical setting: the city. "As the proportion of the urban population of the world increases, with ever fewer in rural areas and ever more in cities", writes sociologist Anthony D. King (2007), "the likelihood of people's identity being primarily determined by their commitment to their city, as provider of work and welfare, shelter and sustenance, culture and leisure, is very real" (p. 10). By emphasizing the context of the city rather than that of the nation, I borrow from scholarly discussions that posit citizenship as an ongoing negotiation that takes place amidst the urban landscape (see Sassen, 2008; Holston, 1998; Holston & Appadurai, 1996; Cadava & Levy, 2003, Isin, 2000; etc.) and I bring them into the context of Havana and into the realm of sound and listening. Havana's acoustic spaces, I argue, offer a salient example of how the right to recognition, autonomy, and the enactment of political agency is manifest.

That residents of Havana are compelled to engage *la lucha* over the right to urban space—over the "right to the city" (Lefebvre, 1996; Sassen, 2008; Holston, 1998)—is, in its most immediate sense, a consequence of Cuba's post-Soviet era. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the island entered one of the most profound economic crises in its history. Termed the "Special Period in a Time of Peace", much of the 1990s was defined by the scarcity of material goods such as petrol, medicine, and basic necessities.[1] In an attempt to mitigate the severity of the crisis, the socialist government conceded to the pressures of the global economy, and implemented a host of market mechanisms. Amidst these changes, Havana, the island's largest and most populated city, figured centrally. Havana was, as urban anthropologist Matthew J. Hill (2007) argues, "uncoupled" from the centralized authority of the state, and (re)positioned amidst a series of national and trans-national mobilities of people, material goods, and finance. Heritage tourism in particular reopened Havana onto a global stage, making the city one of most sought-after tourist destinations in the Americas. In retrospect, the state's economic overhaul has mitigated the worst of

[1] In a 1990 speech to the Committee of the Defense of the Revolution, Fidel Castro announced the inevitability of what he famously termed a "special period in a time of peace": a moment during which citizens must enact war-like measures (namely, food and energy rationing) in spite of the absence of the war itself.

the crisis, and by most accounts, it has been considered a success. Yet, in so doing, much of the city has been redesigned in the name of international travellers, inequality has intensified amongst the local population, and the effects of the Special Period linger and condition everyday life in Havana in profound ways.

However, any account of citizenship in Havana today must account for more than the most recent political era alone. So too must it look and listen to the ways in which the city's revolutionary, imperial, and colonial past is also manifest in the experience of the present. Nowhere is that history made more tangible than in the built environment—much of which is weathered, decaying, and in desperate need of repair. Havana's architecture and parts of its public infrastructure have endured decades, and in some cases, centuries of neglect. Across political eras, the city has either developed or decayed (or in some cases, both at once) as a result of a multi-scalar politics conditioned by either colonial power, or through the policies and decisions of a national governing body and the international pressures that it faced. The result is a city that is presently in a state of disrepair to the extent that much of the built environment is quite literally beginning to collapse. That this history is made tangible in the very design of the material landscape upon which residents live makes the enactment of sonic citizenship in Havana not simply the enactment of citizenship practices in the context of any global city. Rather, it is the enactment of citizenship in a Caribbean city, one that has endured centuries of colonial and neo-colonial rule. As such, this research project offers but one example of the ways in which residents establish a politics of presence amidst a geography in which everyday life is conditioned by ongoing forms of coloniality.

In some ways, the elaboration of sonic citizenship I develop throughout this dissertation offers yet another story about the already-famed status of Cuban ingenuity. It is in step with the idea that necessity is the mother of invention, and it draws attention to how residents of Havana are compelled to engage *inventar*—to invent—on account of the city's tenuous social, economic, and material conditions. It does so, not by prioritizing the enactment of individual ingenuity, but rather, by unearthing moments during which it is manifest interpersonally, through communication and social dialogue. Amidst the everyday life of the city, sound facilitates informal acts of negotiation, and at times, is itself an act of negotiation. It stands to align entire communities, articulating both how the city is lived, and more importantly, where it wants to go; it suggests the possibility for a more inclusive city of the future. In this sense, the notion of sonic citizenship is in step

with the work of architect and urban planner Teddy Cruz (2005; 2011), a champion for the development of what he terms “an urbanism of inclusion” (2011). We are in need of a new civic imagination, Cruz rightly argues, and we require new models through which to develop cities that are socially and politically just. And by prioritizing the idea that “communities themselves can, in fact, be participants in the shaping of the city of the future” (p. 112), there emerges a more egalitarian conception of design and planning. So if we aspire to design more equitable, democratic, and participatory cities, then sound, and in particular, the enactment of sonic citizenship has much to contribute to these conversations.

By gesturing toward conditions of future possibility rather than focusing on the shortcomings of the city alone, I in no way intend to trivialize or disregard the suffering and poverty of Havana’s residents in the present. Instead, my aim is precisely the opposite: to offer a new way to think about, and perhaps to someday mitigate these very issues. As such, I pursue the idea of sonic citizenship not as a momentary status that emerges at the end of history, but rather, as an everyday act filled with future political potential. And in light of the ongoing political and economic rapprochement between Cuba and the United States, and the uncertainty that this geo-political relationship presents, locating moments during which the city functions according to the needs of residents themselves is particularly salient. As corporate power continues to encroach upon the island and Havana’s landscape continues to develop according to the logic of global capital, the exacerbation of the city’s exclusionary logic remains quite probable. But if Havana is to become a more inclusive, egalitarian, and democratic city, then political authorities and decision-makers would do well to listen both figuratively and literally to the sounds of the city. There is much to learn from how the politics of the urban terrain play out in everyday life, and from the claims for inclusion and participation that are always and already being made. In this regard, sonic citizenship is not only generated by moments in which the city functions according to residents’ needs, but it is also symbolic of a future city that functions according to their desires and aspirations.

Theoretical Framework

This project borrows from and extends existing scholarly discussions on citizenship by intersecting the fields of sound studies, urban studies, and Cuban studies. Through the exploration of everyday, sound-based practices in the city of Havana, it

asks: what is citizenship and how is it established or lost, enacted or refused? How do residents produce the spaces of Havana in light of the logic of exclusion that characterizes so many facets of everyday life in the city? And how might everyday sounds and everyday listening practices give life to an inclusive and democratic political presence? The responses to each of these questions demands, first, that we address the territory over which political participation and citizenship rights extend. Here, I foreground the context of the city, and I do so by borrowing from a growing body of scholarship that conceives of citizenship as itself an urban condition (among them is Sassen, 2008; Holston, 1998; Cadava & Levy, 2003; Isin, 2000; Lefebvre, 1996; 2014). "Cities", as James Holston and Arjun Appadurai (1996) have argued, "remain the strategic arena for the development of citizenship", and are the geographies upon which individuals and communities "engage most palpably the tumult of citizenship" (p. 188). This scholarly trajectory, which spans a host of disciplinary traditions, emerged largely on account of the present-day global era: technology changes the terms through which the urban terrain is engaged, new political identities are being put forward, and bodies are constantly in movement. To study the city is to locate how power gets played out on the very terrain upon which global politics are made tangible.

Since the early 1990s, Havana has become increasingly entangled with new global flows of people, finance, and material technology. Scholars have in turn explored the present-day city by foregrounding the resulting urban issues and concerns, which include but are not limited to overpopulation (Coyula & Hamberg, 2003; Clark, 1998), the accelerated deterioration of the built environment, (Álvarez-Tabío Albo, 2011; Coyula, 2011; Ponte, 2002; 2011), and the pervasiveness of growing tourist geographies (Porter, 2008). Others have interrogated representations of the city in literature, film, and the visual arts, and have argued that the city is all-too-often depicted as a neo-colonial tourist landscape that denies civic participation to the local population (Bobes, 2011; Dopico, 2002). Such perspectives tend to foreground the precarity of everyday life and posit Havana as a site of contradiction or even failure. But scholarly accounts of the city have also been developed from the bottom-up, which instead offer stories of creativity and resourcefulness. Individualized informal practices such as prostitution (Berg, 2004) and street hustling (Carter, 2008), for example, offer a means through which scholars argue that members of the local population resist impoverished conditions. And communal practices, such as hands-on demonstrations of ingenuity with material

technologies (Del Real & Scarpaci, 2011; Del Real & Pertierra, 2008), and racialized populations whose musical practices make claims over the urban geography from the social and spatial margins of the city (Fernandes, 2006; 2011; Pacini Hernandez & Garofalo, 2004; Thomas, 2010), offer accounts of a grassroots form of urbanism that mobilizes communities without access to political power. Such narratives represent residents as political actors in the context of an urban geography that continually challenges their agency as urban subjects.

Amidst these scholarly discussions is the notable absence of studies that explore tacit, place-based practices. There is a growing body of scholarship in the human sciences that draws from qualitative modes of inquiry to interrogate the role of the senses in everyday life. Such scholarship problematizes the role of the body, and the ways that the phenomenology of perception functions as either an articulation of, or an act of resistance to, political power (Pink, 2009; Howes, 2003; Feld & Basso, 1996, etc.). Such an approach has yet to be employed in the context of Havana, where the need to be resourceful and creative permeates virtually every layer of life in the city—including the comportment of individuals and the modes of communication that mobilize interpersonal dialogue and communal participation. The study of sound addresses this very absence by interrogating the relationship between the body and the everyday practices that it engages (which oftentimes also tend to be everyday struggles). By asking how sound and listening in Havana accommodates and/or resists the prevailing structures of power, I aspire to generate an as of yet unexplored perspective with which residents inhabit the urban terrain.[2] The study of sound, I argue, can uncover the intimacy and the knowledge with which residents communicate with one another and negotiate their collective position(s) in relation to the physical spaces of the city. Cultivating encounters with the urban terrain based on the everyday, sensory experiences of residents themselves, generates a perspective of Havana from which to locate a city defined not by exclusion and dispossession, but rather, one that consists of negotiated inclusion and participation.

[2] Apart from this dissertation, among the very few other representations of Havana in sound and listening that I am aware of is the film “Suite Habana” (2003) by director Fernando Pérez. In it, interpersonal dialogue between characters is almost altogether absent, and instead, the story unfolds sonically using *only* the sounds of the city.

The study of sound represents an emergent mode of scholarly inquiry in Caribbean and Latin American studies more broadly (Bronfman, 2016; Bronfman & Wood, 2012; Ochoa Gautier, 2012; 2014; Tinajero, 2010). Such research offers a long overdue counterpoint to the wealth of socio-musicological research conducted on the Caribbean and Latin America, and on Cuba and "Cuban music" in particular. In so doing, this growing body of sound studies literature (in which it could be argued that music studies now comprises but one part) not only offers new encounters with these geographies on their own terms, but it also brings the discipline of sound studies into dialogue with histories of colonialism, imperialism, and empire: issues that have tended to remain at the periphery of sound-based qualitative research. The study of sound in the Caribbean de-Westernizes and decolonizes the discipline, and it brings to bear new stories about community politics, inclusion, and citizenship in a region of the globe that remains at the periphery of the Western imaginary. As a result, the stories told from these perspectives have—rather paradoxically in a field dedicated to the study of sound and listening—remained largely silent (and silenced). In this sense, the study of sound in Havana has as much to offer the field of sound studies as sound studies has to offer to the exploration of Havana. To these discussions, I contribute a sonic ethnography that "sounds out" how residents both contest and reclaim the spaces of the urban terrain in sound and through the practice of listening.

By foregrounding the city as a site of analysis, this project also builds on urban studies of sound. Beginning with Michael Southworth's study of the Boston soundscape (1969) and the World Soundscape Project's pioneering research on Vancouver (1973), sound studies scholars have long been interested in the relationship between sound and the city (Peterson, 2012; Lashua et al., 2014; Thibaud, 2003; Bull, 2000). Over recent years, urban studies scholars have also become receptive to the merits of sound, employing it as a means of evaluating the politics of the urban terrain (Atkinson, 2007; Barns, 2014; Arkette, 2004). To these discussions, I contribute an unexplored urban context in the city of Havana, and a new dimension to the political potential of sound: I conceive of everyday sounds and the act of listening as generative moments during which a form of citizenship is enacted. By conjoining urban theory with sound studies, I unearth new ways of evaluating the urban landscape, and new ways not of *seeing* but of

hearing belonging, inclusion, and citizenship in the context of the global city.[3] Doing so in a region such as the Caribbean remains particularly salient, for the struggles of Havana's inhabitants are conditioned by global histories of subjugation that, quite simply, are absent in both European and North American cities. Any study of Havana must account for centuries of colonial and imperial rule, and as such, the informality, tactics, and citizenship practices enacted by its citizens must be evaluated in terms of the regional history within which the city embedded.

Locating moments of political agency in sound and listening situates this project in the context of emergent discussions in the field of sound studies regarding the question of citizenship. As a scholarly theme, citizenship has for some time represented an important topic of discussion in socio-musicological research (O'Toole, 2014; Pasler, 2009; Moehn, 2007; Dueck, 2007). It is presently being explored in extra-musical contexts as well, where some have interrogated the relationship between sound and citizenship on the basis of its limitations, and in particular, how state citizenship is either delimited or altogether refused to racialized communities (Stoever-Ackerman, 2011; Casillas, 2014). Others have posited that organized listening practices represent generative moments during which communities participate in a form of civic engagement and therefore enact a form of citizenship (Leonardson, 2015; Moles & Saunders, 2015; Dillane et al., 2015). In contrast to these approaches, while also building upon Ana María Ochoa Gautier's notion of the "aural public sphere" in Latin America (2012), I argue that sound-based enactments of citizenship also take place in the context of everyday life. By listening trans-liminally, across the threshold of the built environment, residents participate in sound-based social formations that I refer to using the term "acoustic communities" (World Soundscape Project, 1978). I argue that at times, these communities are politically motivated insofar as they are generated on the basis of inclusion and participation, and as such, they stand in contradistinction to the exclusionary logic that otherwise characterizes many dimensions of everyday life in the

[3] I borrow "global city" as both a term and a concept from the work of Saskia Sassen (1991; 2000b; 2005), which has gained traction across the fields of sociology, globalization studies, and urban studies among others. Sassen's theory of globalization argues that, since the 1990s, there has been a "re-scaling" of political and economic process around territories that are not exclusively defined by the borders of the nation-state. The emergent geography upon which this transnational global politics is manifest is what she terms the "global city": a strategic landscape wherein "the dynamics and processes that get territorialized are global" (2005, p. 27).

city. In the acoustic community, we hear the collective presence of residents inhabiting the spaces and places of Havana—we hear residents enacting sonic citizenship.

By developing a notion of citizenship in and through everyday sounds and everyday listening practices, this dissertation asks the reader to think about what it means to live in spaces that are no longer—or not yet—defined by forms of inclusion and belonging that function as a counterpoint to the political architecture of the nation-state. This dissertation thinks beyond the geo-politics of the present moment alone to consider the experience of more equitable, future alternatives. Though ethnography is invariably about the lived experience of the present, I nevertheless develop this project with an eye—or rather, an ear—toward both the past *and* toward the future. In this sense, I borrow from a growing body of literature that positions everyday urban practices as filled with future potential (Cruz, 2005; 2011; Sassen, 2008; Appadurai, 2013; Coyula, 1996). "Seeking to imagine a democracy that would exist beyond citizenship and citizenry—to imagine cities that would open the spaces for new forms of democratic communities", Eduardo Cadava and Aaron Levy (2003) observe, "would involve alliances that go beyond the 'political' domain as it has been commonly defined…and therefore would define the cities of tomorrow in relation to a democracy that is still yet to come and yet to be imagined" (p. xviii). I argue that in sound and listening, we hear what Cadava and Levy refer to as the "cities of tomorrow". We hear new political possibilities, and alternative political realities. During the everyday moments in which sonic citizenship is enacted, we hear—albeit momentarily—residents simultaneously attending to their most immediate needs and aspiring toward more inclusive, democratic futures.

A Note on Method

I spent the autumn and part of the winter of 2012 in Havana conducting the fieldwork that forms the basis of this project. My approach was, in retrospect, a bit unorthodox, insofar as my agenda did not include the dedicated study of any one specific social or material condition (for instance, material scarcity or architectural ruination). Instead, I travelled to Havana to explore, quite simply, the sounds of the city. Such an approach was incredibly productive however, in that the study of sound in everyday life did not delimit my thinking to a single urban issue. As a result, I address a range of very different urban issues throughout this dissertation, yet they remain interconnected in that all of them are of course articulated in sound, and all of them are

indicative of the difficulties and challenges of everyday life in the city. I arrived at each of these topics using a sound-based approach to doing contemporary ethnography, or, *sonic ethnography*, as some have termed it (Gershon, 2013). During my stay, I spoke with others, I walked through the spaces of the city, I documented some of my auditory experiences in audio format, and above all, I listened with patience and curiosity. I borrowed, in equal measure, approaches generated in soundscape studies (Schafer, 1993; Truax, 2001; Westerkamp, 2006) and sensory ethnography (Erlmann, 2004; Pink, 2009; Howes, 2003) alike, which offered a methodological framework with which to observe and evaluate the soundscapes of Havana. Since the city's landscape is vast, I prioritized the study of three areas in particular: the district of El Vedado, and the municipalities of Centro Habana, and Habana Vieja, the site of the original city. As such, the three case studies presented here are built on observations I made within each.

Why study the city sonically? Sound offers an important and often overlooked way of conducting urban studies research. It makes one's observations of the local world seem richer. It unearths the details of lived experiences that might otherwise go unnoticed. And it is illustrative of the activity, events, and practices that are bound to, and in some cases even definitive of, specific spaces and places. For these very reasons, the field of sound studies has undergone exponential growth in both the humanities and social sciences over the previous decade or so. As media historian Jonathan Sterne (2012) observes,

> By analyzing both sonic practices and the discourses and institutions that describe them, [sound studies] redescribes what sound does in the human world, and what humans do in the sonic world. It reaches across registers, moments and spaces, and it thinks across disciplines and traditions, some that have long considered sound, and some that have not done so until more recently (p. 2).

Ethnography in particular is a discipline that has a long history of engaging the study of sound, even if those who have employed it have remained few and far between (two of the more notable figures in the long history of the discipline are Edmund Carpenter (1973a; 1973b) and Steven Feld (1982)). The sound ethnographer is a researcher who is attuned to the multi-modality of everyday life, and posits that sound and listening represent an incredibly fertile dimension of lived experience. Attuning oneself to sound in most any ethnographic encounter raises new questions, and it affords new avenues for the exploration of local worlds and those who inhabit them.

Yet, for all of the richness and detail the ethnographic study of sound unearths about localized contexts, to study it alone is to tell only part of the story. Upon returning to Vancouver from Havana, I could articulate, with a great amount of detail, the sounds of the everyday events and activity definitive of various parts of the city. I could not, however, illustrate what these events and activity meant at a broader level. I could not describe the ways that these moments either fit alongside, or stood in contradistinction to, municipal, state-level, or even global-historical narratives. For instance, how are the sounds of the city today related to distant historical moments, which in Havana's case entail centuries of colonialism? How are they related to the nearly six decades of U.S. imperial rule throughout the first half of the twentieth century? And how, if at all, are they related to the politics of the Cuban Revolution? Such questions reproduce the critical issue that any ethnographer must confront: how to put one's observations in touch with both geographies and historical moments that are not altogether apparent in localized, embodied experiences. My aim was therefore to put the circumscribed cultural world of Havana's neighbourhood communities in touch with larger, more impersonal systems. In so doing, I take inspiration from contemporary approaches in the field of sound anthropology, in which scholars have pursued both the relationship between the sounds of the local world *and* the broader global-historical narratives in which they are embedded (see for instance Hirschkind, 2006; Kunreuther, 2014).

I established this relationship by thinking spatially, beyond the seemingly bounded geography in which sound is experienced. I trace the dynamic and ever-changing relationships between urban space and transnational movement, and I acknowledge the oftentimes fractured, friction-filled, and uneven flows of ideas, materialities, and people, and how the acoustic environments of the city articulate them. Such an approach requires, first, a conception of space that is open, outward-looking, and dynamic. It demands that we conceive of the local geography, as geographer Doreen Massey (2005) puts it, as a "contemporaneous plurality" or a "coexisting heterogeneity" contingent upon flows and processes effected elsewhere and at various historical moments. This open, outward-looking, and dynamic conception of space is precisely that which is espoused by the emergent mobilities paradigm, which, according to Mimi Sheller (2013), "advances a relational basis for social theorizing that puts mobility, immobility, and their associated power relations at its center" (p. 2). With this in mind, I conceive of the acoustic environment as a localized manifestation of relations

that extend far beyond the embodied context in which it is experienced. Rather than theorize the act of listening as simply an everyday, situated practice—one that is somehow contained by, or limited to, a circumscribed local geography—I instead pursue the study of sound according to the myriad events, political processes, and social histories that emanate from outside the geo-spatial immediacy in which aural perception takes place. As a sonic ethnographer, I listen to what I term, "space beyond space".

This emphasis on global movement represents a productive means of evaluating the sonic geography of any city, yet it is particularly salient in the case of Havana. Following the triumph of the Revolution in 1959, and the ensuing enactment of the U.S. embargo shortly thereafter, Cuba has all-too-often been conceived of as an island that remains geo-politically isolated from the rest of the world. According to this logic, it is a place without time, and therefore, it belongs to the past. Yet, as anthropologist Sidney Mintz has famously argued, the Caribbean has "always been entangled with the wider world" (1985, p. xv), and is a site upon which the global flows of modernity depend. It is a geography that is "on the move"; one that has, since the earliest moments of colonization, facilitated "the circulation of people, commodities, capital, and information" (Bronfman, 2007, p. 1). While it is true that in the late twentieth century, the neoliberal agenda may not have been observed in Cuba with the simultaneity and concurrence that it was in many other parts of the Americas, it would be erroneous to posit that the island republic somehow sits outside of global history. As we will soon find in each case study in this dissertation, national and transnational flows have continued to circulate in and through Havana over the course of the Revolutionary era—as turbulent, fractured, and uneven as those flows may be. Part of the aim of this project is thus to follow these ever-changing political, economic, and cultural currents as they position (and reposition) Havana not only amidst Cuba's national landscape, but as a transnational urban centre both embedded and entangled in evolving networks of global mobilities.

One of the preeminent forms of global mobility through both Cuba and the Caribbean at large is the movement of people. Over the last two decades, Havana in particular has reemerged as a highly sought-after destination for international travellers, the majority of whom are either North American or European in origin. As a researcher who is non-native to the city of Havana, I too am compelled to travel some distance in order to visit, which also positions me as a participant in—and a beneficiary of—these very same currents of global mobility. Over the course of several months in 2012, I

worked as a visiting scholar at Fundación Fernando Ortiz: a scholarly institution that pursues new research in the areas of Cuban culture, art, and folklore. While there, I worked alongside host supervisors Dr. Aurelio Francos Lauredo, Dr. Miguel Barnet, and a community of local scholars—all of whom facilitated my research endeavour in various ways. In retrospect, this residency was much more than a simple intellectual exchange: it also marked the beginning of an institutional dialogue between Fundación Fernando Ortiz and Simon Fraser University. But more importantly, it cultivated a series of interpersonal relationships that continue in spite of our distance. As a written document, this dissertation comprises one outcome of this exchange, and as such, it embodies a highly specific transnational flow of ideas, people, and culture that have moved to and from the city of Havana. Therefore, it too must be situated in relation to the spatial and material contexts through which it travels, and in which it is read.

This project is located along both a personal and professional trajectory that was established well over a decade ago. First and foremost, my interest in Cuba and Cuban culture emerged through both familial ties, and through performance-based musical inquiry. As a musician, and in particular, as a drummer who was pursuing a career in both teaching and performance, I found that Cuba represented the ideal place in which to cultivate a more refined and thorough sense of my craft. I coupled this musical curiosity with an academic line of inquiry, which brought me to Havana in the autumn of 2005. While there, I spent several months studying with local musicians, during which time I also conducted fieldwork that formed the basis of my research as a Masters student at York University. In music, I found not only a new way of approaching my own performance, but also, a point of departure to learn more about the island, those who inhabit it, and the various cultures that comprise it. My questions then evolved, and have since extended beyond the limits of the musical, or even the musicological context alone. Working at Simon Fraser University, home of the World Soundscape Project and foundational research in soundscape studies, I cultivated an interest in the extra-musical, or the everyday context as a site of cultural inquiry. So in some ways, this project on urban life in the city of Havana represents both an extension and a broadening of my original research interests that began with music. However, it is my hope that this research, which includes a theoretical elaboration of sonic citizenship, demonstrates a much deeper understanding of local culture, Havana's urban history, and the social and political struggles with which its citizens are entangled.

Organization of the Dissertation

Throughout this dissertation, I argue that residents creatively and collectively inhabit the city of Havana, in spite of the logic of exclusion that characterizes so many of their experiences amidst the urban landscape. I argue that they do so, in part, through everyday sounds and in the practice of listening. But because sound, by its very nature, is ephemeral, fleeting, and momentary, the moments during which residents produce the spaces of the urban geography can be easily overlooked. As such, my aim as a sonic ethnographer is to recover and re-centre some of these shared, contemporaneous moments and to unpack them in the pages of this dissertation. To be sure, the instances during which residents do so are many, in fact, they are infinite: they are the very events and activities that comprise daily life in every neighbourhood in the city. But because it would be impossible to describe each and every one of them, I have selected a few of my more illustrative encounters to interrogate and to represent in turn. I offer brief aural glimpses into the everyday life of various neighbourhood communities and the social formations that comprise them. I do so by prioritizing moments during which residents collectively listen trans-liminally, to and through the open spaces of the built environment. And in turn, I historicize and situate those listening practices, communities, and neighbourhoods according to the municipal, national, and transnational mobilities with which they are related. Only with this broader spatial and historical perspective can we hear how the enactment of sonic citizenship can stand in contradistinction to the city's logic of exclusion.

However, before excavating these moments, we must engage the existing research out of which this project emerges, and to which it contributes. Chapter Two consists of a literature review that brings into dialogue a series of distinct, yet interrelated bodies of literature. It begins with a spatial reading of Havana, which I borrow from existing historiographies about the city and about the island more broadly. Here, I develop a brief historical narrative that spans centuries of colonial and imperial rule in order to account for the logic of exclusion that characterizes the contemporary landscape. Next, I suggest that, in spite of this logic of exclusion, and the need for the local population to constantly struggle (*luchar*) throughout (and still today, following) the Special Period, residents have nevertheless found ways to creatively and collectively inhabit the urban terrain. I develop the discourse of informality and the notion of *inventar,*

(to invent) and conjoin these concepts to what urban theorists refer to as “tactical urbanisms”: ways that citizens without access to political power make claims upon the spaces of the city. I argue that the practices of soundmaking and listening, which are intrinsically spatial practices, represent an unexplored means through which residents enact tactical urbanisms and produce the spaces of the urban geography. Such an approach foregrounds the role of the body, and the tacit modes of communication that are themselves filled with political potential. The final section of the chapter deals with what sonic citizenship means moving forward and its potential for developing a more equitable and democratic approach to urban design and planning. Taken together, the chapter brings together literature from sound studies, urban studies, and Cuban studies, and it offers the theoretical basis for the subsequent case studies.

Chapter Three turns toward the topic of research methodology. It critically evaluates the tools and techniques associated with both soundscape studies and sensory ethnography, and it builds a case for a methodological approach referred to as *sonic ethnography* (Gershon, 2013). It does so, first, by detailing my own on-the-ground techniques while I conducted fieldwork in Havana. But it also details my experience upon returning to Vancouver, where I realized that, in order to hear (and eventually, to narrate in the pages of this dissertation) the stories told by everyday sounds, I must do much more than listen in a literal sense alone. I must listen in ways that are at once historical, and that extend far beyond the local geography. Only then could I construct what sensory anthropologist Sarah Pink (2009) refers to as “ethnographic place”: a representation of both “the lived immediacy of the ‘local’” and the ways in which “it is inevitably interwoven, or entangled, with the ‘global’” (p. 33). As such, this chapter builds upon existing approaches to sound-based ethnographic research by suggesting a conception of the relationship between sound and space that extends outward, across both time and space. Not only is this outward-oriented approach to listening imperative for research in the Caribbean, a geography that demands the engagement with the global-historical conditions of colonialism, imperialism, and empire, but so too is it fertile in the context of most any city entangled in networks of global mobilities. I refer to the multi-methodological approach I employ throughout the dissertation as a way of listening to “space beyond space”.

Chapter Four is the first of three dedicated case studies, each of which examines highly specific encounters borne out of my own personal experiences in Havana. It

describes a series of events that I encountered on a daily basis, which compelled me to interrogate one of the most ubiquitous and pressing issues in the city today: the housing crisis. In my neighbourhood in El Vedado, I awoke most mornings to a curious sound: that of water slowly dripping onto the air conditioner mounted in the window above my bed. So I followed these sounds to the rooftop of the apartment in which I lived, which enabled me to determine that their point of origin was the result of malfunctioning water infrastructure. This daily event is in turn connected to the corresponding conditions of architectural and infrastructural ruination, and by extension, overpopulation. By historicizing the materiality of the built environment, I develop the social and political backdrop against which each episode of overflow and runoff is manifest. And by using the rather unorthodox approach of sound and listening as a point of departure, I generate a new perspective from which to interrogate the lived experience of the urban geography. On the one hand, the sounds of the malfunctioning water infrastructure communicate Havana's conditions of urban decay, overpopulation, and infrastructural disrepair. But at the same time, I argue that residents also listen creatively and collectively for the best interests of each of the members of the neighbourhood, and in so doing, they enact a form of sonic citizenship that produces the city as they aspire to live it.

Chapter Five moves us eastward, from the district of El Vedado to the municipality of Centro Habana, and outward, from the sounds of domestic spaces to those that comprise the public life of the city. It does so by interrogating a particularly notable sound that I encountered dozens of times throughout the duration of my stay: the heralding music of Havana's *heladeros* (ice cream vendors). This is a sound with which most people throughout the Americas (and for that matter, throughout the globe) are familiar, no matter their geographical origin. In Havana however, the history of this sound, and by extension, the history of this vendor is far different than in most other cities. During the worst of the Special Period, the heralding music of the ice cream vendor was silenced and only over the last few years has it reemerged into the soundscapes of the city. The vendor's recent history inspired me to ask a series of questions about the social and cultural meaning of the sound, which in turn compelled me to historicize the various permutations of the vendor across political eras. In so doing, I write a critical history of Havana that argues for the importance of the sound of the ice cream vendor amidst the everyday life of the city. Listening to the chime music of

the ice cream vendor, I argue, is not only an enactment of civic memory that dates back to the late nineteenth century, but it is also an enactment of sonic citizenship that enables residents to inhabit Havana's urban geography according to the desires and aspirations of residents themselves.

Chapter Six moves us further east to the municipality of Habana Vieja, where I interrogate the exclusionary logic of the city's historic district. I do so by problematizing my own positionality as an ethnographer who is also a white, male, international traveller. Whereas the observations I generate in Chapters Four and Five would have unfolded in precisely the same way whether or not I was present to observe them, the same cannot be said for my aural observations in Habana Vieja. Here, my presence altered the composition of the soundscape in very real ways. As such, I develop not solely my aural observations throughout the chapter, but I also elucidate a process of learning to listen outward, to the sounds of the district, and inward, to the ways that my own presence shapes the sounds that I encountered. In so doing, I argue that, in spite of the emergent tourist economy on the one hand, and architectural decay on the other, residents have nevertheless found ways to maintain their embodied presence in the spaces of a municipality that has been (re)designed to exclude them. To listen to sounds such as the cry of the street vendor, and to music designed not for tourist consumption, but to that which generates local communities of interest, is to enact a form of sonic citizenship by intervening in acoustic spaces designed primarily for international travellers. Taken together, the three case studies that comprise Chapters Four, Five, and Six offer a series of divergent yet complementary spatial contexts, historical narratives, and social moments, each of which articulates a different permutation of sonic citizenship.

Chapter Seven brings the dissertation to a close, and in so doing, it revisits the notion of sonic citizenship as I developed it throughout the project. It addresses its various manifestations as I represented them in my ethnographic encounters, and what it means in the present-day city of Havana. The chapter also addresses the outcomes of the study: what this research contributes to existing scholarly discussions, what could have been improved, and what this study suggests for future research on the city. Perhaps most importantly, the closing chapter of the dissertation argues for the potential for sound and listening to contribute to the design and planning of Havana itself. In a rather poetic sense, but in terms of much more than a simple metaphor alone, I argue

that the act of listening to the city can function as an integral means for learning about the needs of residents. This is particularly important at the present historical moment, where change for all Habaneros is impending, yet the precise terms of that change are still yet to be determined. While the pressures of global capital continue to encroach upon the island, the opportunity for the city and the nation's sovereignty and self-determination seems ever weaker. But in sound what we hear is a future that accommodates the needs, desires, and aspirations of those who live there. As such, the chapter makes a case for the implications of sonic citizenship and what the study of sound could mean for the city of Havana moving forward.

Chapter 2.

On Sonic Citizenship

> *The footfalls of previous walkers will have already created a 'desire line' through the landscape: the force and weight of bodies, and traction of boots, wearing away ground vegetation, even creating areas of soil erosion and slippage. The desire line will have been dictated by the lay of the land; previous footprints sometimes marking the route that presents least resistance to weary legs, sometimes showing up the one offering the most direct route uphill. Visible to the eye, the desire line is an easy lure for all those who follow and are content to defer decisions on route-selection. (Lorimer, 2011, p. 28)*

Most scholarly accounts of present-day Havana begin, first and foremost, by recounting the political era that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union. The "Special Period in a Time of Peace" is the term given to an island-wide economic crisis that extended throughout much of the 1990s. Among other things, this historical moment consisted of the widespread scarcity of material goods, energy resources, and basic necessities. The dire conditions experienced by residents across the island forced the Cuban government to concede to the pressures of the global economy, which resulted in the implementation of a host of market mechanisms. The *cuentapropista*, the private entrepreneur, has since become an important part of re-mobilizing the domestic economy's financial flows. But the most lucrative of reforms was indeed the return of Cuba's once-storied tourist industry. Havana figured centrally in this regard, as the Cuban government has restored and revitalized large parts of the city, however restorations are mostly limited to the city's tourist geographies, and have been undertaken not in the name of servicing residents, but to cater to the desires of international travellers. Although the most severe moments of crisis are in the past, present-day Havana is nevertheless still characterized by an exclusionary logic manifest in urban issues such as material scarcity, a crisis in urban mobility, and the pervasive ruination of the built environment. "Beyond Habana Vieja", architect Emma Álvarez-Tabío Albo (2011) writes, "that ordered, painted, rejuvenated city, custom-built or reconstructed for the untroubled tourist and dotted with places where one can linger, lies a city rotting away and about to collapse—what is, in reality, the true Havana" (p. 165).

Some of the many scholarly readings that position the city as a site of contradiction or even failure emerge because of the extent to which *la lucha* permeates everyday life. Anthropologist L. Kaifa Roland (2009) offers a historical treatment of the term, which she argues has particular resonance not only during the Special Period, but across political eras. There is what Roland refers to as the "independence lucha": the collective struggle for national self-determination, waged first against Spain in the late nineteenth century, and then against the United States throughout the first half of the twentieth century. There is the "*luchando por la Revolución*" (the struggle for the Revolution), which began in 1959, and is a collective struggle to fulfil the goals of building a politically and economically self-sufficient nation state. According to national discourse, this struggle is ongoing, and it forms the basis of a state ideology that champions the pursuit of national development, progress, and prosperity. Lastly, there is the "Special Period Lucha", which refers to a moment of economic crisis caused by the collapse of the Soviet Bloc. It connotes the struggle for survival, which is constituted by a range of practices or constant manoeuvrings to overcome the material and financial shortcomings of everyday life. By tracing the evolution of *la lucha* across political eras, Roland makes the observation that, throughout history, the term described a collective struggle: against Spanish colonizers, against the American imperial presence, and beginning in 1959, as part of the Revolutionary call to action. However, "today's lucha", Roland maintains, "frequently forsakes collectivism in the name of the individual" (2009, p. 6).

In contrast to Roland's reading of present-day Havana, I in turn argue that there remains a collective dimension to today's *lucha*, even though it may no longer be a preeminently national aspiration. During certain moments, and in certain place-based practices, residents continue to engage and even rely upon one another in order to negotiate the challenges and material shortcomings of everyday life. In so doing, they have been able to creatively and collectively mitigate the exclusionary logic that characterizes so many attributes of everyday life in their city. They do so however, in ways that are somehow both inconspicuous and omnipresent. In the streets, on the sidewalks, and in the parks; at the market, in the square, and along the *malecón* (the seafront promenade), residents greet, engage, and dialogue with one another. They do so, in part, to leave their struggles behind: public life in Havana is nothing if not sociable, convivial, and *extrovertido* (extroverted). But at the same time, they do so for precisely

the opposite reason: to confront the struggles of everyday life. In the spaces and places of the city, residents engage in practices, networks, and economies that, at times, operate outside the official infrastructure of the state and its emergent open market. *Lo informal*, or, a culture of informality, is pervasive in cities across the island, even though it is considered morally and legally reprehensible. It undermines the solidarity of national discourse, yet it remains necessary since neither the state nor its emergent open market can fulfill the material and nonmaterial needs of residents. As such, the everyday moments of social functionality, conviviality, and above all, informality, that take place in Havana's public and private spaces, enable residents to produce the city invisibly, and with a measure of control.

I conceive of these everyday, participatory practices as the aspiration to acquire the "right to the city". Such an approach finds its origins in the work of philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1996), yet it has since reemerged in scholarship across the human sciences (see Butler, 2012; Marcuse, 2009; Harvey, 2003; 2012; Holston, 1998). One notable interpretation is found in the work of urban theorist Saskia Sassen (2008), who argues that the global city is a strategic space where the disadvantaged participate in political processes that are not directly associated with the institutional infrastructure of the nation-state. They do so through a social and spatial articulation of political will at the local level, which she refers to as "presence". "Today's citizenship practices", Sassen (2008) maintains, "have to do with the production of 'presence' of those without power and a politics that claims rights to the city" (p. 315). Citizenship, in this sense, is conceived of not as legal rights in the context of the nation-state, but as social processes through which individuals and communities make claims to authority amidst the urban geography. It is first and foremost a spatial issue, which is articulated by participatory social practices that enable otherwise marginalized groups to attain the "right to the city". Such an approach borrows from, and contributes to, a growing body of literature on citizenship in the global city (Isin, 2000; Cadava & Levy, 2003; Holston & Appadurai, 1996), while it also represents an untapped means through which to conceive of citizenship in Cuba's largest and most populated city. "Although citizenship has been examined extensively in the sociology and political science fields", observes Velia Cecilia Bobes (2005), "little research has been conducted on the topic in Cuba" (p. 61).

I argue that in sound and listening, residents engage in communicatory practices through which they can acquire, albeit momentarily, the "right to the city". They do so by

mobilizing place-based social formations that produce the spaces of the urban terrain. I refer to these community-based practices using the term *sonic citizenship*, which I define as the communal production of acoustic spaces by those without sustained access to political power. Sonic citizenship, much like the citizenship practices to which Sassen among others refer, is not an institutionalized status bound to the political architecture of the nation-state, but rather, a social status that emerges during moments in which sound-based social formations make claims over a given territory. I conceive of these momentary social formations during which residents collectively assert their embodied "presence" in the spaces of the city as "acoustic communities", which are most palpable in the context of the neighbourhood. Here, residents listen in ways that are facilitated, rather than inhibited, by the design of the built environment. Through open windows and doors, from the balcony and through the portico, residents communicate across the thresholds of the physical geography. Such modes of communication are often engaged through the practice of *trans-liminal listening*, or *listening trans-liminally* (which amount to the same thing), through which the local population remains attuned to the events and activity beyond their sight lines, animating the vibrant social life of the city. Sound and the act of listening represent one means through which the urban geography is brought to life. And by exploring the composition of the acoustic environment, there emerges a new way of encountering the citizenship practices of Havana's residents.

In this chapter, I formulate the theoretical basis for my approach to *sonic citizenship*. I begin with a brief spatial reading of Havana, which addresses the historicity of the city, its development, and it communicates the idea that social stratification is not simply a matter of policy alone—so too is it manifest in the very ground upon which residents walk. I then address the idea of grassroots urbanisms, which denotes the ways that residents live the spaces of their city "from below". In Havana, this means engaging *inventar* (to invent) in order to acquire the material and non-material support that the state is unable to provide. In so doing, residents reclaim the spaces of the city by inhabiting a "liminal space", wherein they temporarily suspend or subvert official, state-level institutions to resolve a pressing need or issue. And in a state of liminality—that is, during moments in which practices of *inventar* are engaged—the spaces of the city are temporarily reterritorialized. Sound and listening, I argue, represents one means through which residents achieve this very aim. By listening to and through the spaces of the built environment, residents mobilize acoustic communities that give life to what I term sonic

citizenship. As such, I develop the theory of the acoustic community, and I situate this approach to conceiving of sound based citizenship practices amidst existing discussions of citizenship that extend across the field of sound studies. Finally, I conclude the chapter with some musings about the relationship between sound and urban design. Here, I argue that sonic citizenship not only communicates the political agency of inhabitants in the present moment, but if we listen closely enough, it also represents possibilities for the design of a future, more egalitarian city.

A Spatial History of Havana

San Cristobal de la Habana was founded in 1519 alongside a protected harbour on Cuba's northern coast. Geographically, it is situated in a highly strategic maritime location, though it was not until 1610 that it became an important port-of-call for trade between Europe and the Americas. "The strategic importance of Havana's port", historian Alejandro de la Fuente (2008) writes, "became evident to the crown and its enemies gradually, as the routes of oceanic shipping were being defined" (p. 4). From Havana, the Spanish Crown not only maintained access to the island's hinterland where it cultivated sugar and tobacco, but it also oversaw a fleet system that crossed the Atlantic and landed in various destinations within the Americas. It was a territory through which material goods, people, and finance travelled. And because of the economic and political possibilities that came with the control over these currents of global mobilities, it was a territory that demanded protection. One of the most effective ways that Spanish authorities did so was by developing defensive, top-down strategies in terms of planning and design. The harbour was closed and barricaded nightly in order to prevent intrusions by corsairs and pirates. And a wall—*la muralla*—fortified the colonial city for the same reasons, and was an essential part of a defensive strategy that sought to preempt naval invasions. Throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the design of Havana prioritized a defensive military strategy that protected the settlement from external forces.

Yet, as Latin American scholar Ángel Rama (1996) has observed, the spatial articulation of colonialism extends far beyond protective measures installed along the perimeter of a territory alone. For it was in the control not of external forces but of inhabitants themselves that the colonial project acquired its political power. And this project is particularly important in the context of settlement types that are at once

strategic terrains and that house vast numbers of the population: the city. Colonial power, Rama argues, was manifest in Latin American cities not only in the social and political institutions that authorities developed, but also, in the very layout of the spaces that it produced. The “rational”, “structured”, and “programmatic” logic of post-Enlightenment European thought emerged in the colonial setting through the contributions of literate social elites he termed “*letrados*”. And it was through the work of these actors that the organization and design of Latin American cities was realized. Such an approach to urban development created, literally from the ground up, a strategic terrain upon which authorities could simultaneously manage hinterland regions while importing and implementing ideas, culture, and authority from Europe. So the design and development of urban space was guided by the imperative for social control, and the reason for doing so was, according to Rama, so that “the distribution of urban space would reproduce and confirm the desired social order” (p. 5).

In Havana, the “desired social order” consisted of a hierarchy established by the Spanish Crown. And a key attribute amidst the city’s landscape that maintained the colonial power of the Spanish authorities was, somewhat ironically, the very wall that was originally designed to prevent external invasions. Though functional throughout the seventeenth century, by the late eighteenth century, following a British intrusion in 1762 that successfully acquired the territory for a period of six months, the utility of *la muralla* as a means of urban fortification was suspect. Yet, it remained standing for another century, in spite of the fact that it inhibited the city’s westward growth. Historian Guadalupe García (2016) attributes the Spanish Crown’s latency in dismantling the wall to its centrality in dividing and thus governing inhabitants themselves. This administrative strategy became particularly important during the latter half of the nineteenth century—a moment during which the colonial hierarchy was challenged by growing independence movements across much of Latin America. So too was this a moment of political restlessness in Cuba as well, caused by a growing independence movement comprised largely of the island’s Black population. But by maintaining the wall, Spanish authorities preserved a measure of control over the production of space in the everyday life of the city. “Colonialism”, García maintains, “entailed a distinctly physical component in which spatial relationships were central to the exercise and proliferation of colonial power” (p. 11). Ultimately however, neither the wall nor the military presence of Spanish authorities

could prevent a series of Independence Wars that extended throughout the late nineteenth century.

Cuba's final Independence War came to an end in 1898, and it produced not the sovereign nation-state that Cubans desired, but a neo-colonial Republic that remained deferential to the Western hemisphere's own emergent global power: the United States. Four years of military occupation by the U.S. government followed, and the Republican era began in 1902. To be sure, Cubans, at least in part, welcomed this new geo-political relationship. As historian Louis A. Pérez Jr. (1999) has convincingly argued, Cuba's acceptance of all things American represented the island's attempt to depart from its colonial past while transforming Cuban society according to the ideals of "modernity" and "progress". And in Havana, Cuba's modernization efforts were most palpable. U.S. investment propelled new urban works projects such as roadways, infrastructure, and housing developments, all of which grew the city exponentially. But as historian Antoni Kapcia (2005) observes, by the 1920s it was "tourism that most impelled construction" (p. 67). Much of Havana's new building was intended for recreational purposes, and so the city catered quite well to social elites such as landowners, entrepreneurs, and wealthy American tourists. However, it was far less amenable to its working-class populations, and in particular to its disenfranchised Black communities who inhabited crowded tenement houses in Habana Vieja and other squatter settlements. In much the same way as the colonial era, Havana's urban design once again functioned as a spatial expression of the city's social hegemony. This time, however, the nouveaux riches wielded power instead of Spanish elites. And it excluded large portions of its residents just the same.

Throughout much of the Republican era, a host of corrupt governments kept Cuba politically, economically, and militarily dependent on the United States. Student protests, general strikes, and insurrections voiced civil society's dissatisfaction with the state, which persisted intermittently throughout the early-mid twentieth century. Following a series of attempts to overthrow Fulgencio Batista's military government, the Cuban Revolution triumphed on January 1st, 1959. Shortly thereafter, the new government announced that the Revolution would proceed under a socialist agenda which, for Havana, meant an outright reversal of its previous economic fortunes. For the Revolutionary government, the city was a symbol of decadence, indulgence, and excess created by U.S. capitalism. And because the disparity between the island's urban and

rural populations remained so stark throughout both the colonial and Republican eras, it was the mandate of the Revolutionary government to redress these inequities. As historians Josef Gugler (1980) and Susan Eckstein (1994) have both observed, 'a maximum of ruralism, and a minimum of urbanism' was the maxim that guided state initiatives throughout the first decade of the Revolution, which redirected economic flows *from* rather than *toward* the capital city. The result was that, on the one hand, Havana became a landscape that functioned according to the ideals of equitability and access, supported by rent controls and *bodegas* (state-run ration centres) that were dispersed throughout the city. But on the other, Cuba's pro-provincial, pro-rural strategy left Havana's physical geography largely unattended: restoration and maintenance efforts were minimal, and new housing developments were insufficient for a city of its size.

Cuba's most recent political era was set into motion with the fall of the Soviet Union beginning in the late 1980s. In light of the ensuing crisis, the socialist government was forced to make a series of ideological concessions that included open-market reforms. The most notable change was the return of tourism: the very industry that propelled Havana's economic and cultural growth for nearly six decades prior to the Revolution. And once again, much like the Republican era, the city of Havana remained front and centre. Designated a UNESCO world heritage site in 1982, Habana Vieja has undergone intense revitalization efforts since the 1990s so that the state can capitalize on the architectural patrimony of what was once a modest colonial settlement. Yet, these ongoing revitalization efforts are limited to little more than a few city blocks, while most other neighbourhoods have not undergone maintenance or repair in decades (if ever), and are literally crumbling to the ground. Cuban author and self-proclaimed "ruinologist" Antonio José Ponte (2011) has convincingly argued that Havana's ruins work not against, but in service of the Revolutionary government's political agenda: the city's crumbling architecture, official discourse maintains, is a manifestation of the geo-political isolation created by the U.S. embargo. In this regard, Havana's spatial design has, and continues to function as a mechanism for urban governance and control, inhibiting the social and economic participation of residents themselves.

Havana's history—from the onset of the Special Period in the 1990s as far back as the colonial era—is made tangible in the present-day, lived experience of the city. Growing tourist geographies, crumbling architecture, malfunctioning infrastructure, material scarcity, and a crisis in urban mobility, are all issues and concerns that have

roots in the past, yet are manifest in the present. They were generated by centuries of colonialism, imperialism, and empire to which the city (and the island more broadly) has been subject. And these are precisely the issues that have fractured the geo-social bond between residents and the urban terrain, thereby challenging the institution of citizenship. In spite of the national sovereignty gained by the Cuban Revolution, everyday life in the island's largest and most populated city remains precarious. And in light of Havana's simultaneous re-emergence onto the global stage *and* the state's continued withdrawal from the domestic economy, the need to engage *la lucha*—the struggle in order to make ends meet—has become part of the everyday reality of life in the city. The result, according to Havana-based architect and urban planner Mario Coyula (2011), is that the city is "increasingly dystopian, with a topos that is damaged, uncomfortable, and dysfunctional with a corresponding loss of a sense of place" (p. 50). According to this logic, residents are disoriented, and live amidst an urban terrain that cannot sufficiently sustain the civic life of the city. How then, do residents enact political agency while living amidst a landscape that continues to exclude them?

Inventing the City

In spite of the post-Soviet era's exclusionary logic, residents of Havana nevertheless negotiate the material shortcomings of everyday life by engaging urban practices "from below". The work of Patricio Del Real, Joseph Scarpaci, and Anna Cristina Pertierra (2008; 2011) for instance, takes up the issue of overpopulation and the city's housing crisis. It draws attention to the innovative, makeshift construction projects undertaken by residents, which are used as a way of "inventing" space in order to accommodate surplus inhabitants. The work of Thomas Carter (2008) deals with tourism and the Cuban state's complicity in the commodification of its citizens. Carter focuses not on the apparent economic and political exclusion generated by international tourism, but on the creative approaches that residents employ in order to challenge their own personal and cultural commodification. And music studies scholars Sujatha Fernandes (2006; 2011), Deborah Pacini Hernandez and Reebee Garofalo (2004) have addressed Havana's renewed racial tensions through the post-Soviet era. They unearthed the ways in which claims to urban space are made by Black hip hop artists through participatory musical events held at the social and spatial margins of the city. Each of these scholarly narratives prioritize the innovation, creativity, and the tenacity of the local population

throughout (and following) the Special Period, and each one illuminates a distinctive means through which residents engage *la lucha*. When read from a spatial perspective, these are the very practices that enable residents to make claims upon Havana's urban spaces, momentarily acquiring the "right to the city".

That Havana's residents have engaged everyday practices to make claims upon the spaces of the city, however, is not altogether a consequence of the Special Period alone. On the contrary, the centuries of colonial and imperial rule to which the island has been subject has made the subversion of authority by the local population an important part of life in the city across political eras. For instance, during the colonial era, the Spanish Crown aspired to control the city by monopolizing trade between Havana, Europe, and the rest of the Americas. However, within Havana, networks of personal exchange subverted that control by facilitating the circulation of material goods and currency amidst a black market that operated outside the formal economy (Fernández, 2000, p. 29). During the U.S. occupation, residents held unsanctioned gatherings such as fiestas, demonstrations, and ceremonies that not only represented a way of participating in the project of nation-building, but more palpably, of reclaiming the spaces of their city from the neo-colonial order (Iglesias-Utset, 2011). And during the early years of the Revolutionary era, residents developed their own form of humour used in the streets known as *choteo*: an alternative vocabulary that undermined both revolutionary policies and the principle of unconditionality that, when breached, was perceived as un-revolutionary and anti-democratic (Guerra, 2012). Each of these examples communicates the creative, and at times, the collective ways that those without sustained access to structural power have negotiated the exclusionary logic of the city.

Throughout this dissertation, I too argue that residents are able to attain, if only momentarily, the "right to the city". Their ability to do so however, is by no means extraordinary: it is found in the everyday activity, and in the everyday modes of communication that comprise Havana's public life. It is in the streets, on the corners, and in the shops. It is in the city's many parks, on its boulevards, and on the sidewalks. And it is in the exchanges that take place between the street and the home, through the liminal spaces of the built environment. "Lowly, unpurposeful, and random as they may appear, sidewalk contacts", Jane Jacobs (1961) famously observed, "are the small

change from which a city's wealth of public life may grow" (p. 72).[4] And according to a recent study by Project for Public Spaces (2015), "Havana may have more street life than any other city in the world" (para. 2). Social dialogue, interpersonal exchange, and the embodied presence of residents generate social and spatial relations based not on exclusion, but on affiliation, participation, and solidarity. In so doing, they challenge the exclusionary logic of the city. This is most evident in the everyday activity, events, and modes of communication that comprise Havana's neighbourhood communities. Here, if we look and listen closely, there emerges a city that is not altogether falling into ruin, but one that, quite simply, functions according to the needs of residents themselves.

The solidarity found in Havana's neighbourhood communities comes, in part, in response to the declining allegiance citizens have for another, more discursively prevalent and politically powerful community of interest: the nation state. According to Damian J. Fernández (2000), following the Special Period, Cubans lost their affective attachment to the national community because of its inability to "fulfill the individual's need for identity, meaning, and material well-being" (p. 14). In turn, smaller-scale associations have become increasingly relied upon since neither the state nor the emergent open market are able to satisfy the material and nonmaterial needs of the individual, the family, or the community. *La lucha*—the struggle of everyday life—has conditioned a turn to *lo informal*: an informal politics that undermines the solidarity of national discourse in order to negotiate challenges and dilemmas that are otherwise impossible to resolve. Fernández (2000) refers to this as the "politics of affection", which are a personal politics "based on an instrumental logic in which anything goes, justified by who you know and who you love" (p. xii). This might entail helping a friend fix a material technology such as a refrigerator, a portable fan, or a transistor radio. It could involve acquiring building materials with which to repair one's home. Or it could be to find a contact who can acquire fresh chicken when the grocery store hasn't received a shipment in several weeks. Such practices, even for the discerning observer, are not altogether apparent, and can be easily overlooked and rendered invisible. Nevertheless, they are the very practices that constitute everyday life in neighbourhoods across

[4] Though her work is limited to the study of North American cities, Jane Jacobs nevertheless presented a model for the democratization of urban landscapes that challenged—and still today challenges—the dominant Western paradigm. I borrow from her here because she proposes a grassroots approach to urbanism that not only offers possibilities for Havana moving forward, but as each of my case studies will demonstrate, it also resonates with the city's sociable and extroverted public life in the present.

Havana, which enable residents to *sobrevivir*—to survive—by producing the spaces and places of the city with a measure of control.

One of the keywords that denotes informality and the aspiration to *sobrevivir* is *inventar*, which signals the need to creatively "invent" alternative life strategies in light of the city's untenable social, material, and economic conditions. Commonly used in the Cuban vernacular as a philosophy of the everyday, *inventar* is "simultaneously a technical and a social skill" that enables "citizens to improvise in adverse circumstances" (Del Real & Pertierra, 2008, p. 78). It involves the ability to negotiate the adversity of everyday life with ingenuity, resourcefulness, and wit. When read from a spatial perspective, practices of *inventar* constitute urban tactics designed to challenge the city of Havana's geographies of exclusion. They are, in this sense, what urban theorists refer to as "tactical urbanisms", which, as Neil Brenner observes, are "immediate, 'acupunctural' modes of intervention in relation to local issues that are viewed as extremely urgent by its proponents" (2015, para. 8). They take place in small-scale, circumscribed geographies, and have a time horizon that is impulsive, spontaneous, and is therefore fleeting. They are not representative of a unified social or political movement, but instead are comprised of a broad range of emergent ad-hoc urban projects. And they promote a collaborative, hands-on approach to urban restructuring that is "grounded upon participatory democracy", and are not "formally preprogrammed in advance or from above" (ibid). In short, tactical urbanisms, much like *inventar*, are informal proposals for a new relationship between citizens and their city; they are proposals for a new form of citizenship.[5]

[5] The term "tactical urbanisms" as used in contemporary urban theory borrows from the work of French theorist Michel de Certeau. In *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), de Certeau argues that there is no single logic at work in contemporary society, but rather, there are a series of multiple, oftentimes contradictory logics—some hidden, others explicit. Those that are observable and readable belong to institutionalized forms of power, and are what he calls *strategies*. Through a series of tried and tested practices, strategies seek to colonize space by both quantifying and surveilling it. *Tactics* on the other hand are unofficial practices. They are dispersed, disguised, improvised, but above all, they are momentary. Tactics are subtle expressions of creativity that make the 'weaker appear stronger'; they gain for the marginalized every advantage they can, given that the marginalized cannot directly challenge or confront the existing structures of power. Whereas strategies occupy an identifiable physical space, tactics operate without a fixed locus. Whereas strategies are standardized and regulated, tactics are "clandestine forms taken by the makeshift creativity of groups or individuals caught in the nets of 'discipline'" (de Certeau, 1984, p. xiv).

Informal practices and the ability to engage *inventar* are part and parcel of what Victor Turner (1982) has referred to as "liminal phenomena", which denote events, activity, and negotiations that take place at the boundaries of institutional life. Such negotiations suspend or invert normative social rules and regulations in order for the socially and economically vulnerable to temporarily acquire a greater degree of political power. "In liminality", observes Turner, "profane social relations may be discontinued, former rights and obligations are suspended, the social order may seem to have been turned upside down…in other words, in liminality people 'play' with the elements of the familiar and defamiliarize them" (p. 27). In Havana, normative rules and regulations belong mainly to Revolutionary ideology which, since 1959, has become entangled with the lives of citizens in profound and intimate ways. Pro-governmental slogans line the streets. Officers and security guards patrol random street corners in virtually every neighbourhood across the city. Neighbourhood Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR's) produce an (albeit contested) sense of community that has had a far-reaching effect on Cuban social consciousness. And public displays of dissent are not only discouraged, but are altogether not permitted and can carry with them a severe penalty. Taken together, the pervasiveness of state power makes accessing Havana's liminal moments, and understanding the ways in which they are *invented*, less than straightforward.

For this reason, sound in particular offers a fertile means of locating and interrogating the moments of solidary that emerge in the public life of the city. On the one hand, sound shifts our attention away from how the city looks toward how the city is being *lived,* making tangible the events and activity of everyday life. It offers the possibility of re-centering the practices of the most important actors in the city: residents themselves. And on the other, these moments of liminality in the city—moments during which residents creatively and negotiate the shortcomings of their material and economic reality—are in part expressed through social practices that, fittingly, make use of the city's liminal spaces. By listening to and through the open spaces of the built environment, residents engage in both formal and informal practices alike. During these moments, communities are made tangible, and the spaces of the neighbourhood are produced by residents themselves. Both from and within a state of liminality, the local population collectively issues unofficial, uncelebrated requests for the "right to the city".

I refer to the act of listening beyond the boundaries of the built environment as listening *trans-liminally*: across the threshold through which sounds pass as they animate the vibrant social life of the city. From inside the home, residents of Havana remain attuned to the sounds of the street, just as those in the street are able to summon the attention of those who are indoors. Communicating in this way illuminates the contours of the neighbourhood community, and it illustrates the intimacy with which both domestic and public spaces are perceived, experienced, and imagined by those who live there. In so doing, such practices generate what soundscape scholar, composer, and member of the World Soundscape Project (WSP) Barry Truax (2001) refers to as an "acoustic community", which he defines as a "soundscape in which acoustic information plays a pervasive role in the lives of inhabitants", and as "any system within which acoustic information is exchanged" (p. 66). But how do we know, for instance, that acoustic communities are in fact social formations that exhibit political potential? On the basis of *what* do they have the capacity to produce the spaces of Havana's urban terrain? And in what way do acoustic communities claim the "right to the city", and give life to moments of sonic citizenship? Such questions require not only a theoretical appraisal of the acoustic community, but also, a theory with which to conceive of the very act of listening.

The Making of the Acoustic Community

The acoustic community is one of a number of concepts that emerged out of the work of the World Soundscape Project: a group of researchers assembled by composer and educator R. Murray Schafer at Simon Fraser University in the late 1960s. Motivated by their concern with the increasing noisiness of urban centres worldwide, the group developed an ambitious research program they called "soundscape studies" or "acoustic ecology", which aspired to cultivate the "resources for improving the orchestration of the world soundscape" (Schafer, 1993, p. 4). The project began with a case study of their hometown Vancouver, a city the group argued was becoming increasingly noisy and its soundscape "more monotonous" (World Soundscape Project, 1973, p. 33). Automobile traffic, seaplanes, and building exhaust are all examples of machine-generated, broadband noises that made it increasingly difficult to discern many of the discrete sounds once definitive of the city's downtown core. Furthermore, the group pointed out that rising ambient noise levels have inimical physiological and psychological effects that

are manifest latently as both stress and fatigue. In this sense, noise is, quite literally, a matter of public health. So for the WSP, and for most acoustic ecologists still today, the composition of the acoustic environment is itself an urban issue that requires our urgent attention. And in much the same way we might look after other natural resources such as air, water, or agriculture, so too must we look (and listen) after the soundscape.

Seeking alternatives (or, outright solutions) to the cacophony and sonic congestion of the modern city, the group followed up their Vancouver study with an exploration of five European villages (1977). Unlike Vancouver's soundscapes, which were largely characterized by machine-generated, broadband sounds, the acoustic environments of the villages were defined by forms of communication that occurred at a "human scale". The acoustic clarity and definition of these soundscapes simultaneously emerged from, and gave life to, what the group referred to as "the acoustic community". "Community can be defined in many ways: as a political, geographical, religious, or social entity", observed Schafer, "but I…propose that the ideal community may also be defined advantageously along acoustic lines" (1993, p. 215). According to Barry Truax (2001), the three fundamental attributes of a functional acoustic community are "variety", "complexity", and "balance"—all of which are required for listeners to observe and attend to discrete sounds. Any factor that inhibits the ability of individuals to do so (which is typically caused by, other, less desirable sounds), can quickly take the acoustic community out of balance. It is, in this sense, a fragile social formation. "The 'enemy' of the acoustic community is…any element that lessens the clarity and definition of an acoustic space, or dulls people's inclination to listen" (Truax, 2016, p. 259). Forged on the basis of audibility and acoustic clarity, the acoustic community refers, quite simply, to an unencumbered, shared aural experience.

Since the pioneering work of the World Soundscape Project (1973, 1977), soundscape researchers have used the acoustic community model to describe how sound and listening mediate social and spatial relationships. For instance, in a study of the soundscapes of Madrid (1995), Isabel López Barrio and José L. Carles argue that, in spite of the city's ongoing noise problem, residents are nevertheless able to discern discrete sounds and to participate in communities that are fully functional. Residents enact a place-based, situated knowledge of their social and spatial environment to the extent that it "evokes a traditional village culture" (López Barrio & Carles, 1995, p. 8). This is similarly the case in *Acoustic Environments in Change* (2009): a project by a

group of Finnish researchers that revisited and extended the *Five Village Soundscapes* (1977) study by the World Soundscape Project. In it, anthropologist Noora Vikman observes fully functional acoustic communities in the Italian village of Cembra. Particularly notable is that these communities are mobilized by listening to and through the open spaces of the built environment. “From inside the house I could follow the outside life as an outside observer” writes Vikman, “similarly outside in the street I could—like anybody else—listen to the sounds that came from inside the houses” (p. 94). In Cembra, residents generate acoustic communities on the basis of what I have termed *trans-liminal listening* in the context of the present study.

According to Vikman, Cembra’s acoustic communities are functional because residents remain attuned to the rhythms of village life at all times—no matter whether they are indoors or outdoors. And in Madrid, residents participate in sound-based communities that López Barrio and Carles characterized as “village”-like. In this sense, these studies offer examples of acoustic communities that demonstrate similarities to those that I observed in Havana. Voices call out to one another between the home and the street, public life is extroverted, and sound-based modes of communication are fully functional insofar as they emulate those found in a small village setting. However, in Havana, there is an additional—and integral—dimension that defines the social and spatial relationships communicated in sound. In the neighbourhood context, acoustic communities are formed not on the basis of audibility, or acoustic clarity alone, but in many cases, they are also generated by political motivations: residents aiming to address the inequitable conditions in which they live. Sound and listening constitute a means for residents to engage *la lucha* by attending to the pressing needs and concerns of the individual, the family, and the neighbourhood more broadly. The result is that acoustic communities represent both a social formation *and* a punctuated moment during which residents make claims, subtle as they may be, over the spaces of the neighbourhood. In Havana’s acoustic communities, we hear the aspiration toward social inclusion and participation, which communicates a politics of presence amidst the urban landscape.

But how might everyday sounds and everyday listening practices generate a politics of presence? And in what way is sound and listening a political act? Here, I borrow from the work of media studies scholar Kate Lacey (2011; 2014), who argues that listening is an integral—though often overlooked—activity in public life. Lacey takes

issue with the idea that “free speech”, and the liberal notion of “having a voice”, has historically been conceived of as the singular criterion upon which political agency depends. The communicatory potential of the speech act is, after all, contingent upon someone else listening. And unlike speaking, which is an act of individual expression, listening is an embodied mode of perception that can be engaged collectively. The question however, is how that collective listening is enacted. By accommodating a communicative disposition that is “critical rather than simply politically obedient” (p. 148) while also maintaining a “fundamental openness toward others” (p. 14), listening allows us to “open up a space for intersubjectivity” (p. 179). “The experience of listening” Lacey (2011) says, “is both potentially and very often in practice, an experience of plurality” (p. 14). At once attentive and anticipatory, discerning yet receptive, “listening out” as Lacey refers to it, is integral for communicative reciprocity, and for nurturing a civic life that brings with it the promise of democracy—the promise of equal citizenship. “Listening publics” are the social formations that result from this type of listening, which Lacey (2014) defines as an “imaginary association with no institutional form or power”, whose agency “rests on this active will to be addressed, this active mode of attention” (p. 172).

Lacey’s model of listening, which generates what she terms “listening publics”, is precisely that which mobilizes acoustic communities in neighbourhoods across Havana. During even the most ordinary of moments, residents “listen out” to the sounds of the city, in order to remain both attuned to, and engaged with, the events and activity of the neighbourhood. They do so not simply for the purposes of engaging in inconsequential banter with neighbours, though this is indeed an important part of everyday life in the city. But they also do so as a means through which to participate in networks and informal practices that can provide the social, material, and economic support that both the state and the open market cannot. Sound and listening represent a means of being, acting, and communicating with others in ways that both acknowledge and engage the struggle of everyday life. It enables residents to engage *inventar*—to invent—momentary resolutions for their pressing needs and desires. But above all, participating in the acoustic community is a means of asserting one’s embodied presence in the spaces of the city. As such, Havana’s acoustic communities, and the liminal moments during which they emerge, do much more than simply appear only to disappear again. They do much more than simply resolve momentary issues. For the moments during which acoustic

communities emerge are also the very moments during which residents enact what I refer to as *sonic citizenship*.

Mapping the Landscape of Sound and Citizenship

My focus on citizenship builds on an emergent discussion in the field of sound studies that interrogates the relationship between sound, listening, and the political agency of individuals amidst broader communities—both formal and informal alike. This discussion has flourished over recent years in response to the present state of affairs of global politics: the ongoing tension between transnational mobilities and immobilities on the one hand, and the unequal treatment of racial, ethnic, and gendered minorities within the confines of the nation on the other, have positioned citizenship as one of the more pressing geo-political issues of our time. For these reasons, media studies scholars (Stoever-Ackerman, 2011; Blake, 2011), media historians (Hartley, 2000; Douglas, 2004; Cohen, 2012; Casillas, 2014), music studies scholars (Pasler, 2009; Moehn, 2007; Weheliye, 2005; Dueck, 2007; O'Toole, 2014), and most recently, soundscape practitioners (Leonardson, 2015; Moles & Saunders, 2015; Dillane et al., 2015; Kim, 2016) have engaged the relationship between sound, listening, and citizenship. Across each of these disciplines, scholars have tended to conceive of citizenship either as an institutionalized status defined by national forms of belonging, or as a form of civic engagement that emerges in the context of organized sonic practices. In order to establish how my own elaboration of sonic citizenship is either in step with, or stands in contrast to these approaches, I briefly survey some of the existing treatments of sound and citizenship. I then address my own approach, which finds its theoretical ground in urban studies.

Music studies is one of a number of sub-disciplines within the broader field of sound studies that has developed formulations on the topic of citizenship. Ethnomusicologist Frederick Moehn (2007), for instance, argues for the unifying potential of music in Brazil, which can "sound a national space unmarred by social division" (p. 183). Musicologist Jann Pasler's (2009) historiography of French musical culture observes the critical role of musical life in Paris and its contribution to what she calls "composing" citizens in the context of the nation. African American studies scholar Alexander G. Weheliye's (2005) work on the globalization of hip-hop details the enactment of citizenship "from below". Weheliye argues for a form of "diasporic

citizenship", which he uses to describe the status of racialized communities in the African diaspora. Ethnomusicologist Byron Dueck (2007) addresses the ways that music, in conjunction with political discourse, constructs "aboriginal publics", which are formed in order to communicate indigenous rights in the province of Manitoba. And the work of musicologist Michael Francis O'Toole (2014) is particularly notable because it argues for a conception of what he too terms "sonic citizenship". However, his work, unlike my own, conceives of sonic citizenship in the context of music making by diasporic populations: "for musicians in Berlin's Turkish and Anatolian diasporas, musical performance is not only a medium for shaping new understandings of a transnational cultural identity, but also for intervening creatively to shape public opinion about cultural and ethnic diversity in contemporary Germany. I describe these musical interventions as a practice of 'sonic citizenship'" (p. 5).

Media studies scholars have also developed ideas surrounding the relationship between sound, listening, and citizenship. John Hartley (2000) and Debra Rae Cohen (2012) offer complimentary historiographies of the radio (both explore the BBC in particular) and its centrality in mobilizing the "imagined community" (Anderson, 2006) of the nation. Such accounts develop the role that media played in the early history of the nation-state, and by extension, the conception of citizenship that gave life to the national public. Departing from such an approach is Latin American studies scholar Dolores Ines Casillas (2014), who also writes a history of twentieth century radio, but instead of considering the national community, she interrogates the role of audio media in generating sentiments of membership and belonging amidst diasporic Latin communities. Through the study of Spanish language radio in the United States, Casillas focuses her attention on those who are without state-sanctioned citizenship and argues that radio programming "provides a familiar sanctuary for listeners to achieve a sense of cultural citizenship" (p. 4). Finally, the work of sound studies scholar Jennifer Lynn Stoever (2016) explores the ways that racial stratification in the United States today is articulated not only visually, but also, in various sound-based media. She terms this exclusionary propensity the "sonic colour line", which refers to the ways that sound communicates (and upholds) the peripheral status of racialized communities within the confines of the nation-state.

The most recent sound-based discipline to turn toward the topic of citizenship is soundscape studies. In a recent special edition of *The Journal of Urban Cultural Studies*

(2015), a number of authors take up the issue of what they term “urban soundscapes and critical citizenship”. Throughout the edition, the authors conceive of citizenship not as an institution bound to the political architecture of the nation state, but rather, as a participatory process in the context of the city. For them, “critical citizenship” emerges from engaging cities in ways that diverge from “totalizing, capitalist-inspired narratives for consumption”, and instead, developing “counter-hegemonic, often messy ruptures in officially sanctioned representations of the city” (Dillane et al, 2015, p. 91). Citizenship, in this sense, is grounded in praxis, and is generated in the context of sound-based, collaborative projects that engage the soundscapes of the city. The authors that comprise the edition coordinated participatory community endeavours that allowed residents to engage both aesthetically and culturally with their surroundings (Dillane & Langlois, 2015; Leonardson, 2015; Moles & Saunders, 2015). Such an approach is fertile insofar as it employs sound and listening as a point of departure for engaging the social and spatial environment. Much like the mandate of acoustic ecology, which is to cultivate what Schafer (1993) termed “clairaudience”, or an attentive listening public, the authors of this special edition also seek to develop engaged citizens by cultivating opportunities for active listening in the context of the modern city.

In contrast to these approaches, I conceive of sonic citizenship as an emergent form of citizenship bound not to the political architecture of the nation-state, nor as that which is enacted during moments of organized civic participation or musical production, but in the context of everyday life. It is a tacit and embodied practice that occurs in the spaces and places of the city. In this regard, my research closely resembles that of urban anthropologist Tripta Chandola (2012; 2013), whose work is based in and on the peripheral areas of South Delhi. Here, she observes that, both socially and economically, residents of slum areas have been “denied a right to the city” (2012, p. 57). In the soundscapes however, Chandola finds that women of Govindpuri have developed their own cultural, spatial, but above all, sensory strategies that allow them to maintain access to the city, and in particular, access to potable water. She refers to these strategies as “water routes”, which are at once enacted sensorially and are traversed spatially. In so doing, residents are able to negotiate some of the adverse living conditions of their settlement, thereby maintaining a form of agency—a sonic form of agency “that is otherwise mostly denied to them” (2012, p. 58). In this regard, the present research project echoes Chandola’s approach insofar as I too listen to the

sounds of the city in order to hear the politics of the urban terrain as they are enacted from the bottom-up, rather than imposed from the top-down.

The conception of sonic citizenship that I elaborate throughout this dissertation builds upon a regionally specific discussion that conceives of sound and listening as a site of political contestation in Latin America and the Caribbean. Notably, musicologist Ana María Ochoa Gautier (2014) argues that sound constitutes a mode of communication through which the public sphere (as a precursor to citizenship as such) is articulated and institutional politics are contested. Such politics are generated not only in the context of face to face communication, but also in the mediated realm by way of radio, film, and the circulation of music. “In speaking about Latin America as an aural region, I argue that under the contemporary processes of social globalization and regionalization coupled with the transformations in the technologies of sound, the public sphere is increasingly mediated by the aural” (p. 392). The “aural public sphere”, as Ochoa terms it, is a terrain upon which ongoing forms of coloniality in Latin America are contested. Historian Alejandra Bronfman (2016) similarly takes up the politics of sound and listening by positing the emergence of media technologies in the Caribbean as a contested terrain rather than a simple extension of empire. By recounting the history of the radio, Bronfman problematizes American expansionism as a straightforward project from the top-down by rendering “visible the uneven and multidirectional qualities of imperialism” (2016, p. 3). Both Ochoa and Bronfman posit sound and listening as a site of political struggle—a site in which individuals and communities alike express their political agency. This project builds upon these critical discussions of sound and listening in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is particularly salient as I argue for a form of sonic citizenship.

Amidst all of these existing discussions, few (if any) have developed ideas about citizenship as a sound-based spatial practice. Sound studies scholars have yet to tap into the myriad accounts and robust conceptions of citizenship as generated in urban studies. Conversely, urban studies scholars have yet to interrogate tactical urbanisms or citizenship practices insofar as they are articulated in sound and listening. As such, I aim to adjoin these existing discussions by offering a formulation of citizenship—and in particular, a formulation of sonic citizenship—as a tacit, embodied practice that communicates a politics of presence amidst Havana’s urban geography. To do so, I

borrow from the work of Henri Lefebvre (2014) who, in a recently translated essay, offers perhaps his most succinct articulation of citizenship in the present-day, global city:

> The citizen (*citoyen*) and the city dweller (*citadin*) have been dissociated. Being a citizen used to mean remaining for a long period of time in a territory. But in the modern city, the city dweller is in perpetual movement—constantly circulating and settling again, eventually being extricated from place entirely, or seeking to do so. Moreover, in the large modern city, social relations tend to become international, not only due to migration processes but also, and especially, due to the multiplicity of communication technologies, not to mention the becoming worldwide (*mondialisation*) of knowledge. Given such trends, isn't it necessary to reformulate the framework for citizenship (*la citoyenneté*)? The city dweller and the citizen must be linked but not conflated. The right to the city implies nothing less than a revolutionary concept of citizenship. (p. 205)

Here, Lefebvre questions the salience of citizenship in its present formulation by acknowledging the difference between the city dweller and the citizen. He alludes to the problems that transnational movement create for state-bound conceptions of citizenship, which are indeed articulated in the context of Havana, a city that, since the Special Period, has accommodated tens of thousands of migrants from elsewhere on the island; consists of rising levels of inequality; and affords international travellers more citizenship rights than residents themselves. But above all, Lefebvre's formulation of space, the "right to the city", and citizenship more broadly, advocates for the development of a new form of global politics. It contemplates a series of future alternatives for the institutionalization of citizenship that stand in contrast to its present-day status in the context of the nation-state. As such, my formulation of sonic citizenship refers not simply to moments during which residents assert their political agency and acquire the "right to the city", but it also refers to the future political alternatives that are articulated in those very moments.

Sonic Citizenship as a Principle of Urban Planning

The ability of sound and listening to produce the spaces of Havana by bringing people together in the form of an acoustic community illustrates not a "damaged", "uncomfortable", or "dysfunctional" relationship between residents and the city (Coyula, 2011; Álvarez-Tabío Albo, 2011; Ponte, 2002; 2011) but one that is at least functional, if not altogether vibrant. By listening to and through the liminal spaces of the built

environment, residents themselves inhabit a liminal space that challenges the city's logic of exclusion. And in a state of liminality, they momentarily upend the established social order and enable the possibility of a more inclusive, participatory future. According to urban theorist Quentin Stevens (2007), liminality "frames an escape from social convention" and affords "the exploration of new possibilities" (p. 74). Similarly, "liminal practices", says Damien J. Fernández (2000), "are an emotional infrastructure that can become a social movement" (pp. 121-122). In this regard, liminal practices that make claims for belonging, membership, and citizenship, are directed not only toward the present, even though residents employ them to overcome immediate and pressing needs. Instead, such practices are representative of the struggle for an unrealized possibility. They are the practices that suggest a future political order in which the "right to the city" belongs to residents themselves.

Architects, urban planners, and urban theorists alike have advanced the idea that everyday events and activity communicate a potential for design. Notable in this regard is the "desire line": a channel carved into physical space that demarcates the ways in which residents aspire to use a given terrain. A "desire line", in its most basic sense, "indicates yearning" (Brown, 2003). Typically, it consists of a well-worn dirt path that cuts across a patch of grass where, oftentimes, a sidewalk is nearby. The sidewalk of course represents the pre-planned, formalized route, whereas the desire line represents the informal path of least resistance. It denotes the more functional use of space, according to the many pedestrians whom it has serviced. In a similar way, scholars have called upon institutions to also find purpose in the everyday, informal events and activities that may not have a visual articulation like the desire line. In particular, they have made appeals for the design potential of tactical urbanisms, which remains largely untapped by policy makers. "Tactical urbanism", Neil Brenner (2015) writes, "is presented as a potential palliative for urban problems that state institutions and formal urban planning procedures, in particular, have failed to address adequately" (para. 11). Similarly, architect Teddy Cruz critiques governing institutions for refusing to engage informality in any meaningful way. In turn, he calls for a reimagining of the design process in order to develop planning efforts that are efficient, cost-effective, but above all, that "advance agendas of socioeconomic inclusion" (Cruz, 2014, p.118).

These progressive, and largely untried proposals for urban design emerge from research projects taking place in cities all over the world. Yet, a similar perspective

emerged in the context of Havana as well. The early work of architect and urban planner Mario Coyula argued for the emancipatory potential of everyday life in neighbourhoods across the city. In the seminal, and globally renowned essay "The Neighbourhood as Workshop" (1991; English language version published in 1996), Coyula took issue with state-centred approaches to urban planning and design in the context of Havana. He rightly argued that the centralized administration, which for decades endorsed a pro-provincial, pro-rural strategy, was far too economically and politically detached from urban life to effectively address the needs of Havana's population. In response, he suggested, boldly, that the principles for a sustainable and equitable future for Havana will not emerge from a time consuming and labour intensive process implemented from the top-down. Instead, these principles already exist, and are evident in the neighbourhood setting. Traditions, customs, and practices are already enacted that cultivate relationships with the social and spatial environment. In the context of the neighbourhood, Coyula observed, "a sense of community and commitment still exists and works very well" (p. 99). At the onset of the Special Period, a moment of economic crisis and ideological reform in Cuba, Coyula put forward a new paradigm with which to engage urban issues the state could not adequately address. But much to his dismay, this proposal fell on deaf ears (2011).[6]

Discussions that entertain innovative ideas for planning and design are commonplace in fields such as urban studies and architecture, but in no way are they limited to urban theorists and architects alone. For instance, Arjun Appadurai (2013), who takes issue with anthropology's propensity to understand culture solely through the paradigm of reproduction, historicity, and "pastness", argues that the project of anthropology can—and indeed should—also play an important role in designing futures, and conversely, the future of design. To do so, he too regards the culture of informality as a point of departure, which he terms "the capacity to aspire", and defines as "a navigational capacity, through which poor people can effectively change the "terms of recognition" within which they are generally trapped" (p. 289). In so doing, Appadurai places the project of anthropology in step with the project of planning and design, an approach he terms "the future as cultural fact". Similarly, anthropologist James Holston (1998) builds a case for the role of ethnography in the planning and design of the

[6] This is likely the cause for the critical appraisals of the city (and by extension, the governing regime) found in Coyula's later work (e.g. 2011), during the years before his death in 2014.

modern city. For Holston, urban spaces that are produced by those without access to structural power are what he terms “spaces of insurgent citizenship”. “Insurgent forms”, Holston observes, “are found both in organized grassroots mobilizations and in everyday practices that, in different ways, empower, parody, derail, or subvert state agendas” (p. 47). By interrogating the relationship between urban space and its informal, everyday social uses, Holston locates a form of citizenship from which to build a more inclusive, participatory future.

Common amongst each of these proposals—from urban planning to anthropology, from Brenner to Holston—is not simply their tendency to conceive of collective, participatory activities as moments of possibility rather than shortcomings of the city, significant as it may be. Equally important is their desire to reclaim design and planning as processes that can and should be engaged by more than those who are regarded as “specialists” alone. Each of these scholars is attuned to not only the potential, but also the necessity to integrate collective knowledge in the planning process. The democratization of the city, in terms of its social institutions and its spaces alike, will not emerge solely out of the work of technology designers, policy makers, architects, or urban planners. It must also be generated by those without access to political power, who are more than capable of articulating their own needs, desires, and aspirations. And they do so, not simply by using words that are expressed through the voice, or during moments of political dissent, but also in the context of everyday life. Solutions to urban problems can be found in the tactical urbanisms, the capacity to aspire, and in the ways that residents *inventar*. Collective knowledge, as each of these scholars rightly observes, always already exists. And as I will elucidate throughout this dissertation, it is manifest in the actions and events that produce urban spaces, urban sound environments, and localized modes of listening. It is up to us to attune ourselves to it. It is up to us to listen.

Throughout this dissertation, I argue that residents of Havana produce the spaces of the city in sound and through the act of listening. In the acoustic community, momentary and ephemeral as it may be, we hear the sonic articulation of visuality’s “desire line”; we hear the improvisational negotiations Neil Brenner among others refer to as “tactical urbanisms”; we hear, as Mario Coyula described, the functionality of Havana’s neighbourhoods; we hear an expression of Appadurai’s “capacity to aspire”; and we hear the sounding and resounding “spaces of insurgent citizenship” elucidated

by James Holston. In Havana's acoustic environments, we encounter a functional and even vibrant city not only as it is, but as it *can be*. So on the one hand, the need for residents to engage *inventar* can be framed as a failure of the institution of state citizenship, and as a consequence of the present-day logic of exclusion characterizing Havana's landscape. But on the other hand, it is in the very moments of spontaneity, creativity, and participation that the possibilities for a democratic, participatory city can emerge. These are the liminal moments during which residents attain the "right to the city". And that liminality is most succinctly encountered by listening to and through Havana's liminal spaces. For it is here, through open windows, doors, balconies and porticoes, that residents produce invisible encounters with the city, inventing it, seemingly in thin air. And if we listen closely enough, we can hear the making of sonic citizenship.

Conclusion

The experience of present-day Havana is invariably conditioned by the island's most recent political era, the Special Period. However, the conditions of coloniality to which the city has been subject extend much further into the past and are manifest not only institutionally, but as a number of scholars have argued, they are inscribed into the city's very topography. Centuries of colonialism and decades of imperialism condition the relationship between residents and the urban terrain still today, and are manifest in material scarcity, architectural and infrastructural ruination, the return of the tourist economy, and a crisis in urban transportation. Each of these urban issues condition everyday life in the city, and each contributes to Havana's present-day logic of exclusion. The result is that residents must expend a great deal of energy to resolve even the simplest of tasks. They must engage in a daily struggle to make ends meet, a struggle referred to colloquially as *la lucha*. Whether this entails repairing a material technology or acquiring food items for one's family, the logic of exclusion between residents and the city prevails. As such, many commentators have regarded Havana as a site of failure, and some have represented it as a tourist paradise that is 'stuck in time' since its urban topography is falling into ruin (Álvarez-Tabío Albo, 2011; Redruello, 2011; Porter, 2008; Rojas, 2011; Ponte, 2002; 2011). Such narratives characterize residents as lacking the political power required to not only affect policy, but to make decisions that can improve their living conditions. They have, in short, been unable to acquire the "right to the city".

Although these representations of Havana are not unfounded, it is also true that residents have learned to live amidst the urban geography in spite of its exclusionary spatial logic. I explore this perspective, latent, inconspicuous, and invisible as it may be, not as a way of romanticizing the impoverished conditions of life in the city, but as a way of encountering it anew. In so doing, I argue that residents have learned to negotiate the social and spatial hegemony of their city through moments that are characterized by interpersonal dialogue, participation, and communication. Such everyday, rather ordinary moments take place on the streets, in the parks, and in the context of the neighbourhood. Here, residents form allegiances not simply on the basis of common interests, but because of the need to participate in social networks that provide the material and non-material needs that the state cannot. To engage *inventar* is to confront the city's tenuous conditions with creativity and resourcefulness; it is a practice that I have also framed as an urban tactic, described by some urban studies scholars as "tactical urbanisms". In both cases, *inventar* and tactical urbanisms alike (which effectively amount to the same thing), residents momentarily subvert control from above and lay claim to the spaces of the city. In so doing, they inhabit Havana's "liminal spaces", which represent moments of possibility during which urban space is produced by residents themselves. These moments, these spaces, and these practices, I argue, are representative of the needs and desires of residents who lack sustained access to political and economic power.

The study of sound represents an important, yet often overlooked way in which residents engage in communal activity. In sound and through the act of listening, Havana's residents mobilize communities and make them tangible. They listen with attention and curiosity to the activity and events of their neighbourhoods: a tacit social ability facilitated by the design of the built environment. Spaces such as windows and doors, which residents often leave ajar on account of the hot Caribbean climate, alongside their widespread use of transitional spaces such as porticoes and balconies, allow them to listen across the threshold of the built environment. To listen to everyday sounds in Havana is therefore to simultaneously attend to both public and private spaces, an act I term *trans-liminal listening*. In so doing, residents enact a highly sophisticated, localized knowledge through which they relate to their surrounding environment, mobilizing place-based social formations known as acoustic communities. The intimacy of this relationship stands in contradistinction to narratives of displacement,

disassociation, and discomfort found in the literature. As such, the city has the potential to emerge in sound as a functional, and even vibrant and thriving settlement. It is a landscape comprised not of individual actors who are lacking political agency, but rather, of communities who possess the capacity to make autonomous decisions amidst the urban terrain. But above all, the study of sound brings to bear many of the otherwise invisible ways that residents organize in, and stake a claim over the spaces and places of Havana.

During moments in which those without sustained access to political power mobilize acoustic communities, they enact what I term *sonic citizenship*. In so doing, a city emerges that is functional, and that operates according to the needs of residents themselves. We hear a city in which everyday life is not delimited by the history of empire, omnipresent as that history may be. Instead, we hear a city as people live, desire, and imagine it. We hear a version of Havana as it can be, a city that aspires to be something other than it is. It is during these moments that residents enact sonic citizenship, and a principle for social and spatial design emerges. Sound's proclivity toward urban design is an area of research that scholars have yet to explore not only in the city of Havana, but in most any city. It offers a new means to conceive of the relationship between residents and the urban terrain, and the possibilities for the future of the city. Much like the "desire line", an urban planning concept that describes a physical manifestation of how communities aspire to use the physical terrain, sonic citizenship similarly represents a tool that has the capacity to further inform the decision-making process engaged by planners and policy makers alike. In Havana, this is particularly important at the present historical moment for a host of reasons, not the least of which is the impending penetration of new technologies, ideas, and markets amidst Cuba's ongoing rapprochement with the United States.

Throughout the remainder of the dissertation, I elucidate moments during which sonic citizenship is enacted. In Chapter Four, I interrogate an occurrence that I experienced daily, in my own living quarters. Here, the sound of water overflow and runoff not only brings to bear the neighbourhood's infrastructural ruination, but also illuminates the solidarity of residents in their attempts to collectively mitigate this daily disruption. In Chapter Five, I interrogate the history of a highly noteworthy sound amidst Havana's soundscape that territorializes the spaces of the city: the heralding music of the ice cream vendor. And in Chapter Six, I develop a narrative of my experiences in

Habana Vieja; ground zero for the city's tourist economy. I think with and through some of the sounds that comprise Havana's tourist geographies and argue that, in spite of the ubiquity of tourist "noise", residents are nevertheless able to maintain a collective presence in spaces that were quite literally designed to exclude them. But first, I develop an account of the methodology that I employed both during my fieldwork in Havana and as I assembled it following my return to Vancouver. In the next chapter, I detail the ways in which sound ethnographers have historically approached the study of sound and some of the limitations of these existing approaches. In response, I offer an intervention formulated by working in a region of the globe that has been, throughout its history, subject to the conditions of empire. At once local and global, my approach to doing sonic ethnography cultivates a rich description of the immediate geography, while simultaneously remaining aware of its position at a global level. It is, in short, an approach that listens to what I term "space beyond space".

Chapter 3.

Listening to Space Beyond Space: Charting a Multi-Scalar Sonic Ethnography

> *Perhaps the most important distinguishing feature of auditory experience…its capacity to disintegrate and reconfigure space. (Connor, 1997, p. 206)*

During the autumn and winter of 2012, I travelled to Havana to undertake several months of sound-based ethnographic fieldwork. I had no preplanned themes or critical urban issues that I set out to evaluate, so my plan consisted of little more than listening to the everyday sounds of the city. The central question that guided my pursuit was, quite simply, what can be learned about Havana by studying it in sound? I position this question in contrast to more traditional approaches to studying cities, which oftentimes interrogate urban attributes such as architectural heritage, spatial design and layout, or municipal policy. Havana in particular is a city known for the vibrancy of its musical life, about which there is no shortage of scholarly research, yet the dedicated study of everyday sound is virtually non-existent. “Music”, historians Alejandra Bronfman and Andrew Grant Wood observe, “has practically drowned out other Latin American and Caribbean sounds” (2012a, p. xii). So at the very least, I knew I was working through a novel method. Yet, this method, while singular in its own right, is also part of a broader shift in anthropological studies in Cuba. Since the onset of the Special Period, there has emerged what Cuban studies scholar Ariana Hernandez-Reguant (2005) refers to as a “renovated anthropology”, undertaken predominantly by young scholars who not only “distrust grand narratives, whether pro-socialist or pro-capitalist”, but who also bring with them “the concerns of post-colonial theory, postmodernism, feminist and queer theory, cultural Marxism, and globalization paradigms” (p. 300). My project offers a contribution to this emergent discussion by bringing sound studies, and in particular, the exploration of Havana’s sonic geographies, into dialogue with these newfound perspectives in Cuban anthropology.

I do so by employing an approach to qualitative research that takes everyday, communicatory practices as its point of departure. Following what has been referred to

as the “sensory” or the “sensorial turn” (Howes, 2003; Edwards et al., 2006), scholars across the human sciences have turned toward the body as a site of investigation. And amidst this scholarly shift, sound and listening have figured centrally to the extent that some have even declared the emergence of a “sonic turn” in its own right (Drobnick, 2004). Urban studies scholars (Atkinson, 2007; Arkette, 2004), cultural anthropologists (Samuels et al., 2010; Vannini et al., 2010), and human geographers (Rodaway, 1994; Wood et al., 2007) alike have “tuned in”, so to speak, to the merits of sound-based qualitative inquiry. And these scholars, among a host of others, have done so in order to evaluate spaces, places, and the practices that comprise them anew. “Auditory experience”, observes human geographer Paul Rodaway (1994), “with the context of a wider multi-sensual encounter with the world, can give important geographical information, of location and spatial arrangement and a rich evocation of the distinctive character of places at different times of the day and in different seasons” (p. 106). Sound communicates the details of social and spatial contexts that might otherwise go unnoticed in more traditional scholarly approaches. It articulates the historicity of local events and activity. It illustrates how spaces are experienced and imagined according to those who live there. And to study it is to cultivate new encounters with the social and spatial terrain.

Early sound-based qualitative research elucidated the merits of sound, and positioned it as a fertile methodological and theoretical paradigm in its own right (see for instance Feld & Brenneis, 2004; Erlmann, 2004; Samuels et al., 2010; Vannini et al., 2010; Rice, 2003; World Soundscape Project, 1973; 1977; Schafer, 1993; Truax, 2001). These studies, alongside numerous others, accomplished the necessary and integral task of introducing sound studies to well-established disciplinary traditions such as anthropology, media studies, and urban studies, making it part of qualitative researchers’ general methodological tool kit. Yet, sound studies researchers continued to face the very same problematic as qualitative researchers more broadly, which is locating the relationship between one’s immediate site of research and the broader social, political, and economic structures within which it is embedded. In 2004, sound anthropologist Veit Erlmann communicated this very concern when he observed that “anthropologists have yet to seriously investigate how acoustic practices are being drawn into the maelstrom of globalization and modernization” (p. 5). This was the case, at least in part, because of the situated techniques that sound ethnography demands: to listen, of course, is to listen

locally, to the sounds of the immediate environment. But it was also the result of a geographically and temporally circumscribed conceptual approach that aspired to apprehend the details of the local world alone. Qualitative sound studies research did a thorough job of attending to the attributes of immediate experience, yet it had far less to say about the relationship between that experience and the broader historical narratives within which it is embedded.

Recent scholarship, however, has moved beyond simply advancing the merits of sound, developing instead thoughts about what sound can do, its relationship to contemporary social issues and trends, and how it can further contribute to discussions across the human sciences. Such research engages the politics of sound and listening and it generates new and previously unexplored encounters with people, the media they use, and the spaces they inhabit. The work of anthropologist Charles Hirschkind (2006), for instance, interrogates the circulation of cassette sermons in Cairo, Egypt, and their role in developing a moral and political landscape in the Middle East. Hirschkind posits that "the affects and sensibilities hones through popular media practices such as listening to cassette sermons are as infrastructural to politics and public reason as are markets, associations, formal institutions, and information networks" (p. 9). Similarly, anthropologist Laura Kunreuther (2014) interrogates what she terms the "figure of the voice" in Kathmandu, which she argues "refers to a nexus of metaphors associated with the voice as a sign of intimacy, consciousness, and presence, associated, above all, with those modes of selfhood central to democratic political agency" (p. 5). These studies, among a host of others, offer models through which to map the localized experience of sound and listening onto narratives that circulate at municipal, state, and global levels. It is with this perspective in mind that I engage the tools and techniques of sonic ethnography, which I argue must treat sound and listening not simply as a local experience, but as a local experience conditioned by both historical and multi-scalar enactments of power. That this project is situated in the Caribbean, a region that has historically been subjected to the political will of global-historical forces emanating from elsewhere, is no small reason for developing this perspective.

In this chapter, I survey some of the theoretical approaches that guide sound-based ethnographic research. I do so both to illustrate their utility for generating qualitative observations in and about a particular social and spatial context, and to give voice to my many experiences in Havana. But in addition to an account of what I did

during my fieldwork experience, I also develop the theoretical scaffolding that brings together the relationship between the localized experience of sound and listening and the much larger systems within which those local worlds are embedded. To do so, I think with and through a theoretical concept and a category of analysis that is ubiquitous across the field of sound studies: space. In spite of its ubiquity as a term and a concept across sound studies, I argue that the treatment of space in the context of sound-based ethnographic research demands further interrogation. The qualitative study of sound has both internally developed and drawn from a place-based, or localized discourse that could potentially contribute a relatively narrow or constricted understanding of space, and more importantly, to the historicity of space. In response, I propose an outward listening approach that engages the global-historical narratives brought to bear on the social and spatial contexts under investigation, and on ethnographic researchers themselves. Such an approach is particularly important in the case of Havana: a harbour city that for centuries has facilitated the circulation of people, material goods, and culture. Yet it also represents a productive way of doing research on any city during an era characterized by global mobility and digital communication.

But before I develop this perspective, I will elucidate what I did, what I thought, and how I carried out my fieldwork research “on the ground” in Havana. I begin by addressing the reasons for selecting the areas where I worked, and my approach to both listening to them and documenting them in turn. I then address the ideas that framed my local observations, animated by a series of terms and concepts that describe the relationship between sound and space. By surveying this vocabulary and by elucidating its utility in my research, I illustrate how the weight of the disciplinary tradition is brought to bear on the contemporary soundscape researcher. I argue that, in spite of all its affordances, the discourse and theory surrounding space and place in sound studies develops an introverted, localized spatial sensibility that delimits investigations to the local world alone. In response, I borrow from, and integrate in turn, conceptions of space generated in human geography, Caribbean studies, and in the mobilities paradigm: all of which offer a global scope that complements the inevitable localized emphasis of most any ethnographic encounter. In so doing, I develop an understanding of the relationship between sound and space that simply *begins* in the local context, yet remains open and outward-listening across both space and time. And by listening beyond the immediacy of

the geographical terrain upon which we stand, sonic ethnographers can hear in sound the broader social, political, and economic contexts within which our work is situated.

Listening In, and To, the City of Havana

The tools and techniques that I employed in Havana I borrow mainly from soundscape studies (World Soundscape Project, 1973; Schafer 1993 [1977]; Truax, 2001)—a discipline that informs the work of ethnographers, anthropologists, and cultural geographers working in and through sound. For instance, audio walks (Moles & Saunders, 2015), or soundwalks (Hall et al., 2008), which typically consist of moving silently by foot across a given terrain while attending specifically to the sonic environment, have been both practiced and theorized since the 1970s by acoustic ecologist, composer, and contributor to the World Soundscape Project, Hildegard Westerkamp (2006; 2012). In Havana I practiced soundwalking daily, listening intently as I moved through the city's spaces. Formal and informal dialogues, or interviews, which is of course a longstanding anthropological technique, are creatively referred to as "earwitness accounts" (1973) in soundscape studies. In Havana, I listened with curious ears, and when I desired more information about a sound, space, or a particular event or activity, I asked friends or acquaintances to verbally offer context. And as an accompaniment to soundwalks, interpersonal dialogues, and to listening encounters in general, the act of recording enabled me to pause, slow down, and revisit my sonic experiences long after they took place. Audio recording is a definitive technique of the World Soundscape Project during the 1960s and 1970s, and I too recorded many of my sonic experiences in Havana—including soundwalks, interviews, and everyday moments alike—using a small, handheld recorder.

Not only do audio recordings enable the researcher to revisit and re-evaluate an earlier time and a particular place, but so too does the use of recording technology condition how one listens during the act of recording. Listening to—and through—a recording device shifts the researcher's positionality, compelling them to actively attend to their sonic environment. Whereas "the ear has a capacity to focus", Westerkamp (2002) observes, "the microphone's ways of hearing is non-selective" (p. 53). Recording compels the researcher to simultaneously attend to both the microphone *and* ear, while making a host of decisions about how, where, and when to capture a given environment. Much like a photograph, the specifications of the technology "frame" the recording, and

the recordist establishes—directly or indirectly—the criteria. Communication scholars Jan Marontate and David Murphy (2012) refer to the soundscape researcher's decision making process as an "axiology": a term used for the philosophical study of ethical and aesthetic value systems that in the case of recordists may be manifested in both competence and recording aesthetics. In Havana, I often listened without the microphone, but when I wanted to either document the sonic environment, or engage it from a different perspective, I began to record. Such an approach altered my perspective, reconfigured my listening experiences, and conditioned the impression I held of the city more broadly. And these experiences are inevitably brought to bear in how I evaluated and represented that audio material in the pages of this dissertation.

Throughout the duration of my stay, I held an academic residency at Fundación Fernando Ortiz, a local institution that conducts research in the areas of Cuban culture, art, and folklore. While there, I worked alongside oral historian Dr. Aurelio Francos Lauredo, anthropologist Dr. Miguel Barnet, and a community of scholars who were more than willing to share with me their knowledge of the spaces and places of the city. I met bi-weekly with Dr. Francos, who functioned as somewhat of a gatekeeper by putting me in touch with local networks of scholars, artists, and possible informants. In addition to gaining access to both local knowledge and social networks, the residency afforded me a social status that proved advantageous on my travels. Being a "*doctorando*" (a doctoral student) and working at a well-known research institution, made it easy to negotiate bureaucratic checkpoints and engage conversations with possible informants. In return, my contribution to the Fundación consisted in part of a public talk and an authored paper published in the journal *Catauro*; both of which presented my preliminary findings to the scholarly community while introducing soundscape studies as a method for conducting cultural research. Additionally, I worked alongside Dr. Francos to develop a sound archive consisting of approximately of 70 audio recordings I captured in various parts of the city.[7] Today, that collection functions as a media resource for local scholars, artists, and students alike. It is what Jan Marontate et al. (2016) might refer to as a "commemoration and imagination" of the city's acoustic past.

Since it was impossible to visit, record, and speak with members of every neighbourhood in Havana, I had to delimit the project's geographical area(s) of study.

[7] Further information on this series of recordings, including date, location, and duration, can be found in the Appendix.

Following a couple of preliminary consultations, Dr. Francos and I decided to prioritize the municipalities of Centro Habana, Habana Vieja, and the district of El Vedado: each of which are central areas of the city, and each houses large portions of the population. El Vedado is in the municipality of Plaza de la Revolución, it was the district where I lived, and it also happened to be where the Fundación was located. Built mostly between 1920 and 1940, Vedado is the most modern of the three selected areas, evidenced in its garden city-inspired design and architecture. Centro Habana is the neighbouring municipality to the east, and was mostly built during the eighteenth century. Colonial era design and architecture is evident in the two or three story buildings that line its narrow streets, creating living spaces in very close proximity to one another. And lastly, further east still is Habana Vieja, the site of the original settlement. Sitting directly on the shores of the harbour, Habana Vieja exhibits a quintessentially colonial design, which, since the early 1990s, has been undergoing restoration for the purposes of heritage tourism. Taken together, these three areas—El Vedado, Centro Habana, and Habana Vieja—are where much of my ethnographic research was carried out. The themes I pursue in the subsequent chapters emerge out of my sonic encounters within each one.

I quickly realized however, that the geography of a municipality or district, though more manageable than the city at large, is still too vast to develop a comprehensive study of sound. As such, I began thinking at a smaller, more personal scale: the neighbourhood. Not only is this a more appropriate context in light of the distance at which discrete sounds can be heard, but neighbourhoods also tend to be intimate settings where interpersonal encounters take place and communities become tangible. “Neighbourhoods”, sociologist Anne Power (2007) observes, are “the basic building blocks of all cities and towns” (p. 7). So I began by thinking spatially with the question, *what are the sounds that bring some of Havana’s neighbourhood spaces to life?* Generating responses to this question in my own neighbourhood was quite easy, since I have an intimate relationship with the everyday events and activity that produce its spaces. Accordingly, the dissertation’s first case study, Chapter Four, is based in my own neighbourhood in El Vedado. However, because I do not have a similarly intimate relationship with neighbourhoods in Centro Habana and Habana Vieja, I began my explorations in these municipalities with some of the sounds that I encountered while on my travels. In particular, I made note of some of my many acoustic experiences while

conducting private soundwalks, some of which I captured with my audio recorder. In turn, I interrogate how those sounds animate the spaces of a given neighbourhood, which provided material for the case studies that comprise both Chapter Five and Chapter Six respectively.

The decisions that I made about which sounds to interrogate, and in fact, the very way that I listen, is always and already conditioned by my social location. As someone who is a temporary resident in Havana, I have the privilege of both mobility to and from the city, and virtually unlimited access to its many spaces and places. At once, my positionality conditions the sounds that I attend to, the questions that I ask about them, and it is in turn inscribed in the recordings I captured that are now hosted at Fundación Fernando Ortiz. As a result, my social location informs the account of the city that I generate, and the position that I support throughout the pages of this dissertation. In this sense, my body and my comportment are implicated at every level of this project: from my listening to my recording, to the ways that I theorize my experiences. My methodology, and this project more broadly, must therefore be understood and engaged on these terms. For those who present and perform different identities, it is both conceivable and also quite plausible that Havana emerges as a very different city. As such, I write myself into the dissertation by elucidating the ethnographic encounters from which I generate my observations and analyses. Chapter Six in particular problematizes my status as a non-native resident of the city by elucidating a series of experiences in Havana's tourist district, and then in Chapter Seven I return to these issues as I detail the limits of the study.

Many of the details of my work on-the-ground in Havana I articulate further in the Appendix which is found at the end of the dissertation. There, I describe my approach to acquiring the respondents whom I interviewed, I develop accounts of their identities as it pertained to my research, and I address the role of these interviews in my project more broadly. I discuss some of my ethical considerations as an ethnographer who works in and through sound. I raise questions such as, which sounds are available for me to record? Which ones are too personal? And how to represent the sounds of individuals and communities—many of whom remained unaware they were participating in a study? The Appendix also offers a brief account of the documentary research that I engaged in order to develop the account of the ice cream vendor found in Chapter Five. Here, I describe some of the questions I asked, and the decisions I made while assembling this

project in Vancouver, long after I left Havana. And finally, the Appendix concludes with an account of the centrality of audio recording to this project, and my approach to doing so. I elucidate the scholarly trajectory from which much of my methodological techniques emerged (the discipline of soundscape studies), and the role and function of audio documentation in the project more broadly. I conclude the section with a chart that offers information about each of the nearly 70 recordings I captured including the file name, and the date, time, and location.

Throughout the remainder of the present chapter, I develop an account of the theory guiding my methodological approach. I offer some preliminary observations of sound and listening at the neighbourhood level, and I describe some of the terms and concepts that give them voice. I begin my exploration of the relationship between sound, listening, and space at the most intimate, embodied level, by briefly addressing the physiology of listening. In particular, I speak to the auditory system's capacity to detect space sonically—a latent ability definitive of listening anywhere, at most anytime. However, "acoustic space" as anthropologist Edmund Carpenter (1960) famously termed it, is by no means contingent on the physiology of listening alone. So too are spaces engaged in ways that are learned, and are therefore culturally conditioned. And the differences between my own approach to listening and those that define the aural culture in Havana quickly became apparent to me during my first extended stay in the city. In Havana, the sonic geography is not limited by the design of the space in which one is situated. Instead, it extends well beyond it. Listeners' aural awareness extends outward, through open spaces such as windows, doors, porticoes, and balconies. I refer to this tacit, embodied disposition as *trans-liminal listening*, during which the act of listening is attuned to the design of the built environment. This makes the neighbourhood community tangible, giving life to what the World Soundscape Project (1978) refers to as "acoustic communities".

Sounding Out Local Spaces

The body's ability to sense space is by no means limited to vision alone: so too can the ear determine the attributes of the physical environment. Sound, on the one hand, communicates a literal meaning: a voice utters words, footsteps articulate bodily movement, street signals communicate the public life of the city. But sound also carries with it information about its physical surroundings. Through reflection, refraction, and the

absorption of propagating sound waves—the dynamics of which are contingent upon both the design and the materiality of the space—the attributes of the physical environment are made tangible. The auditory system can simultaneously discern both attributes (that is, literal meaning and spatial inflection alike), an ability that sound studies scholar Barry Truax (2016) refers to as “dual processing”. “The simultaneous perception of a sound event and the acoustical space in which it is produced”, Truax observes, “are so intertwined that we often ignore the influence of the physical space on the sounds we pay attention to” (p. 254). This process invariably takes place outside of our conscious attention, it is part of the backdrop of phenomenological perception, and as such, this information is almost always intuited and seldom is it directly attended to or engaged by the average listener. Nevertheless, the auditory system registers these two distinct layers of information, and it uses them to generate an impression of the physical environment that spatially and temporally orients the body.

Because of the auditory system’s ability to detect space in sound, scholars in the human sciences have for some time been interested in the relationship between the body, space, and sensory perception. One of the more notable, and certainly one of the more lasting contributions to this discussion is found in the work of anthropologist Edmund Carpenter (1960; 1973). Carpenter’s work, which is in many ways an antecedent to today’s sensory anthropology, explored the role of the senses in the context of everyday communication. In particular, he was interested in the act of listening, and its ability to function as a mode of social and spatial orientation. Carpenter referred to the relationship between sound and the physical environment using the term “acoustic space”, which he and Marshall McLuhan famously observed, “has no point of favored focus. It’s a sphere without fixed boundaries, space made by the thing itself, not space containing the thing. It is not pictorial space, boxed in, but dynamic, always in flux, creating its own dimensions moment by moment.” (1960, p. 67). Insofar as sounds exist, acoustic spaces also exist. But as Carpenter rightly argued, the propensity to attune oneself to them is contingent upon factors that are not physiological, but rather, are social and cultural. While the physiology of a functional auditory system is the same across individuals, communities, and cultures, how people employ that system during the act of communication is by no means homogenous. Listening is, in short, a learned skill.

That the act of listening is culturally variable became most apparent to me during my first extended stay in Havana over a decade ago, when I was made aware of the importance of sound in everyday modes of communication. Friends who came to visit my apartment often announced their arrival by hollering at my third floor window from outside in the street: "*¡Vicente!...¡Oye, Vicente!*". It was quite the commotion, and surely everyone in the neighbourhood could hear it. But for some reason, I didn't immediately register their calls, even though it was my own name they were shouting. To be sure, I could hear the sounds in the street quite clearly, but I was not actually *listening* to them. My attention extended no further than the walls of my bedroom, because at the time, the idea that someone outside would be calling for me was foreign. In the environments I am most familiar with, acoustic space is more or less defined by the physical properties of a room. However in Havana, the act of listening is neither limited to indoor environments, nor to public spaces, but it tends to be inclusive of both. It took some time, but after a few weeks, I became aware of the fact that, although I was out of sight, I could be called to participate in a conversation taking place outside. So I began listening in a way that extended my awareness outward—from the home and into the streets—and in so doing, my acoustic spaces accommodated those of my friends and neighbours.

Figure 2: My apartment building and the third floor balcony of my residence
Photo taken by author

On the basis of my early experiences in Havana, it was apparent that the city's listening culture was quite different than my own. My impression of sound-based modes of communication was different from those with whom I lived. But at the same time, I was also unfamiliar with the functionality of the city's design, and how the contours of urban space could accommodate sound and listening. Barry Blesser and Linda-Ruth Salter (2007) use the term "aural architecture" to refer to "the properties of a space that can be *experienced* by listening" (p. 5, original emphasis). "As we hear how sounds from multiple sources interact with the various spatial elements", they observe, "we assign an identifiable personality to the aural architecture, in much the same way we interpret an echo as the aural personality of a wall" (p. 2). Whereas acoustic space emphasizes the ability for the listener to sonically engage their physical environment, aural architecture instead refers to the attributes of a physical space, and how individuals and communities listen to them. The difference is subtle but important. Havana's residents are fully aware that, because of the city's spatial design, acoustic spaces can extend beyond the limits of the built environment, and they in turn communicate accordingly. So on the one hand, we might say that Havana's listening culture fits seamlessly with its aural architecture, but on the other, the city's aural architecture also accommodates its dominant listening culture. And it stands to reason that the relationship between the two is no matter of coincidence.

After developing these rather preliminary observations, I was left with the following questions: to what end do residents make use of the city's acoustic spaces? And, for whom does Havana's aural architecture function in a positive manner? Neither of these concepts (acoustic space and/or aural architecture, respectively) explicitly engage the politics of sound and listening—yet sound and listening are indeed political acts. How then, might I hear the politics that comprise Havana's urban geography? Here, I borrow from the work of sound artist Brandon LaBelle (2010) whose term "acoustic territories" politicizes the relationship between sound, space, and listening. "Acoustic space brings forward a process of acoustic territorialization", LaBelle argues, "in which the disintegration and reconfiguration of space becomes a political process" (p. xxiii-xxiv). LaBelle astutely observes that the production of acoustic spaces—that is, acoustic territories—is never politically benign. And acoustic territories find their political potential not by generating acoustic space, or in the ways that sound "illuminates" (Blesser, p. 343) aural architecture, but by mobilizing functional social formations in the

context of a physical geography. “Sound might be heard to say, this is our moment…this is our moment is also immediately, this is our place…this is our place is also potentially, this is our community” (LaBelle, 2010, p. xvii). By mobilizing neighbourhood communities, sound makes the embodied presence of its members palpable. To collectively know and to live in a given neighbourhood with an intimate knowledge of it is, in and of itself, a political act.

But as my own experience demonstrates, acquiring an intimate knowledge of a neighbourhood, and actively participating in it as a community member, does not happen overnight. Instead, one must not only listen, but wholly experience a space, both socially and sensorially, over extended periods of time. Whereas the geometrical properties of acoustic space emerge over mere fractions of a second, social and political meaning emerges over the course of days, months, or even years. So as much as the study of sound is spatial, always grounded in a highly specific physical geography, so too is it temporal: it is contingent upon the passing of time. As a sonic ethnographer, to listen is therefore not simply to engage the events and activity that comprise a particular moment, but it is to participate in a cultural geography that is always and already in motion. In the following section, I extend the present discussion concerning sound and space by thinking at a broader temporal scale than that at which the auditory system detects the spatial geometry. I think beyond the instantaneity at which “acoustic spaces” emerge in order to interrogate the relationship between sound, space, and listening at a level at which listeners produce familiarity and meaning. To do so, I draw from a frequently used term in the context of qualitative research, and in particular, in sound-based qualitative research, that communicates social and political meaning at the intersection of space, time, and perception: “place”.

“Placing” Local Sounds

Though it took only a few weeks to begin listening outward, beyond the spaces of my immediate environment, I remained a long way from possessing a similar aural awareness as most long-time residents of the city. This is particularly apparent in the intimacy with which Pampi’s mother, Margarita, listens to her domestic spaces. Her apartment, where I lived throughout my stay, is located on avenida Paseo, a busy street filled with the sounds of moving automobiles—especially during the late-afternoon rush hour on weekdays. Yet, in spite of all the traffic, Margarita could easily identify the

precise moment at which Pampi arrived home from a day's work. She did so (or so she said) by attending to the sound of his car's engine slowly pulling into the driveway, along with a host of other sounds that were indicative of his arrival: the slam of the car door and the opening of the garage door among others. Unless I was on the balcony, where I had an overhead view of the street and the driveway, I remained oblivious to Pampi's arrival until the moment he walked through the door. Margarita on the other hand, knows not only the specific series of sounds for which to listen, but also, the spatial location from which those sounds will originate. That is to say, she knows not only *how* to listen in order to identify specific sounds, but *where* to listen according to how sound "illuminates" the neighbourhood's aural architecture.[8] To be sure, this social and spatial knowledge that informs her listening practices emerged over years of listening to the sounds of these neighbourhood spaces.

This example is only one of countless everyday moments that demonstrate the intimacy with which listeners apprehend their social and spatial surroundings. As a relative outsider, I was mostly incapable of interpreting the meaning (or for that matter, even the presence) of certain subtle, everyday neighbourhood sounds. But for Margarita, and for many of the other long-time residents of the neighbourhood, these spaces and the sounds in them are both present and are indeed filled with meaning. To listen with localized knowledge is therefore to listen not simply to the sonic attributes of physical "spaces", but it is to listen to the neighbourhood as the "places" in which they live. "Place", geographer Tim Cresswell (2004) asserts, "is how we make the world meaningful and the way we experience the world" (p. 12). It consists of much more than the experience of geometrical space alone, but instead it refers to the spatial experience of social and political meaning. "When humans invest meaning in a portion of space and then become attached to it in some way it becomes a place" (Cresswell, 2004, p. 10). At once, place refers to the attributes of physical space, and to the subjective and emotional attachment individuals or communities have to those spaces. And a particularly tangible means through which that attachment is both expressed and experienced is through the senses themselves. We might say, then, that it is Margarita's localized knowledge, or her "sense of place" that enables her to hear the arrival of her

[8] I borrow the term "illuminate" in reference to the relationship between sound and space from the work of Barry Blesser and Linda-Ruth Salter (2007), who argue that "sound illuminates space in the same way that light does; ears as well as eyes can sense illuminated objects" (p. 343).

son Pampi, by actively attending to sounds that are definitive of spaces in her domestic life.

Because “place” intersects ideas about space, cultural meaning, and temporal change, it constitutes a central idea in sound-based anthropological research. Sound studies scholars such Katharine Norman (2011) and Georgina Born (2013) among others, theorize the relationship between sound, listening, and the spatial geography using the term place. They do so, accordingly, to distinguish the benign experience of space, from the enactment of an intimate local knowledge on the basis of sound and listening. Notable in this regard is that both scholars borrow the notion of place from the work of ethnomusicologist Steven Feld (1996; 2005), who has had considerable influence on both sound anthropology and sensory anthropology more broadly. One of the more prominent proponents of “place”, Feld articulates the intimate relationship between sound, space, and listening through what he terms *acoustemology*: an acoustically-oriented spatial epistemology, which he defines as “an exploration of sonic sensibilities, specifically of ways in which sound is central to making sense, to knowing, to experiential truth” (1996, p. 97). It is through an “acoustemological” orientation that Feld rather poetically suggests, “as place is sensed, senses are placed; as places make sense, senses make place” (2005, p. 179). Norman, Born, and Feld are only a few of the scholars who think with and through the notion of place when exploring the relationship between space, sound, and sensory perception. Worth noting however, is not *that* each of them use the concept, but rather, *how* they use it.

Common to each of the aforementioned scholars, amongst a host of others (e.g. Hall et al., 2008; Moles & Saunders, 2015), is that their impression of place emerges out of the work of phenomenologist Edward Casey (1996; 1997). In the extended essay “How to Get From Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time” (1996), Casey presents a treatment of place that is highly specific, localized, and even inward-looking (or for sonic ethnographers, inward-listening). For Casey, “the crux in matters of place is the role of perception” (p. 17), and as such, it is the body, rather than the social context that takes priority. The result is a formulation of place that extends only as far as the body can perceive: “local knowledge is at one with lived experience...to live is to live locally and to know is to first of all know the places one is in” (p. 18). In terms of sound, then, places exist only insofar as one can hear them—they are inclusive of, and are thus limited to, the spaces that are within earshot. As a way of gesturing toward the social

and spatial context that encompasses place, Casey argues that it has a “gathering power”, which he defines as a “holding together of a particular configuration…a holding in and a holding out”. Here, his conception of place finds both its geo-social and its historical limits. It is that “gathering power” that “retains the occupants of a place within its boundaries” (p. 25). To move, then, from place to place, we must cross what Casey refers to as a “threshold”, which he defines as a “concrete inter-place of transition” (p. 40).

Casey’s introverted approach to theorizing the attributes of place has been highly influential, and for sound studies, its appeal is rather obvious: since the “sensorial” or the “sensory” turn, sound studies—and sound anthropology in particular—has found purchase in theoretical models grounded in the enactment of sensory practices. For this reason, Casey’s theory (1996; 1997), which on the one hand extends the work of phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962), and on the other, has been taken up by sound anthropologist Steven Feld (1996; 2005) among a host of other sound studies scholars and has held a prominent role in theorizations of place in sound studies research. Casey’s inward-looking (and listening) theoretical sensibility is echoed in contemporary sound studies discourse. Each of the concepts that I employ to express the relationship between sound and space, from “acoustic space” to “aural architecture”, emphasizes the experience of the local world alone. Taken together, the theoretical and discursive tools that inform a spatial approach to doing sonic ethnography position sound and listening primarily as a localized, embodied practice. To listen is to listen locally. To study sound is to study the perceivable attributes of the social and spatial geography. Such an approach delimits the extent to which the sonic ethnographer engages with their social and spatial context. It encourages the researcher to listen in ways that occlude, and therefore silence the relationship between the local world and the broader narratives of historical change in which it is embedded.

If place is, as Cresswell (2004) argues, “space invested with meaning in the context of power” (p. 12), then in order to hear the multiple and at times overlapping ways that power is effected, we must develop a more rigorous understanding of the spatial and temporal context to which the sonic ethnographer listens. That is, we must begin to think about the relationship between sound and space from a spatial and temporal perspective that extends far beyond the local world alone. If deciphering acoustic space demands a time frame that extends mere seconds, and listening to

"place" demands a time frame that extends to days, months, or even years, then discerning the political context of space and place requires the ethnographer to listen according to what historian Fernand Braudel (1995) famously referred to as the *longue durée*: temporally expansive periods of development that extend across multiple social, political, and economic cycles. Such an approach is particularly important in the context of the Caribbean, and in the city of Havana in particular, where everyday life is conditioned by ongoing forms of coloniality. To do so entails, at once, listening deep into the past, to historical moments that may be phenomenologically imperceptible, while also listening outward, toward disparate geographies that remain both unseen and unheard. In so doing, the politics of place becomes audible. In the following section, I elucidate the analytical impasse I encountered as I reached the spatial and temporal limits of traditional approaches to sonic ethnography.

Encountering the Limits of the Local

From "acoustic space" to "place", the terms and concepts employed in sound studies have opened up new and important ways to think about the attributes of space through sound and vice versa. They are part of the conceptual makeup that affords sound a scholarly utility across the human sciences more broadly. And in the context of this project, they gave me the opportunity to frame my own ethnographic observations and to formulate a preliminary analysis on neighbourhoods in Havana. However, using these terms and concepts alone, I came up against sound ethnography's discursive and theoretical limits. What does, for instance, the "liminality" of sound and listening in Havana mean in the everyday life of the city? How and when do Havana's neighbourhood communities acquire their political potential? And are these communities new or have they emerged throughout the history of the city? To these questions, I had no immediate answers, and the study of sound in localized spaces alone—no matter how rich or detailed—could not provide them. The lexicon of terms and concepts, and the methodological techniques that define sonic ethnography, position sound and listening as practices that we experience in, and pertain only to, a circumscribed geography. While my engaged approach to listening enabled me to describe, with great detail, the functionality of sound in neighbourhood settings across Havana, I still remained uncertain about how to put these observations into dialogue with the city's broader urban issues and concerns. This localized approach, then, must be

supplemented by listening to—and for—a context that extends far beyond that of the present moment and the local geography alone.

Situating ethnographic observations in terms of their relationship to broader historical and geo-political narratives is important in most any context, but in a city like Havana, and in a region such as the Caribbean, it is imperative. Anthropologist Sidney Mintz (1985), whose work was based in the Caribbean, argues: “a view that excludes the linkage between metropolis and colony by choosing one perspective and ignoring the other is necessarily incomplete” (p. xvi). Still today, any study of the Caribbean demands a globalized approach, and as such, my aim as a sonic ethnographer is not only to generate detailed observations of the acoustic environments that I encountered, but also, to find how those acoustic environments are related to disparate geographies and historical conditions. It is to locate the extent to which sound and listening in Havana still today expresses the conditions of colonialism, imperialism, and empire. And it is to better understand sound as a medium through which the city is territorialized and re-territorialized according to its everyday uses. In order to do so, I must develop not only an intimate knowledge of the unfolding of everyday life at a local level, but also, a contextual knowledge surrounding the global-historical conditions within which my observations are embedded. Only by coupling these distinct yet contingent dimensions of everyday life in Havana can I formulate an argument about sound and listening that engages the social and political conditions residents are compelled to negotiate.

The associations between the local world and the global context were not immediately apparent in my experiences, nor were they explicit in my audio recordings. Rather, they emerged only following an extended amount of reflection and consideration. In fact, it was not for some time, and after much trial and error, that I became aware of the broader meaning of my many experiences in Havana. Lamentably, during the interim, I endured a considerable amount of doubt concerning my success as a fieldwork researcher. My fear, inevitably, was that I did not follow the right sounds, ask the right questions, and in the worst case, that I had pursued a research project that simply could not bear the fruit I initially hoped. However, the act of knowledge production is itself a turbulent, fractured, and friction-filled process. “The tempo of ethnographic research”, anthropologists Allaine Cerwonka and Liisa Malkki (2007) argue, “is not the steady, linear accumulation of more and more insight. Rather, it is characterized by rushes of and lulls in activity and understanding, and it requires constant revision of insights

gained earlier. We see the anxiety and euphoria that accompany the uneven tempo of analytical understanding and systematic research" (p. 5). Indeed, my time working through this project was punctuated by moments of both anxiety and euphoria—all of which were necessary to arrive at the understanding of sound and listening that I present in the pages of this dissertation. And it was by enduring this process and trusting in its potential that I was eventually able to locate how sound and listening simultaneously represent a localized experience *and* an articulation of global-historical conditions.

To better understand my analytical impasse and negotiate what Cerwonka and Malkki refer to as a "lull in activity", I turned toward ethnographic and anthropological theory. The limitations presented by the local emphasis of fieldwork have been at the centre of debates in these fields for some time. For instance, in George E. Marcus's essay in the now-famous *Writing Culture* collection (1986), he argues "ethnographers of an interpretive bent have not generally represented the ways in which closely observed cultural worlds are embedded in larger, more impersonal systems" (p. 165-166), and that "the world of larger systems and events has often been seen as externally impinging on and bounding little worlds, but not as integral to them" (p. 166). More than a decade later, Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1997) extended this argument by observing "anthropology appears determined to give up its old ideas of territorially-fixed communities and stable, localized cultures…at the same time, though, it has come to lean more heavily than ever on a methodological commitment to spend long periods in one localized setting. What are we to do with a discipline that loudly rejects received ideas of 'the local', while ever more firmly insisting on a method that takes it for granted?" (p. 4). These scholars' interventions represent important contributions that are still being grappled with in the fields of ethnography and cultural anthropology. In the field of sound ethnography, I too engage these conceptual problematics, and in so doing, my research builds on the work of others who have also located the relationship between the localized experience of sound and much broader, more impersonal social processes.

Sonic ethnography must continue to develop conceptual approaches that extend beyond what Marcus calls the "bounded little worlds" ethnographic research so intensely evaluates. It must remain open to the study of sound insofar as it transcends local events and processes alone. And when thinking with and through space, it must find a way not to listen further inward, as the existing discourse seems to encourage. Rather,

sonic ethnographers must listen outward in order to hear the numerous global-historical narratives that shape our embodied, localized experiences. To do so, we must listen spatially, beyond the limits of the circumscribed geographies upon which we stand. We must also listen historically, to the historicity of both the sounds we hear, and those that we do not. Only then can we find how disparate geographies both unseen and unheard condition the sounds of our immediate environment. Only then can we move away from approaches that simply seek to understand sound as a medium that transmits contextual knowledge and move toward one that understands how contextual knowledge is embedded in broader systems of historical change. Above all, only then can we cultivate a sonic ethnography that rejects the simple description of the local world to one that sees and hears from a global perspective. In short, we need a way to listen to space beyond space.

Listening to Space Beyond Space

The first step in doing so demands an open, outward oriented conception of both space and place. Here, I borrow from geographer Doreen Massey (1991; 2005), whose work stands in contradistinction to that of Edward Casey (1996; 1997). Whereas Casey regards place as closed, contingent, and local, Massey instead conceives of it as unbounded, relational, and global. “Is it not possible”, Massey (1991) asks, “for a sense of place to be progressive; not self-enclosing and defensive, but outward looking?” (p. 24). For Massey, localized experiences are intimately and irrevocably interrelated with global-historical forces. “Instead then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around”, Massey suggests, “they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself” (p. 28). Both place and space are comprised of a number of “distinct trajectories”; they are what she calls a “contemporaneous plurality”; and are a “product of interrelations” (2005). For Massey, the condition for spatiality consists of an “urge toward outwardlookingness”, toward the “world beyond one’s own turf” (2005). And so, as sound studies researchers, we too must cultivate a similar conception of space in order to acknowledge its relationship to the world beyond our own turf. Only then can we tune in to what we might refer to as the “outwardsoundingness” of space.

Key in Massey's formulation is not spatial relationality alone. It is also the very process that makes spaces relational: movement. Spaces, and urban spaces in particular, as sociologist Anthony D. King (2007) observes, are "always in process, always on the move, always changing, always growing, never static" (p. 3). This is the case, in large part, because so too are things on the move: people, culture, capital, and so on. In this regard, Massey's ideas about space find a robust articulation in the emergent mobilities paradigm which, as sociologist Mimi Sheller (2013) argues, "focuses on the combined movements of people, objects, and information in all of their complex relational dynamics" (p. 2). Mobilities conceives of social, political, and economic systems as themselves active processes: in movement, ever-changing. Inevitably, political stratification affects these systems—what Sheller refers to as "unequal" or "uneven" mobilities. The U.S. economic embargo, Cuba's ruralization efforts in the 1960s, and the fall of the Soviet Union are examples of political events and processes that have conditioned uneven mobilities to and from both the city of Havana and the island of Cuba more broadly. And each of these, among other structural forces, weighs on the many sounds and the many moments that comprise this study. For these reasons, the dynamic nature of a theoretical framework such as mobilities represents an effective means through which to bring my dynamic, sound-based, phenomenological observations into dialogue with the broader systems within which they are embedded.

Both Massey's work and the mobilities paradigm have emerged in response to the increasing pace, pattern, and scale of globalization and global digitization over the last several decades. However, as Mimi Sheller attests (2013), the idea that globalization is strictly a modern process, or that either globalization theory, or the study of mobilities are contemporary scholarly approaches, is somewhat misleading. Instead, these ideas, while relatively new to disciplines such as urban studies, human geography, and cultural anthropology, tap into conceptual currents that have long been charted in Caribbean theory. As far back as 1944, for instance, historian Eric Williams argued that it was on the backs of slave labour in the Caribbean that early capitalism in Great Britain was born: "Negroes were purchased with British manufactures; transported to the plantations, they produced sugar, cotton, indigo, molasses and other tropical products…the profits obtained provided one of the main streams of that accumulation of capital in England which financed the Industrial Revolution" (p. 52). In his work, Williams offers less a theorization of space than a historical example in which theorizing demands

the acknowledgement of both spatial relationality and global mobility. By developing an account of the slave trade from a Caribbean, rather than North American or European perspective, Williams not only illustrates that events in one region of the globe are directly connected to those that emerge in an entirely separate region, but also, that the relationality between these locations is inevitably conditioned by uneven mobilities. In so doing, Williams intervenes with the narrative that global capitalism is solely, or even primarily, a manifestation of mercantile exchange within the borders of Western Europe alone.

Sidney Mintz (1985) echoes this very sentiment, for he too interrogates the wider global-historical relationships in which the Caribbean region is enmeshed. Whereas Williams arrived at this idea by writing history, Mintz did so by combining anthropology with historiography. He maintained that, although he is an anthropologist, his research exhibits a "bias in a historical direction" because "without history [anthropology's] explanatory power is seriously compromised" (p. xxx). Mintz spent several years performing manual labour on sugar plantations in Puerto Rico, Haiti, and Jamaica, which afforded him an on-the-ground perspective of the Caribbean sugar economy. By engaging with communities of labourers, and by following the history of the global sugar market, Mintz observes that the overall quality of life for cane workers depended upon demand for the product not within, but beyond the borders of the Caribbean. The sugar industry has, throughout history, worked in the service of the Western world, and so its economic viability remains subject to the global-historical conditions of demand. It is therefore not internal, but rather, "outside forces [that] determine what is available to be endowed with meaning" (p. xxix). Mintz's positionality as both an anthropologist *and* a historian afforded him the unique opportunity to develop a narrative of "networks of control and dependence from the Caribbean vantage point" (p. xvi). In so doing, his work "looks up and out from local life, so to speak, rather than down and into it" (p. xvi).

It was with the ideas of entanglement, relationality, and interconnectedness found in the work of Mintz, Sheller, and Massey among others, that I returned to my observations of sound and listening in the city of Havana. I revisited my notes, conversations, and field recordings, and I considered them analytically *and* theoretically in both spatial and historical terms. I began by listening, first, to how sound and listening function as everyday modes of communication. I listened for the sounds that permeated open spaces such as windows, doors, balconies, and porticoes. I listened for sounds

that illuminated both Havana's acoustic spaces and its aural architecture. I listened to the listening of others, the experienced aural attention required to engage in trans-liminal listening—the very form of aural attention that brings neighbourhood spaces to life and makes communities tangible. And lastly, I attended to the ways in which sound and listening communicate an intimate spatial knowledge; how a localized "sense of place" manifests itself sonically. With the observations I generated by listening for the aforementioned attributes, I asked the following questions: for what reason does a particular sound, or a series of sounds emerge? How do listeners interpret them? And for how long have these sounds been present in the spaces where I encountered them? Using these questions, among a host of similar others, I carried out my interrogation of how sound functions in Havana's neighbourhood contexts.

Once I understood how sound-based communicatory practices functioned at a local level, I followed them outward. I conceived of them in ways that extend beyond their literal relationship to the neighbourhood spaces in which they are audible to include their symbolic relationship to the many spaces that are both unseen and unheard. I questioned the ways that forces emanating from elsewhere have been brought to bear on the meaning of these sounds. In this regard, I borrow from Mintz the desire not to "look up and out from local life", but rather, to *listen* up and out from it. In so doing, I put my localized experiences, and the experiences of those around me, in touch with municipal, national, and global forces, and I locate how such forces have been brought to bear on everyday life in the city. This perspective propelled my ethnography in new directions; it unearthed a newfound significance of what I did, what I heard, and what I documented. It pushed me to situate my work historically, and to consider the ways in which both local *and* structural narratives are articulated by sound and listening. Ultimately, it enabled me to locate the relationship between my embodied, localized experiences and the broader global-historical conditions to which they are related. I did so by listening outward, beyond the spatial immediacy of my own lived experience. I did so by listening to space beyond space.

Conclusion

The approach to sonic ethnography I elaborated in this chapter borrows from and extends traditional approaches found in much of the existing sound studies literature. It does so by bringing sound studies into dialogue with cultural anthropology,

historiography, and human geography. It begins by inquiring about localized meaning through observations that have been made with an attentive and curious ear. And much like other contemporary approaches to sonic ethnography, so too does it relate the everyday experiences to social and spatial contexts that are far broader than the local world alone. To do so demands a listening that attends to global-historical narratives, and how those narratives are brought to bear on everyday life in the city. In so doing, I develop what Sarah Pink (2009) refers to as "ethnographic places", which she argues, "are not the same as actual, real, experienced places ethnographers participate in when they do fieldwork. Rather, they are places that we, as ethnographers, make when communicating about our research to others" (p. 42). Ethnographic places are scholarly representations that include both "the lived immediacy of the 'local'", and the ways in which it is "inevitably interwoven, or entangled with the 'global'" (p. 33). Each of the subsequent chapters does precisely that: I draw upon a small number of my many sonic experiences in Havana and I listen outward to locate the broader context that most any formulation of ethnographic place requires.

By bringing localized, embodied experiences into dialogue with global-historical narratives, such an approach cultivates the possibilities for a deeper understanding of sound and listening as spatial—and therefore political—processes. It pursues the social, economic, and political conditions within which listener(s) are embedded, and in so doing, it affords opportunities through which to further interrogate and critique power structures. Sound is above all a spatial practice, and by enacting a form of listening that I have termed listening to "space beyond space", I develop a theoretical form of sonic attention based not on the singularity of the local world, but instead, based on relationality. Such an approach to doing sonic ethnography remains attuned to the ways that sound and listening at the local level—in the neighbourhood, on the street, or in the home—either accommodate or resist multi-scalar enactments of power. It interrogates the spatial politics of the global city, and it asks how the urban geography is being territorialized and re-territorialized from moment to moment. What this means in Havana is listening for the sounds that communicate *la lucha*—the struggle—that residents face on a daily basis. Simultaneously, it means listening for the sounds with which residents *inventar*—invent—tactics to negotiate those struggles. By searching for the political tensions manifest in sound, I develop previously unexplored encounters with Havana's cultural terrain, and by extension, untapped narratives about everyday life in the city.

Although this spatially-oriented approach to sonic ethnography emerged out of the case of Havana, by no means is it limited to the study of sound in Havana alone. On the contrary, the scholarly utility of a methodology necessitating further spatial and historical contextualization can benefit qualitative researchers, regardless of their geo-spatial locations, topics of inquiry, or disciplines. By pursuing further spatial and temporal context, such an approach aims to situate the tacit, seemingly localized nature of embodied experience amidst narratives that circulate at the municipal, national, and global levels—all of which are seemingly abstract when considering the intimate, embodied nature of listening. The approach to sonic ethnography that I elaborated here collapses the distance between these distinct yet dependent levels. In this regard, the aim of sonic ethnography is in step with Pink's broader, more comprehensive notion of "sensory ethnography" (2009), which she argues is "not just another route in an increasingly fragmented map of approaches to ethnographic practice", but rather, is "a critical methodology…through which understanding, knowing, and (academic) knowledge are produced" (p. 8). The aim of sonic ethnography is therefore to locate how the acoustic environment communicates multi-scalar enactments of power. And it is to in turn listen for the ways that individuals and communities negotiate those systems of power. Such an approach represents an under-used, although a particularly salient means of evaluating the politics of a given social and spatial context.

Lastly, the approach to sonic ethnography that I articulate here challenges the ethnographer to focus their attention inward to reflect on their own social location. Its emphasis on entanglement, relationality, and interconnectedness, compels the researcher to acknowledge their own positionality—both spatially, in terms of their potential mobilities, and historically, in terms of the narratives that they accommodate and/or resist. As a researcher based in Vancouver, Canada, my relationship with Havana has historically been conditioned by uneven mobility: aside from limitations imposed by time and finance, I am able to freely move both to and from the city. Simply based on my identity as an international traveller, which implicitly suggests an economic allegiance with a global middle-class, there are few parts of Havana to which I cannot gain access. However, the same cannot be said for many of my friends, acquaintances, and colleagues who live there. For instance, until 2008, the tourist apartheid made it illegal for Cubans to access tourist spaces, and still today, the freedom of movement for the local population is quietly discouraged. Residents are additionally faced with the

constant need to engage *la lucha*—to struggle, even for the most basic of goods. International travel is a challenge because of both financial and bureaucratic restrictions. This is a reality based upon uneven mobilities, and is a reality with which I myself am complicit. As such, it is a reality that demands interrogation, as it conditioned my fieldwork experience, and the writing of this project more broadly.

Throughout the remainder of the dissertation, I put sonic ethnography into motion in three distinct, yet complementary settings. Within each one, I articulate who I am in relation to what's going on around me by writing myself into the ethnographic encounter. In so doing, the method undergoes a series of permutations based upon both the neighbourhood and the sounds under investigation. For instance, in Chapter Four, I explore a daily episode in my own neighbourhood surrounding the sounds of water infrastructure. In order to contextualize my observations, I think outward, across the spaces of the city and the island more broadly, and historically across political eras. I develop the context, both literal and abstract, that surrounds my ethnographic observations. In Chapter Five, I follow my ethnographic observations spatially and historically to the extent that I undertake historiographic work. The sound of the ice cream vendor's heralding music prompted a line of questioning that inspired me to interrogate the meaning of the sound not only today, but throughout the twentieth century. And finally, in Chapter Six, I develop an on-the-ground account of Havana's re-emergent tourist geographies, which have transformed the city's historic district from an impoverished settlement to a bourgeoning tourist centre. By problematizing my own positionality, I argue that in sound, residents continue to assert their presence in spite of the exclusionary logic of the tourist economy. Taken together, these case studies illustrate the both the flexibility and the utility of sound ethnography, a multi-methodological approach that simultaneously listens to the sounds of the local world, and to the broader historical geographies to which they are related.

Chapter 4.

“¡Se Bota El Tanque!”: Housing, Infrastructure, and the Sounds of Water in Havana’s Domestic Spaces

> *When you walk along the city’s streets you can see countless leaks of drinking water. My friend tells me that this has become a common occurrence and I tell him that this phenomenon doesn’t just happen in Central Havana but in other municipalities across the capital. Holes in a lot of the city’s water pipes mean that a large percentage of this scarce liquid is lost, a quantity of water that will never make it to homes in Havana whilst nobody does something to fix them.*
>
> —Paula Henriquez, *Havana Times, July 24, 2017*

From my bedroom, which is on the third floor of an apartment in the district of El Vedado, I listen with both interest and curiosity to the sounds of the neighbourhood. The windows above my bed are covered with wooden shutters rather than panes of glass, which makes it rather easy to do so. At most any time of day, sounds pass through the tilted shutter slats, and travel into the room virtually unobstructed. In the evenings it’s fairly quiet, and I can hear the sporadic chatter of voices in the street, the distant hum of a television or radio emanating from a neighbouring apartment, and the engine of the odd car or truck as it passes. Sometimes, I can even hear the couple who live in the apartment next door, which makes for some interesting, and at times, rather uncomfortable moments. In the morning however, it’s quite the opposite. On weekdays, the silence of the nighttime turns into an early morning hustle that begins at about 7:00am. By about 7:30, the swell of automobile traffic becomes more apparent, signalling the daily commute to work. Eventually, the voices and footsteps of pedestrians emerge, most of which belong to children and teenagers who are on their way to school. Without ever leaving my bedroom, I remain attuned to the events and activities taking place around me, which has familiarized me with the daily rhythms of the neighbourhood. And my bird’s eye (or is it bird’s ear?) perspective is facilitated, rather than obscured, by listening trans-liminally: through the spaces of the built environment.

Of the many sounds that comprise my morning soundscape, one in particular strikes me as curious. On most days at about 6:45am, I wake up to a slow, steady water

drip that falls onto the air conditioner mounted on my bedroom window. The shape and density of the air conditioner's aluminum enclosure, combined with the height from which the water is falling, creates a loud, thud-like sound that spoils the early morning stillness. *Bloop*. *Bloop*. *Bloop*. After only a minute or two, it becomes virtually impossible to fall asleep again. If I listen long enough, I begin to hear the sound in new ways. *Smack!*—goes the water drop as it strikes the aluminum. *Womp*, *womp*, *womp*—resonates the enclosure once it's struck. During the time in-between drops, if I listen from yet another perspective, I can hear water flowing in the lane way below. My initial impression of these sounds was a rather obvious one: "it must be raining outside", I thought. I imagined that when I got out of bed, I'd find a dark sky, wet ground, and early morning rainfall—not altogether inconceivable at this time of year. But once I walked through the apartment and out onto the balcony, the sun was rising on another hot, and for the most part, cloudless day. This strange and contradictory experience occurred on a number of mornings for the first several weeks of my stay, each time increasing my curiosity about the situation.

How is it that my ears told me one thing while my eyes told me precisely the opposite? As a listener, I engaged with the acoustic community often, and I participated when called upon. I developed a detailed working knowledge of the rhythms of the neighbourhood to the extent that I could even approximate the times when particular events would take place. But in this case, the sound of dripping water left me baffled. So I followed up with my housemates. "Does anyone else hear these sounds, or is it just me?", I asked. "What's causing them? And why do they happen at such an inconvenient hour?" My friend Pampi, whose bedroom is next door to mine, knew exactly what I was talking about, so he brought me to the source of my early morning anxiety: the rooftop. There, sits a large communal reservoir that supplies water to each apartment in the building. It's filled twice daily, and in so doing—almost without fail—it overflows, and the excess water makes its way across the rooftop and over the side of the building. Along its downward route is my window, where the water slowly accumulates, causing the early-morning dripping that I hear landing on the air conditioner. Through both drainage pipes and alongside the outer wall of the building, the water makes its way into the laneway below, which it then floods before it falls into the sewer, completing its journey through the spaces of the neighbourhood.

Directly affected by the reservoir's errant streams and flows however, are a number of residents, namely, those who live at ground level in the building next door. Once a single-family, fully detached home, likely built by one of Havana's wealthier families around the turn of the twentieth century, the building has since been converted into an apartment block that now houses upwards of twenty or twenty-five people. By Havana's standards, it's not very old, but the numerous modifications it's undergone over the years have put added stress on the structure—to the point that it requires a series of wooden planks and beams for additional support. One such modification is that the laneway is now the entrance to a number of small makeshift apartments known as *cuarterías*. When the laneway is flooded, it becomes inconvenient, if not altogether unmanageable for residents of the *cuarterías* to enter and exit without stepping in the water. For a short period of time, an important part of their already limited living space is unusable. To make matters worse, these residents often hang their laundry to dry in the laneway, but they have little choice other than to do so in the precise (and lamentable) location that the water tends to fall. More than simply an occasional, inconsequential episode, the water runoff is a daily disruption with untimely and undesirable consequences that affect a number of households in this community.

For residents, this sequence of events issues a not-so-subtle reminder of the precarity of their neighbourhood's built environment. On the one hand, the overflowing occurs as a result of a water supply system that clearly, is less than fully functional. While residents seldom altogether lack the basic service of water delivery, the idiosyncrasies of the supporting infrastructure make it extremely difficult to operate without interrupting the everyday life of the neighbourhood community. And on the other hand, residents most immediately affected by the overflow are those who live in makeshift apartments, which are both structurally deteriorated and situated in undesirable locations. The fact that these individuals and families inhabit such spaces is indicative of Havana's deficit of suitable, structurally sound, long-term housing arrangements that can adequately accommodate the entirety of its population. The water overflow and runoff is thus representative of not simply a haphazard, desultory sequence of events that exist within the confines of this neighbourhood alone. Rather, this localized, seemingly insular encounter also exists in other neighbourhoods across the city. It is symptomatic of a series of much broader urban issues that include Havana's present state of overpopulation, as well as the continued degradation and institutional

neglect of both its architecture and infrastructure. When taken together, these conditions comprise what Cuban studies scholar Juan Clark (1998) has referred to as an “urban crisis”, thereby calling into question the potential for citizens to comfortably, or even sustainably, inhabit the domestic spaces of their own city.

In this chapter, I attend to the deterioration and decay of Havana’s built environment. I do so from a perspective that considers not simply the material conditions of the city, but more importantly, how those material conditions are lived by residents themselves. Such an approach engages existing discussions surrounding Havana’s architecture, infrastructure, and urban design (see Quintana, 2011; Del Real & Scarpaci, 2011; Del Real & Pertierra, 2008; Coyula & Hamberg, 2003; Scarpaci et al., 2002; Cocq, 2006), and it presents a counter-narrative to readings of the city that correlate the deterioration of the urban environment with the deterioration of the social and political agency of the local population (Ponte, 2002; 2011). I argue that listening trans-liminally to the sounds of water overflow and runoff represents a creative means for residents to temporarily mitigate the ongoing issues caused by malfunctioning infrastructure. It positions them as active, engaged citizens in a neighbourhood community whose collective interest remains focused on the well-being of each of its members. It is, in short, a series of moments during which they enact sonic citizenship. Before elucidating the details of these moments, however, I contextualize the crisis of Havana’s built environment by following some of the major currents of people, finance, and ideas that have flowed to and through the city over the course of the twentieth century. Only then can we listen to an everyday, rather ordinary event such as the reservoir’s overflow and runoff with a spatial awareness that extends beyond the limits of my neighbourhood, and a historical awareness that extends beyond the present moment.

A Brief History of Housing and Basic Service Delivery in Havana

In the early years of the twentieth century, following the birth of the Cuban Republic in 1902, Havana’s urban development began in earnest. The city executed public works initiatives, including the implementation of an electric streetcar system, the installation of an extended telephone network, and the repaving of old roads and the construction of new ones (Scarpaci et al., 2002, p. 166). Officials also directed their attention to the city’s water delivery system, which underwent repair, reconstruction, and

even extension (Cocq, 2006, p. 15). Such projects contributed to Havana's phenomenal growth, which lasted well into the 1950s. During this time, upscale settlements such as El Vedado, Miramar, and Country Club among others took shape on the western outskirts of the city—places that were once quite a distance from the city centre but became far more accessible following the proliferation of the automobile. But Havana didn't only grow outward, it also grew upward. Apartment buildings, hotels, and skyscrapers began dotting a skyline that, until then, surpassed no more than three or four stories. Beautification projects inspired by the Garden City movement were undertaken on buildings, roads, parks, and gardens.[9] And virtually all of these initiatives, both public and private alike, were in some way financed by American investment. Although propelled by foreign money, Havana's inhabitants welcomed the development for a variety of reasons: it represented a departure from the island's colonial past, it was heralded as a sign of Cuban progress and modernization, and in so doing, it transformed the city from a modest Antillean settlement into a burgeoning modern metropolis.

Although Havana grew exponentially in terms of its geography, its population, and certainly in terms of its economy, officials did little to meet citizens' basic needs. Social and economic disparity was rampant, and in fact, it progressively worsened throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Shantytowns, slums, and inner-city tenement houses proliferated, while the already low standard of living within them diminished. At once physically deteriorated and overcrowded, by the 1930s and into the 1940s, these spaces housed much more than a small minority of the population: 300,000 residents, or about one-third the urban population lived in such conditions (Scarpaci et al., 2002, p. 76). Yet, the urban dwellers who inhabited such spaces were far from the nation's most disenfranchised. In the countryside, more than 90% of residents lived without access to either electricity or sanitary facilities; over 80% lived in *bohios*, which are small, shack-like dwellings often made of straw, palm-thatched roofs

[9] The Garden City movement is an approach to urban design associated with American Ebenezer Howard, which he famously articulated in the book *Garden Cities of To-morrow*, first published in 1898. According to Howard, the Garden City was a planned, self-contained settlement type surrounded by the natural environment, comprised of proportionate areas of residences, industry, and agriculture. In Havana, elements of the Garden City were most apparent in the design of districts such as Miramar and Country Club, which consisted of a golf course, country club, yacht clubs, and other facilities that brought the city to the natural landscape (and conversely, the natural landscape to the city). Additionally, these districts, as well as El Vedado, were developed according to geometric patterns, with broad, tree-lined streets and wide sidewalks; all of which are definitive attributes of Howard's Garden City.

and mud floors; and more than one-third suffered from infestations of intestinal parasites and other diseases (Saney, 2004, pp. 10-11). The inaccessibility of both clean drinking water and sanitary facilities was a likely culprit for the proliferation of illness: 54% percent of rural homes had no toilets, 84% percent depended on rivers or unprotected springs and wells, and very few had uninterrupted access to running water (Saney, 2004, p. 11). Such conditions were, as Scarpaci et al. (2002) have argued, nothing short of "deplorable" (p. 94), and made rural life during the 1950s even more distressing than that which characterized Havana's urban slums.

The Revolution triumphed in 1959 with a mandate for social equality and the provision of basic services for all citizens. With most of the island's disenfranchised population living in the interior provinces, the Revolutionary government allocated the majority of its resources toward the redress and the development of provincial cities, towns, and villages. Financial and material flows that once moved to and through Havana were instead redirected toward the countryside, equipping rural dwellers with educational and health care facilities, full-time employment opportunities, a rationing system, and with new water infrastructure (Cocq, 2006, p. 32). This outright reversal of Cuba's economic currents was the Revolutionary government's response to Havana's uneven overdevelopment during the first half of the twentieth century, and it mobilized a process of social and economic levelling that Susan Eckstein (1985) has since referred to as "debourgeoisement". What this entailed within Havana proper was seizing the assets of its most affluent citizens, and the general repurposing of the city. Officials converted homes, estates, boarding houses, and even a number of hotels into administrative, educational, or social service facilities, or they were settled by urban dwellers whose living spaces elsewhere in the city were in substandard condition. Tenants of the newly converted homes subdivided them into separate rooms known as *cuarterías*, which offered a means of communal living; a lifestyle that was in step with the goals of the Revolution. By the mid-1960s, Cuba's new political and economic model had transformed Havana from a city known for its decadence, lasciviousness, and corruption to what the government regarded as simply another socialist settlement within which the basic needs of all citizens were met and not exceeded.

The Cuban state's intensive ruralization efforts came at the expense of the maintenance and restoration that an aging city like Havana required. Municipalities such as Centro Habana and Habana Vieja, which were constructed during the seventeenth,

eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries, were comprised of architecture and infrastructure that was timeworn, weathered, and in desperate need of repair. Through the Republican era, these municipalities functioned as inner-city settlements that housed the urban poor. And in spite of heavy American investment in the city, they received little, if any public attention or funding for upkeep (Scarpaci et al., 2002, pp. 62-64). Once the Revolutionary government took power, it left the built environment of these municipalities largely unattended. This time however, Havana's institutionalized forms of neglect were not limited to a single area, but included all of its municipalities. The United States' economic embargo against Cuba that began in 1961 compounded this neglect, which altogether terminated more than six decades of American investment on the island.[10] As a result, the Cuban government did little to address Havana's need for sufficient and sustainable living spaces, nor did it undertake dedicated efforts to restore and maintain the city's aging and deteriorating water infrastructure. In lieu of housing restoration, citizens built new homes themselves, which were ultimately lacking in terms of both quality and quantity, and were constructed in undesirable locations on the outskirts of the city proper.[11] And in lieu of maintaining the city's water delivery infrastructure, water pumps at the ground level of dwellings became necessary in order to compensate for the depressurization of the distribution network by assisting water flow.

Clearly the state of Havana's built environment was less than ideal through the first three decades of the Revolution, yet such conditions were more easily negotiable than those that followed the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc. Beginning in the early 1990s,

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[10] Cuban authorities employ the term *bloqueo* (blockade) to refer to the American economic embargo, which is effectively a prohibition on commerce and other official relations with Cuba. It bans Cuba's trade not only with the United States, but also with Western Europe and Latin America insofar as it can be enforced. Strengthened by the "Torricelli Act" of 1992, the embargo remains in effect still today. However, following the announcement made on December 18, 2014 by both American and Cuban heads of state, there is indeed the possibility of normalized U.S.-Cuba relations, which would include the eventual dismantling of the embargo.

[11] Cuba's *microbrigades* effort began in 1970, and offered a way for popular participation in housing programmes with strong governmental support. The basic principle was to make it possible for those that were in need of housing to address that need themselves. Such efforts ended in the 1980s, and have since been the subject of much debate (see Coyula, 1996; Scarpaci et al., 2002; Coyula & Hamberg, 2003; Hamberg, 2011). While the microbrigades successfully constructed housing units for literally hundreds of thousands of residents, such units were made of prefabricated material, they were assembled by citizens who did not possess manual labour skills, and the designs were usually Soviet-inspired and have not fared well in the Caribbean climate.

Cuba entered the "Special Period", one of the most severe economic crises in its history, which brought about sudden and dramatic changes to everyday life for residents across the island. Food shortages led to widespread cases of malnutrition; the absence of oil and petrol was the cause of frequent power outages as well as a crisis in transportation; and the deficit of basic medicines, technology, and equipment negatively affected health care. The Revolutionary government's response to Cuba's failing economy came in the form of market mechanisms, the most notable of which was the resurrection of the island's once-famed tourist economy. Havana thus re-emerged as an epicentre for international tourism, attracting mainly upper-middle-class travellers from both Europe and North America. Inadvertently however, the rebirth of the city's tourist economy also attracted waves of migrants from the island's interior provinces in search of hard currency. Rural residents sought employment in the tourist sector, and those unable to do so found ways to profit from the emergent economy nonetheless, oftentimes by selling informal services or material goods in the streets. Internal migration from the countryside to Havana continued through the 1990s and was left unchecked until 1997, when a regulatory law was enacted prohibiting such movement.[12] By then however, it was already too late: Havana's population had risen to levels that greatly exceeded the physical capacity of the city.

The effects of the Special Period were manifest in all facets of Havana's public and private life, not the least of which were basic service delivery and housing. Throughout the Revolutionary era, the city's water distribution network was left unattended, and by the late 1990s, it was in a state of systemic disrepair to the extent that an estimated 60% of the water supplied was lost before ever being consumed (Cocq, 2006, p. 45). Frequent power outages compounded Havana's already intermittent and unreliable service, which compelled households to install cisterns and reservoirs as a way of maintaining sustained access to potable water. Still today, these cisterns and reservoirs are necessary and remain functional, and can be seen on the rooftops of homes and apartments across the city.[13] In terms of housing, much of Havana's housing

[12] Havana's migration law regulated movement to the city and in particular, to Havana's densest and most deteriorated municipalities. According to Mario Coyula and Jill Hamberg, "the law was designed to stem the new wave of growth in shantytowns and continued population pressure on over-crowded inner-city slums and the city's inadequate infrastructure, such as water, electricity and transportation" (2003, p. 25).

[13] This is particularly important in houses and buildings that use motorized pumps to assist water flow. In such cases, water delivery is contingent upon electrical power.

stock was already crowded and in need of repair as early as the 1950s, if not earlier. So the migration of the 1990s placed further demands on an already aging and weathered city by requiring a greater amount of living space, accomplished almost exclusively through the modification of the existing built environment (as opposed to building new developments). *Barbacoas*, which are mezzanine-like platforms that divide tall rooms horizontally, and *casetas de azotecas*, which translate literally to "shacks on the roof" are private construction projects that have been undertaken in (and on) homes across the city. Such modifications have added considerable weight to load bearing walls, accelerating the process of physical decay and erosion to the extent that homes are quite literally falling into ruin. Even though the worst of the Special Period is over, the effects of the crisis still linger, and the experience of present-day Havana is conditioned by this historical moment in profound ways.

From the City, to the Municipality, and into the Neighbourhood

Although the entirety of Havana exhibits some level of institutionalized neglect, the extent to which this is the case is of course contingent upon the municipality in question. For instance, the city's erosion and disrepair is most abundant in Centro Habana and Habana Vieja. Several centuries old, these municipalities are easily the city's oldest settlements. They housed Havana's lower-income populations throughout the Republican era, and they are currently the two most densely populated municipalities in the greater metropolitan region.[14] When compounded with the inevitable aging and weathering brought upon by the harsh Caribbean climate, there are parts of these colonial settlements that have, by most standards, surpassed the limits of being inhabitable. Two-thirds of the buildings are in poor condition, and most have not seen reparation efforts since well before the onset of the Revolution in 1959. As such, not only are there a countless number of structures that are on the verge of collapse, but according to some estimates, there is a building that either partially or altogether collapses every third day in Habana Vieja (Lasansky, 2004, p. 167). Although crumbling,

[14] In the case of Habana Vieja, planners estimated that in the mid-1990s there were about 80,000 residents living there, even though the area was designed to house only about half that number (Scarpaci et al., 2002, p. 326). According to Cuba's *Oficina Nacional de Estadística e Información* (2015), 87,305 people lived in the historic district in 2014. This makes Habana Vieja one of the most densely populated neighbourhoods not only in Havana, but throughout all of Latin America.

most homes are still inhabited by residents, since there are no other housing options available to them. Additionally, as the two oldest settlements in the city, both Centro Habana and Habana Vieja are located at the end of the water distribution network, which makes water pressure the lowest in these municipalities. Access here is intermittent at the best of times, and as a result, there are some city blocks that are required to have water delivered by a tanker truck.[15]

El Vedado, the district where I lived, was founded in the late 1800s. Yet much of its development took place between the 1920s and the 1940s. It represents Havana's first, and perhaps most noteworthy example of modern urban planning, departing from the city's Spanish heritage in a number of ways. In contrast to the irregular, haphazard layout of both Centro Habana and Habana Vieja, El Vedado instead follows a grid-like pattern, and its streets are named alphanumerically. More importantly, unlike the cramped public spaces and the close living quarters of the old city, the new district was instead designed with wide roadways, tree-lined boulevards, sidewalks, public parks, and city squares. Homes are set back from the road by five metres, offering larger lots, more personal green space, and thus greater privacy to residents. The district is dominated by a 1920s-style eclectic villa, many of which were constructed by Havana's nouveaux-riches following the prosperous *vacas gordas* (fat cow) years (1914-20) when the prices of sugar soared (Scarpaci et al., 2002, p. 56). It is also home to Havana's hospital, its university, famous hotels, and a number of entertainment venues. Both during the Republican era and still today, El Vedado remains a place where residents access social services and where Havana's urban culture is cultivated. As such, it forms the modern heart of this polycentric city.

Since the better part of El Vedado was built less than a century ago, its conditions of decay and ruination are somewhat modest relative to those that are found in Havana's aging colonial settlements. Here, homes were constructed according to a relatively high standard, and the water distribution network is a modern extension of the original system. However, in spite of its relative newness, El Vedado nevertheless

[15] Delivery by way of truck is often slow, disorganized, and inefficient. So, in step with the city's growing entrepreneurial spirit, there have recently emerged one or two mobile street vendors that sell water. They walk the streets of Centro Habana and Habana Vieja with a couple of cisterns on a rolling flatbed, and capture the attention of residents by way of *pregón*. Residents purchase the water by having it pumped from the flatbed into the household cistern using the vendor's own hose and electrical pump, which requires a local power supply.

exhibits more than ample evidence of the city's institutionalized neglect. Many of its structures, originally designed as fully detached homes and estates, now house either governmental organizations, consulates for foreign nations, or they have been subdivided to accommodate several families in a single building. Those that have been subdivided into separate dwellings have undergone significant modifications over the Revolutionary era, and in particular, since the onset of the Special Period. Such modifications have resulted in the deterioration of El Vedado's built environment to the extent that it is now beginning to exhibit conditions that have been present for some time in Havana's colonial settlements. In particular, as Havana Times journalist Alfredo Fernandez (2012) observes, there is a growing need for makeshift systems to structurally support buildings that are not yet a century old: "the shoring up of numerous buildings evidences itself as an inescapable reality, the arrival of bracing has come to the most important residential area of Havana: Vedado" (para. 7). So while El Vedado's housing stock is comprised of fairly modern detached structures, the homes themselves have undergone few maintenance efforts, they are presently overcrowded, and as a result, they too are in increasingly precarious structural condition.

The modifications that typify the homes in El Vedado are evident in the building next door to my apartment. Once a single-family dwelling, the structure has since been subdivided into eight to ten *cuarterías*; each of which houses a separate household. The repurposing of this once-opulent structure was likely undertaken during the early years of the Revolution, but since then, it has undergone a number of further modifications. In particular, several households have extended their living spaces in order to accommodate a greater number of residents, and they have done so by constructing *barbacoas* (mezzanine-like platforms). Additionally, atop the roof of the building, there now sits a *caseta de azoteca*. However, what is typically a simple "shack on the roof" has instead been built using cinder blocks, which has added a considerable amount of weight that surely was not accounted for when the building was originally designed. Large enough to accommodate a family of four, this *caseta* appears to be more like a permanent rooftop apartment than a conventional shack-like dwelling. As new living spaces that residents have *inventado* (invented), both the *barbacoas* and the rooftop *caseta* have compromised the home's structural integrity to the extent that it now requires a makeshift support system to evenly distribute the load of the structure (which is effectively a series of wooden beams that brace an exterior wall). By all accounts, the

building as it stands today is a definite safety hazard, and were there other options available, its residents would surely choose to live to live in a less precarious environment.

The conditions of disrepair to which the residents of my neighbourhood are subjected are representative of *la lucha* at the most intimate level. Their home, and the structural integrity of the very spaces that they inhabit, constitutes a significant source of ongoing stress and anxiety. Dwellings themselves are small, and are located in extremely close proximity to one another. The outer walls of the structure are cracked (and it's quite likely that so too are the interior walls), and are now being supported by a series of wooden planks and beams so as to evenly distribute the weight. In comparison to these structural issues, the nuisance caused by the faulty water infrastructure seems rather insignificant. After all, most apartments have their own dedicated cistern, and while leaky and idiosyncratic, these cisterns are ultimately able to successfully deliver water to residents. However, these water mishaps remain a recurring problem for many residents, and as such, they function as a daily reminder of the unavailability of functional infrastructure and structurally sound architecture. And this reminder resonates most intensely with those who live in the ground-level *cuarterías*. For it is these residents whose living spaces are rendered unusable, and whose clothes end up wet while hanging out to dry. So how is it that the residents in these *cuartarías* have learned to creatively negotiate the adverse idiosyncrasies of the water infrastructure? How has sound become a means for residents of the neighbourhood to collectively *inventar*, mitigating the consequences of this daily disruption? And to what extent can listening represent a means through which residents enact a form of citizenship?

Listening Trans-Liminally to the Sounds of Aging Infrastructure

Since the disruption to the community caused by the reservoir's overflow and runoff occurs up to twice a day, I had ample opportunity to observe this process both visually and sonically, and it unfolds as follows: the filling of the reservoir usually takes place first at 5 or 5:30am, and then again at 2 or 2:30pm. This process is looked after by our neighbour Ariel, who lives on the fifth floor, and whose apartment also happens to be closest to the reservoir. Using a switch from inside his home, he activates a motorized pump located in the parking garage below (as seen in Figure 3), which draws water up

through the building's supply lines and into the tank above. Residents gain access to the water by simply turning on any one of the faucets inside their home, or by flushing the toilet, allowing gravity to take its course. Typically, the reservoir takes a couple of hours to fill, depending on the amount of water that was used over the course of the day. Once the reservoir is full however, it overflows quickly and without warning since the float ball assembly that regulates filling is broken.[16] The water then travels across the rooftop and over the side of the building, where it traverses a number of cables, windows, and pipes before it floods the lane way below. Ariel does his best to prevent the spilling by turning off the pump before the tank overflows, but even on a good day, there is a small amount that finds its way onto this expected route.

Figure 3: Motorized water pump at ground level in my residence
Photo taken by author

[16] Ironically, the motorized system in this apartment is relatively new in comparison to what is employed throughout the rest of the city. Presumably, because it is not widely used, finding the parts to repair the fill valve have been challenging. As such, my neighbours have simply learned to make do with the faulty system until a new float ball assembly becomes available.

Without fail, this series of events brings one, or even several, of the residents who live in the small, makeshift apartments out of their homes and into the laneway. They immediately shout up to Ariel, aiming to notify him—and consequently, everyone else in the community—of yet another overflow. One resident in particular who is surely the most vocal of the lot predictably whistles three times before yelling the all-too-familiar phrase *"¡se bota el tanque!"*, which means "the tank is overflowing!". At times, even neighbours who live in second, third, and fourth floor apartments will chime in. These residents tend either to repeat the call of those in the lane way, which expedites the communication of the message up to Ariel. Or, they express their own discontent with yet another disturbance, saying things like *"¡oye, llevo dos horas avisandole!"*, meaning something akin to "I've been saying that [the water is overflowing] for the last two hours!". Of course this statement carries with it an air of hyperbole, since the disruption caused by the water begins and ends within a matter of only ten or fifteen minutes. Nevertheless, it illustrates the frustration residents have with this daily occurrence, which in this case, is expressed even by members of the community who are not directly affected by it.[17] Ariel of course acknowledges the calls issued by his neighbours, first by responding vocally, then by immediately turning off the motor which slows, and eventually stops the flow of water.

[17] This type of hyperbole is not uncommon in Cuba. It's a popular form of dialogue known as *choteo*: informal humour that explicitly targets authority with the aim of undermining it. About *choteo*, scholar Damián J. Fernández (2000) writes, "The *choteo* deauthorizes authority by debunking it and constitutes a form of rebellion. It is undisciplined, unserious, even if the business at hand is of the utmost importance. It reflects contempt for and cynicism about higher-ups and the institutions of society…the purpose is to use humour as a way to privatize social relations by making them accessible, at least momentarily, by bringing the people and the institutions that stand above the common folk down to the level of the popular, of the streets, of "us". This is *choteo*'s equalizing effect" (p. 31). In this sense, *choteo* too, is a highly important, contributing attribute of sonic citizenship. It requires quick wit, but it also requires an audience of sympathetic ears who can grasp the punch line and the sociocultural references. And in the case of the episode caused by water overflow and runoff, to hear *choteo* is to listen trans-liminally to the sounds of neighbourhood dialogue.

Figure 4: Water overflowing from the spout of the rooftop reservoir
Photo taken by author

Clearly, sound plays an integral role in this sequence, if for no other reason than by way of the dialogue itself. By shouting into and out of one's home, residents are able to communicate with one another in a timely (that is, an immediate) manner. Doing so allows those who live at ground level to create an awareness amongst all community members that they are in the midst of another water mishap. So by hollering up to the fifth floor apartment from the lane way, ground-level residents enact an effective and efficient way of publicly declaring something to the effect of 'the water is overflowing; turn off the pump'. That the flow of water comes to a stop as quickly as possible is of course the ultimate goal. But in another, perhaps more symbolic sense, the act of shouting up to Ariel—and thus to the neighbourhood community at large—seems to imply something more akin to 'these spaces are being flooded by the overflow; not only do I live here, but I *am* here'. In this sense, the intent still remains to stop the water runoff, but it is also to definitively assert an embodied presence in one's own living space—the very sense of presence that most any enactment of citizenship demands. To do so is to attempt to reclaim the space of the laneway, for at that particular moment, it is

submerged beneath a couple inches of water. The sonic act of shouting thus represents a means through which to redraw the limits of the neighbourhood's collective living spaces, and to recover them in a timely manner.

Yet we can evaluate the dynamics of this sequence further, beyond the sounds of vocal communication alone. Before the voice emerges as part of the acoustic environment, and even before the water makes its way into the laneway, residents are already aware of the activity and events taking place within their neighbourhood. To what do they listen? The first and most obvious sound associated with the filling of the reservoir is the broadband, steady-state drone of the water pump that sits at ground level. Generated by an electric motor, this sound is quite loud, and it announces to most every resident in the neighbourhood that the reservoir is being filled. Once full, the tank's overflow begins to splatter on the rooftop (see Figure 4), but its sonic range is not nearly as expansive, and only those who in the building's upper level apartments can hear it. Following its descent however, the water bubbles and splashes as it springs from the drainage pipes and flows over the cement floor of the laneway. For ground-level residents, these are the most urgent sounds of the sequence. They indicate that the laneway is about to be, or is in the midst of being, flooded, and as such they are the final acoustic signal to represent a call to action. Eventually, the flowing water empties into the sewer, but by the time one can hear it, it has already completed its route through the spaces of the neighbourhood (see Figure 5).

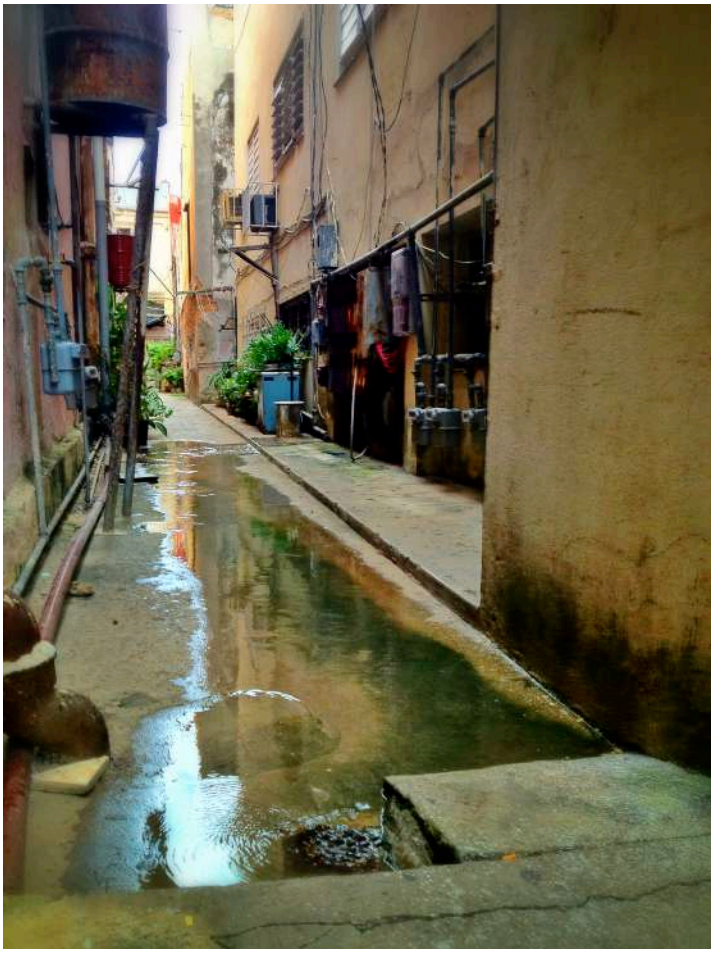

Figure 5: The flooded laneway
Photo taken by author

The numerous sounds produced over the course of this sequence enable residents to accurately follow the water along its expected route, in spite of not being physically co-present with it. From inside their homes, residents listen trans-liminally to the sounds of the supply infrastructure, and remain attuned to the possibility and status of overflow, runoff, and ultimately, laneway flooding. At the outset, the motor of the water pump makes residents aware that the reservoir is being filled. So by the time the water arrives in the laneway, which is usually about an hour or an hour and fifteen minutes later, they are expecting it and are prepared. This immediately brings those in ground level *cuarterias* outside, and they then notify the rest of the neighbourhood about the flooding. The sooner the ground-level residents hear the water, the sooner everyone is collectively able to alert Ariel, and thus, the sooner the errant streams and flows come to an end. In so doing, residents take the opportunity to partially—and at times, almost

entirely—mitigate the consequences of the flooding. So even before those living at ground-level vocalize their displeasure, the act of listening articulates their embodied presence in their own living space. It is a tacit and rather sophisticated first step in a series of preventative measures that safeguard the neighbourhood spaces, and it is accomplished by listening trans-liminally: by extending one's aural awareness beyond the limits of their immediate physical surroundings.

Conclusion

During the first few weeks that I spent in Havana, I awoke almost every day to the sounds of dripping water on the air conditioner in my bedroom window and running water in the laneway below, which left me somewhat confused and extremely curious. While lying in bed I was certain it was raining outside, but when I walked out onto the balcony of the apartment, there was never any rain to be found. My desire to understand the causes of the water runoff led me on a journey not only throughout the spaces of my neighbourhood, but eventually, across the entirety of Havana and throughout the twentieth century. I began as far back as the colonial era and the Spanish architecture that comprises much of the original city. I followed Havana's period of tremendous growth during the early-mid twentieth century: precisely the moment when El Vedado, the neighbourhood in which I lived, was constructed. And finally, I was compelled to think about the more recent past as well, and account for both Revolutionary policy and then eventually the crisis of the Special Period. Neither of these historical eras contributed much in the way of new construction, yet both have unquestionably left their mark on the city's landscape. In so doing, I developed a history of Havana's built environment, which offered a robust explanation for why my neighbours inhabit small, makeshift apartments that open into the alley, and how disrepair characterizes both the conditions of their homes and the water delivery infrastructure of my own apartment building.

My intent while negotiating this history was twofold: to develop the social and spatial context that surrounds each episode of overflow and runoff, and to present the backdrop against which the lived experiences of present-day Havana are played out. In so doing, I engaged some of the most pressing concerns of residents today, namely, that of overpopulation and architectural and infrastructural ruination. The precarity of everyday life in the city is quite literally manifest in the very ground upon which residents

walk. Yet, by offering an account of the ways that residents live these spaces, I also represented one of an infinite number of ways that they creatively engage *la lucha*—the struggle—in response to the city's precarious material conditions. In spite of Havana's exclusionary logic, residents have nevertheless located ways of inhabiting the spaces and places of the city. They have developed a creative means through which to communicate with one another, and to make do in spite of a housing crisis that consists of malfunctioning infrastructure, decaying architecture, and overpopulation. And in this case, they do so not simply in part, but predominantly in sound and through the act of listening. By listening trans-liminally to the sounds of overflow, runoff, and the voices of their neighbours, residents demonstrate a highly sophisticated knowledge of the spaces of their neighbourhood. They enact an intricate interdependence on one another, which represents the best opportunity for them to mitigate this daily disruption. During moments in which acoustic communities are mobilized, residents creatively and collectively assert their embodied presence in Havana's otherwise exclusionary spaces, momentarily enacting sonic citizenship.

The conditions of overflow, runoff, and the ensuing social sequence that I observed in my neighbourhood in El Vedado may seem like a unique and relatively insular occurrence relative to the landscape of Havana more broadly. However, this story and others like it comprise everyday life in neighbourhoods across the city. In fact, no matter the district or the municipality in question, the propensity for water cisterns to overflow makes the phrase *"se bota el tanque"* one with which most residents are quite familiar. The sounds of water in domestic spaces therefore offer a rather unconventional—though I argue, extremely fertile—point of entry from which to evaluate the city of Havana. For the functionality and even the vibrancy of the social formations that surround these sounds illuminate a city that is not altogether in ruin and in a state of despair. Instead, what we hear is a city that, quite simply, residents are inhabiting and experiencing collectively and communally. This idea complicates dominant narratives of Havana, which tend to construct it as a "non-city" (Redruello, 2011), as "dystopian" (Coyula, 2011), or as a "city of fleeting dreams" (Porter, 2008) as some scholars have argued. In sound, we hear the local population living the urban geography as best they can, as they aspire to live it. And in this case, their aspirations clearly include the need for infrastructure that is functional, and adequate housing conditions in terms of both quality and quantity. For residents are always and already living the city on their own

terms, and the design of a future more democratic city can be heard in the ingenuity and creativity with which they do so.

In the next chapter, I continue to explore the multifarious ways in which residents inhabit Havana's urban terrain, yet I do so using a vastly different series of sounds and spaces. I move outward from the context of my home and my own neighbourhood toward the public life of the city. I move eastward, away from the suburb of Vedado and toward Centro Habana. Here, I experienced the ethnographic encounters that led me to interrogate yet another unlikely sound: the heralding music of Havana's ice cream vendors, which is a widely-recognized and as I will argue, a particularly important sound amidst the city's soundscapes. The chime music accrues importance, in a literal sense, on account of the goods that the vendor sells: frozen novelties bring a moment of conviviality and happiness to residents, and the tunes call them from their homes and out into the streets. But the sound of the vendor also finds its significance in the fact that it has been heard on the streets of Havana for more than a century, and is a significant part of the historical geographies of the city. As such, my account consists not of ethnographic observations alone, but it instead develops a history of the city over the course of the twentieth century. By following both the series of social and spatial relationships that the ice cream vendor articulates, and the moments of sonic citizenship that it mobilizes, I write a history of Havana that challenges the idea that residents lack political agency. Instead, I develop an account of a city that belongs to residents themselves.

Chapter 5.

The Sweetest Sound in the City: The Tale of Havana's Ice Cream Vendor

> *Old people would forget their pains. Pregnant women would run to the truck, holding their "bundles" (bellies); other women, holding their children in their arms, would follow. No few foods, left on unattended stoves, would burn to a crisp. And the children, well, suffice it to say that not even the dogs stay put.*
>
> —Regina Cano, *Havana Times, May 19, 2013*

Of all the sounds that I encountered in Havana, the ones that captured my interest above all others are those made by mobile street vendors, or, *vendedores ambulantes*. Perhaps it's because mobile vendors are largely absent in the other cities in which I've lived, and so for me, this practice carries with it a certain amount of novelty and intrigue. Here, vendors walk the streets selling everything from eggs, to cookies, to housewares such as clothes hangers, brooms, and so on. Others offer services such as furniture maintenance, knife sharpening, or even appliance repair. Many of these vending practices have been around for quite some time, and were introduced to Cuba during the colonial era by way of Spain.[18] Yet there are others that have emerged more recently, filling new needs, and creating new local economies in the process. Two such examples are vendors who buy and sell gold (accessories, typically jewelry), and those who sell potable water—a service that is extremely useful in areas of the city where the water distribution network is unreliable. Each vendor, both old and new alike, has their own signature call, or *pregón*, used to announce her or his presence to the residents of the neighbourhood. Some calls are clever and humorous, others are more serious and direct. But the more distinguishable and captivating one can be, presumably, the more successful an entrepreneur they are.

One street vendor with which I am familiar however, is the ice cream vendor, or, *el heladero*. Ice cream vendors in Havana travel the streets on a modified bicycle or

[18] A comprehensive history of Havana's street vendors can be found in a four-part series of essays in *CATAURO: Revista Cubana de Antropología* (2001-2003) by Cuban anthropologist and essayist Miguel Barnet.

tricycle with an insulated cooler usually mounted on the front or the back. The cooler contains their supply of ice cream, which is often comprised of pre-packaged frozen treats, since these are the easiest to handle and to transport. Vendors can be spotted in most any neighbourhood across the city, and at most any time of year: in Cuba, selling ice cream is not seasonal work. But the most distinguishing feature of the ice cream vendor is of course their signature sound. Unlike other street merchants who vocalize their presence by way of the *pregón*, the ice cream vendor instead uses the familiar sound of the electronic music box. Renditions of folk, Western classical, or children's songs act as an acoustic herald that captures the attention of nearby residents, whether they are outdoors or inside their homes. The response is immediate, and is almost Pavlovian: mouths water, children and adults alike hit the ground running, and the streets are suspended in a moment of conviviality, enjoyment, and pleasure for all those inclined to participate. A welcome part of the everyday activity of neighbourhood communities across Havana, the sound of the ice cream vendor is something that most residents listen to with fondness, affection, and with childhood nostalgia.

My growing interest in Havana's *vendedores ambulantes*, and in the ice cream vendor in particular, has made it the topic of numerous discussions I've had with friends, acquaintances, and colleagues. During one such conversation, my close friend Pampi was quick to point out the fact that the ice cream vendor's heralding music is a rather recent introduction to Havana's soundscapes. Only over the previous couple of years could these sounds be heard on the streets of the city. "Where were they before that?" I asked, thinking that surely ice cream vending had a history in Havana of more than a couple of years. "Before that," Pampi said, "they were gone". He lamented that there was an entire generation of children in Havana—his generation—that grew up without hearing this iconic sound. And the reason for their absence was Cuba's economic crisis: following the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, the sounds of the ice cream vendor fell silent. Severe shortages of material goods, food, and energy resources prevented vendors from travelling the streets; it prevented the large-scale production of ice cream; and it eliminated the economic potential for citizens to purchase it. The absence of the ice cream vendor thus coincided with one of the most severe economic crises in the island's history, which signalled the loss of a street merchant—and thus a sound—that for decades, was part of the everyday life of the city.

The recent re-emergence of Havana's ice cream vendor can, in large part, be attributed to the Cuban state's response to the crisis. Conceding to the pressures of the global economy, the Cuban government implemented a series of market-based reforms as well as a dual currency (in Cuban pesos and initially, in U.S. dollars) that created new industries by incentivizing foreign investment. Tourism, pharmaceutical research, and mining projects for natural resources such as nickel are examples of emergent domestic markets that are simultaneously generating, just as they are generated by, new transnational flows of finance and capital.[19] At a sub-national level, the easing of restrictions on self-employment further articulated Cuba's market-based reforms. The state's withdrawal from everyday economic activity gave new life to the *cuentapropista*, or, the private entrepreneur, which has since become a rapidly growing sector amongst Cuba's labour force. Private vendors are continually creating and servicing niche markets, and in Havana, one such example is offered by the most publicly visible (and also audible) form of entrepreneur: *los vendedores ambulantes* (mobile street vendors). Of the many new vending practices that have recently re-emerged on the streets of the city, ice cream vending is one for which Cuba's market-based reforms have made it easier to acquire the material capital that the practice requires. Insulated coolers, soundmaking technology (that is, the electronic music box), not to mention supplies of ice cream are now available to the extent that independent vendors have been able to resurrect a practice that remained absent from the streets of Havana for nearly two decades.

The history of Havana's ice cream vendor is thus comprised of a series of divergent yet intersecting narratives, all of which are brought to bear amidst the urban soundscape. On the one hand, ice cream vending is a localized, neighbourhood practice that for decades, has been present in the city of Havana. Throughout history, it has been characterized by sounds with which all residents are intimately familiar; it is a vending practice that facilitates an experience that is as social as it is sweet; and as such, it is a significant part of the cultural fabric of the present-day city. On the other hand, there is an invariable global dimension upon which the localized sounds of the ice cream vendor

[19] Such reforms were designed with the intent of inserting the Cuban economy into international markets and to stimulate local production so that basic needs could be met. They were to do so however, without disrupting the existing social structure or political system, which was to remain predominantly socialist. The necessary enactment of Cuba's market-based reforms thus ushered in a political era that continues up to today, which has since been referred to as "late socialism" (Fernandes, 2006; Yurchak, 1997).

depend. From the technology that vendors employ, to the social and economic climate in which they operate (or for that matter, cease to operate), the ice cream vendor is also an articulation of national and transnational flows of material, finance, and culture. So in order to fully grasp the social meaning, role, and function of Havana's ice cream vendor, we must bear in mind not only the local geographies within which vendors operate, but also the global mobilities upon which the practice depends. Doing so requires that we locate the historical origins of ice cream vending in the context of Havana, that we trace its evolution over the course of the twentieth century, and that we do the necessary ethnography that brings to bear the ways in which it is listened to in the present-day city.

In this chapter, I listen to, document, and as historian Bruce R. Smith (2004) terms it, I "un-air" the history of Havana's ice cream vendor. I do so by moving in reverse chronological order, beginning with the vendor's silencing during the Special Period (that is, the early 1990s), and ending nearly one century earlier in the late 1890s. In so doing, I elucidate the various permutations of ice cream vending in Havana in terms of both the technologies that vendors employed, and of course, in terms of the sounds that vendors made. However, my interest ultimately lies not in the vendor's sounds as such, but rather, in the meanings they communicate: how they have been, and are still, listened to by residents of the city. This entails generating a new history of Havana—a sonic history—told through the sounds of the ice cream vendor. Such an approach stands in contrast to histories of the city that tend to focus upon either individual political actors or moments of political rupture, and it does so by positioning the local population at the centre of the story. In so doing, I argue that Havana's ice cream vendors have, throughout history, functioned as much more than mobile street merchants who simply deliver frozen novelties to neighbourhoods across the city. Instead, the ice cream vendor, and the sounds with which it is associated, produces and gives meaning to the acoustic spaces of Havana according to the aims, aspirations, and desires of residents themselves. It is a sound that generates a moment, liminal as it may be, in the ongoing, everyday life of the city during which residents enact sonic citizenship.

The Silence of the Special Period

The social, economic, and material conditions that surrounded the disappearance of Havana's ice cream vendor were dire. Immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba suffered a 76% percent decline in national exports,

and by 1993, the country's Gross Domestic Product fell by 25% percent (Brouwer, 2011, p. 63). The loss of Soviet aid, alongside the intensification of the U.S. embargo under the Torricelli Act, resulted in major shortages of everything from petrol, to material goods, to pharmaceutical drugs and medical supplies.[20] But above all else, the most significant consequence of the Special Period may very well have been the decline of Cuba's food supply. Since more than a third of the island's arable land is devoted to the production of sugar cane, Cuba remained dependent on food imports to the extent that over half of all protein and calories consumed came either directly or indirectly from imported goods (Eckstein, 2003, p. 134). Without access to these integral supplies, the basic needs of the population remained largely unmet. Exacerbating this issue was the siphoning off of food resources to the ever more lucrative informal economy so that by 1993, Cuba's ration system could cover only about half of a family's monthly needs (Eckstein, 2003, p. 134). In spite of strict rationing efforts enacted in response to the failing national food supply, a public health crisis could not be prevented.

Nutritional deficiencies mounted during the early 1990s, and the health of vast numbers of the population suffered the consequences. As of June 1993, dietary deprivation was so severe that some 50,000 Cubans suffered an epidemic of optic neuropathy, a serious affliction of the nervous system that results in the loss of eyesight (Brouwer, 2011, p. 64). While the government was somewhat able to curtail illness by devoting some of its diminishing resources to the provision of vitamin supplements, the island's per capita daily food consumption was nevertheless well below the minimum essential level. For instance, between 1989 and 1993, the daily intake of protein fell by 40% from 77 to 46 grams, and the daily intake of fats fell over 60% from 72 to 26 grams (Coyula & Hamberg, 2003, p. 15). The most significant decline however, was in terms of daily caloric intake, which is a particularly salient indicator of an impoverished diet (and by extension, impoverished social and economic conditions). In 1989, the average daily

[20] The Torricelli Act, also known as the "Cuba Democracy Act" was enacted in 1992, which placed additional sanctions on the thirty-year embargo. This legislation was part of the U.S. Department of State's "economic denial program" toward Cuba, which aimed to suffocate the island's remaining sources of capital and commercial opportunities following the Soviet collapse. Fashioned as a *coup de grâce*, the Torricelli Act (and following that, the Helms-Burton Act of 1996) ultimately sought to dismantle the existing Revolutionary government using aggressive international policies, punishing other nations that did business with Cuba, thereby excluding the island republic from the global economy. About this policy, Cuban historian Louis A. Pérez (2015) notes, "It should not be supposed that the Cuban people were unintended "collateral damage" of U.S. policy. On the contrary, the Cuban people were the target." (para. 6).

intake of calories was 3,100, but by 1993 it fell by 40% to less than 1,800 (Brotherton, 2005, p. 350). Lamentably, this drop occurred at the precise moment that citizens required an above average amount of calories, since the island's petrol shortages made walking and cycling the principal means of transport. Consequently, weight loss among adults averaged about nine kilograms, it affected almost all strata of the population, and widespread cases of malnutrition put severe pressure on the nation's health care system (Uriarte, 2002, p. 21).

The acute level of food shortages during the Special Period as well as the precarious health of a large portion of the Cuban population makes the loss of a novelty service such as ice cream delivery seem rather trivial. Yet, trivial as it may have been, the bitter ironies associated with the disappearance of the vendor were multiple, and are worth acknowledging. As a food item, ice cream had been available for public consumption in Cuba since 1806.[21] Rather predictably, as historian Jose María de la Torre (1913) observed, it was available exclusively to Spanish and creole elites, and was symbolic of the social, economic, and racial stratification of Cuban society throughout the colonial era. However, ice cream's elite status changed substantially over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This was the case, first, when it became a food item sold on the streets of Havana during the late nineteenth century (a topic I will address momentarily). But at no point was ice cream more accessible than it was on June 4, 1966, the day Coppelia opened its doors. It was at this moment that we might say ice cream, much like the rest of the island, was socialized. Sitting at the corner of 23 and L in the district of El Vedado, Coppelia is often referred to as Cuba's "socialist ice cream cathedral". It is one of the city's most famed gathering spaces, where the state serves *"helado por el pueblo"*, or, "ice cream for the people" (Motlagh, 2015). During the Special Period however, Coppelia's role as Cuba's ice cream cathedral came to an end: it was open for only two hours daily; there were only two or three flavours available; and because of the scarcity of milk, the ice cream was very low quality and was considered "watery and tasteless" (García, 2011).[22]

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[21] This was, of course, a moment that predated refrigeration technology. As such, it's worth noting that much of Havana's ice during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries arrived by way of New England—an epicentre of the global ice trade (Weightman, 2002).

[22] Still today, locals complain about the low quality of Coppelia's ice cream. For instance, in July 2015, www.havanatimes.com published a story about the parlour's "hollow scoops": the shortchanging of customers by serving them empty, or hollow balls of ice cream. This comes as a

Just as important as the social history of ice cream is its cultural status as a food item. Ice cream is an integral part of the Cuban diet, and as Havana-based journalist Iván García (2011) argues, it is "one of the favourite treats for Cubans of all ages and eras" (para. 8). In part, this dietary preference is conditioned by the local climate: with temperatures in Havana averaging about 25 degrees Celsius, ice cream represents an important way of finding respite from the intense Caribbean heat. However, this preference also has something to do with the ingredient that gives ice cream its flavour. Since the seventeenth century, sugar has been one of the most abundant agricultural resources on the island, and as such, it is an integral part of the Cuban kitchen. Fruit juice, cake, milk shakes, pudding, chocolate, cookies, *malta* (a typical Caribbean cola-like refreshment), and cane juice (prepared with ice; a drink known as *guarapo*) are only some of the preferred local delights—all of which uncoincidentally contain an abundance of sugar. So the loss of the ice cream vendor cannot be read as simply the literal loss of the largely empty calories and saturated fats contained in ice cream. Instead, it was a symbolic loss of both a tasty consumable treat for which most Cubans have a deep affinity, and of a food item comprised of an ingredient that had been grown on the Cuban landscape for several centuries.[23]

Lastly, and no less significant than either the politics of ice cream or its role as a dietary novelty, was the social experience that surrounded it. The arrival of ice cream vendors was, almost invariably, greeted with excitement and enthusiasm, and it gave life to neighbourhood communities across the city. This is one of the central reasons that its sudden and unexpected disappearance was met with such despair and dejection. How and where do we access the expression of these collective sentiments? We listen. But this time, not to the sounds of the city, but to the sounds of popular music. "Helado Sobre Ruedas" or "Ice Cream on Wheels" is a song by the group Gema y Pavel that

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result of both workers and higher-ups in the company skimming the ice cream, and selling it in the informal economy. This is a standard practice in not only food service industries, but across virtually every industry throughout the island. Additionally, with the introduction of Nestlé products to Cuba's ice cream market in the early 1990s, Coppelia's ice cream has become far less desirable than it once was, and although it is at a much more accessible price point, it is widely considered second-rate.

[23] It is worth noting that although ice cream's role as a food item from which to obtain even part of one's daily nutritional intake is suspect, it nevertheless became a dietary staple in the days of strict rationing. It was used as a means of providing calories when food items such as breads, cereals, meat, and fish were unavailable. In a 1991 article for the LA Times, Eugenio R. Balari, head of Cuba's Institute for Research and Orientation of Internal Demand explained: "Ice cream is a good source of nutrition. It has calories, fat, protein. That is perhaps why we defend it" (quoted in Boudreaux, 1991).

laments the disappearance of the ice cream vendor from the streets of Havana. It was included on the album "Trampas del Tiempo", or "Time Traps", which was released in 1994, at the height of Cuba's economic crisis. In it, the duo speaks about the presence of the ice cream vendor as a "refreshing" event on hot days; as a source of joy, pleasure, and happiness that offered much more than a simple respite from the heat, but as one that "made family problems disappear". And unsurprisingly, the iconic sound of the vendor—that is, the sound of the electronic music box—and its "sweet melody" is recalled with both warmth and affection. According to Gema y Pavel, the vendor's heralding music was the cause for celebration in neighbourhoods across the city.[24]

Por las calles de La Habana, en la tarde, en la mañana
Se escuchaba una canción, una dulce melodía
Que ni mística ni amarga, que ni mágica ni extraña
Repartía la alegría, la dulzura y el sabor
Esfumaba los sofocos familiares, cotidianos
De los días de calor

Cuando sonaba so voz ¡cuántas bocas se empapaban!
Amas de casa volaban por las puertas, las ventanas
Y, entre jóvenes y viejos, corrían lagartos y ranas
Y, entre gorriones y gatos, podíarse ver un pato
Con su peculiar modorra, corriendo con la cotorra
—Oye—que tenían en la sala y el conejo 'e la vecina,
Que rompía las persianas y tras el un curielito
Salían en desbandada

¡Qué desorden ordenado! ¡Qué avalancha saludable!
Cuando pasaba a menudo, repartiendo mil sabores,
Que el ambiente refrescaba, y la calle se empachaba
Que rico y sabroso su helado, que todos querían probar,
Del carro que se paseaba en la tarde, en la mañana
¡Por las calles de la Habana!

Quiero tomar helado de guayaba,
Y el carro se ha perdido de La Habana.
¿Por dónde andará aquella música bella?
¿Por dónde andará?

On the streets of Havana, in the mornings, in the afternoons
A song was heard, a sweet melody

[24] The lyrics and the translation written here are included in the release of the album on the Germany-based *Intuition* label, which was released in 1995—one year following the Cuban release. They were authored by Pável Urkiza, however the lead vocalist is Gema Corredera, who takes a good deal of liberties on the recording through her own vocal improvisation. As such, I have made a few minor adjustments to the text so that it more fully and accurately captures her treatment of the sound of the vendor.

Neither mystical nor bitter, neither magical nor strange
Which spread happiness, sweetness, and flavour
It made family problems disappear
A daily event on hot days

When its song was heard, so many mouths watered!
Housewives flew through doors and windows
And, among the young and elderly, lizards and frogs ran
And, among house sparrows and cats, you could see a duck
With its funny waddle, running with the parrot
—Hey—which they had in the living room, and the neighbour's rabbit
Which broke the blinds, and a guinea pig
Which ran all over the place

What orderly disorder! What a healthy avalanche!
Whenever it passed by, spreading a thousand flavours
Which refreshed the neighbourhood, and the whole street had its fill
Of tasty and delightful ice cream that everybody wanted to eat
From the truck as it passed in the mornings and in the afternoons
On the streets of Havana!

(Refrain)
I want some guava ice cream,
The truck has disappeared from Havana
Where has the beautiful music gone?
Where has it gone?

The lyrics of the song evoke images of ice cream delivery as an experience that was an integral part of Havana's vibrant street life. It is represented as a moment during which residents gathered in the public spaces of the neighbourhood and were brought together as a community: "[it] refreshed the neighbourhood, and the whole street had its fill…on the streets of Havana". These participatory moments, as Gema y Pavel so richly articulate, are contingent upon listening; in particular, upon the relationship between everyday listening practices and the city's built environment. Upon hearing the sound of the electronic music box, "housewives flew through doors and windows". By listening to and through the open spaces of their homes—that is, by listening trans-liminally—residents remain attuned to the activity of the street; activity that is punctuated at certain moments by the music of the ice cream vendor. There are however, further layers of meaning expressed by the song that the lyrics alone cannot communicate. For instance, the refrain during the outro repeatedly asks: "where has it gone?", in reference to the vendor and the music. It is sung not only by lead vocalist Gema Corredera, but by a chorus of voices that could be read as the collective voices of residents who are frustrated, and to some extent, disoriented as a result of the economic crisis. Yet another

example is found during the song's introduction, over the course of the first six measures. Here, a simple melody is whistled by either Gema or Pavel; a melody that musically invokes the heralding presence of the ice cream vendor right from the outset of the song.

"Helado Sobre Ruedas" by Gema y Pavel can—and indeed, should—therefore be read as much more than a catchy, popular tune that just happens to be about ice cream. Instead, it is an ode to a food item that has a particular importance not only in the Cuban diet, but amidst the Cuban landscape, and to a vendor that is an integral part of the social life of Havana's neighbourhood communities. That such a tribute is expressed in song is especially important, for in Cuba, there may be no form of cultural production that is as central to the formation of local identity than music.[25] In particular, Gema y Pavel perform in the genre of *Nueva Trova* which, as musicologist Robin Moore describes, is "more directly tied to the Cuban revolutionary experience than any other form of music" (2006, p. 167). This intimate relationship between everyday life and musical expression is evident across Gema y Pavel's repertoire, as the duo often offer their own commentary on events, issues, and places that resonate with most Habaneros, and with Cubans more broadly. The themes taken up in their music engage with the many different manifestations of *la lucha Cubana*: the daily struggle of life in Cuba. In "Helado Sobre Ruedas", such commentary is undertaken in a playful, lighthearted tone, as the composers lament the loss of a simple pleasure derived by taking part in a particular social occasion, and by consuming a food item with popular appeal.

The Sweet Sounds of Technology: Modernizing an Old Sound

After spending several weeks periodically encountering ice cream vendors in various locations across the city, I finally found myself in a position to capture a

[25] "Helado Sobre Ruedas" echoes a more famous example of the convergence between street vending in Cuba and the island's popular music. The song "El Manisero" ("The Peanut Vendor"), composed by Moisés Simons, is arguably one of the most famous Cuban musical compositions ever written: it has been recorded over 160 times by artists that include the likes of Rita Montaner (who, in 1928, was the first to record the song), Antonio Machín (1930), Louis Armstrong (1931), Perez Prado (1971), and by Cuban pianists Chucho Valdés (1995) and Gonzalo Rubalcaba (2001).

recording of the sound. It was in the district of Dragones, in the historical municipality of Centro Habana. I was standing at the corner of San Rafael and Gervasio, which is an intersection that is typical of the colonial settlement: narrow streets, mostly pedestrian traffic, and aging and weathered architecture. At the moment that I arrived, the ice cream vendor happened to be immobile; he was parked in the middle of the intersection while his electronic music box played its familiar tunes. The chime music dominated the soundscape, yet I could still hear the footsteps and voices of pedestrians as they walked along, and the sounds of people in transit on their bicycle. For me, it was an opportunity to capture a lengthy recording of the sound without having to follow the cart on its journey. For the vendor, his intent was clear: his heralding song was being directed not only at the pedestrians in the streets, numerous as they may have been. Instead, he also aimed to attract the attention of potential customers who were indoors at the time, since it is a densely populated neighbourhood, and streetside sound is so clearly audible inside nearby domestic spaces. While capturing the audio recording, I also snapped a photograph of the intersection, in which the ice cream vendor is visible toward the left of the frame (see Figure 6 below).

Figure 6: Ice cream vendor in Dragones, Centro Habana
Photo taken by author

As I listen and re-listen to the music of the electronic music box, several thoughts come to mind. The first is that it is very loud, and it can easily be heard at a distance of two or three city blocks, maybe more. It is audible around street corners and through the (visual) privacy of domestic spaces, and it captures the attention of most any resident within earshot. The second is concerning the tunes themselves. The ice cream vendor's musical repertoire is comprised of songs that are familiar, upbeat, and melodically simple; rarely are they in a minor key. In the United States, they are referred to as "kiddie tunes" in spite of the fact that most songs were not composed as children's songs per se. Melodies from compositions such as "Brahms Lullaby", "Jingle Bells", "La Cucaracha", "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star", and "She'll Be Coming 'Round the Mountain" among dozens of others are played on repeat, and are heard just long enough to be recognized before moving on to an entirely different tune. The third and perhaps most interesting attribute of the sound is its timbre, which may be the decisive factor in how the ice cream vendor's music accrues meaning. Digitally produced by an electronic music box, the sound famously takes its cue from mechanical music works, which is the soundmaking device found in wind-up music boxes. Originally it was produced by rotating discs or cylinders that plucked the teeth of a metal comb; today however, it is produced by digital tones that emulate both the rhythm and the chime-like timbre of the original analog device.

The amalgam of loudness, tune, and timbre are the primary reasons for the immediate recognizability of the ice cream vendor. Yet the objective, or internal qualities of the sound say nothing of what it represents. That is to say, the associations the listener calls forward as a means of defining the aural experience are learned: its meaning has been constructed socially, and therefore it must be treated historically. Musicologist Daniel T. Neely (2014), whose scholarly work on the sound of the ice cream truck stands largely alone, argues that "the music is intended to play on anamnesis, a kind of anamnesis that is conditioned on the recognizability of a specific product through sound" (p. 146). It is the hope of vendors, Neely contends, that their music's tune and timbre will "link perception to memory and lead to nostalgia—for childhood, for sweetness, or for the Main Street of the American imaginary" (Neely, 2014, p. 146). A thorough evaluation of a material technology, Neely's historiography of the ice cream vendor's heralding music is also an account of collective memory in the context of twentieth century America. The question however, is how this decidedly

American story—and by extension, this decidedly American technology—translates into the context of Havana. To find out, we must think historically about the sound of the ice cream vendor and its various permutations across Cuba's divergent social, political, and economic eras. But more importantly, we must think historically about the ways that those sounds were perceived by the local population, and the nostalgia with which they are recalled.

The mechanical music box first emerged as the heralding sound of ice cream vendors in the late 1940s—1949 to be precise (Harris, 1949, p. 96). It was at that time that the Nelson Company began manufacturing chime music boxes for ice cream trucks (Neely, 2014, p. 153). However, technological limitations such as the durability of the music works and the inefficient energy consumption of its amplification system prevented the device's widespread use. It wasn't until 1957 that these limitations were largely resolved by Minneapolis-based company Nichols Electronics. Alongside partner John Ralston, company founder Bob Nichols developed a transistorized amplification system that not only enabled chime music to be played continuously, and over longer periods of time, but it also allowed vendors to herald their presence over greater distances (that is, to be louder!). The mechanical music works built into these devices used either a rotating disc or a rotating cylinder; in both cases, only one tune at a time could be played, which lent itself to the sonic branding that vendors actively sought (the most famous of which is perhaps the Mister Softee jingle)[26]. Throughout the late 1950s and 1960s, this technology made Nichols Electronics the most popular commercial manufacturer of ice cream truck music boxes anywhere in the world. And given the strength of the geo-political ties between the U.S. and Cuba through to 1959—ties that included the unobstructed flow of material, finance, and culture—it is likely this is the precise technology heard on the streets of Havana through the early years of the Revolution right up until the early 1990s.[27]

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[26] The jingle is most easily recognized by its chime-y tune rather than for its lyrics, which of course cannot be played on a music box. However, the song was indeed written with lyrics, and are as follows: "*The creamiest dreamiest soft ice cream you get from Mister Softee/For a refreshing delight supreme, look for Mister Softee/My milkshakes and my sundaes and my cones are such a treat/Listen for my store on wheels ding-a-ling down the street/The creamiest dreamiest soft ice cream you get from Mister Softee*".

[27] Based on personal communication with company President Mark W. Nichols (son of the company's founder and the developer of the transistorized system, the late Bob Nichols), it remains plausible, though indeterminable because of the lack of paper trails, that prior to the

Suggestive that this was in fact the case is the personal account of a longtime resident, who I had the opportunity to speak with while I was in Havana. Her name is Maria, and at the time that we met, she was 63 years old.[28] She recalled the heralding music of ice cream vendors on the streets of her neighbourhood in Centro Habana as far back as the early 1960s, and even before the triumph of the Revolution in 1959. She thought of it as a loud sound, one that "filled the streets" ("*un sonido que llenó las calles*") and could easily be heard around corners, from some blocks away. She also recalled that in the late 1950s and the early 1960s—at which time she would have been about eight or ten years old—there were some ice cream vendors who made use of proper ice cream trucks, which was a change from the bicycles, hand-held carts, and other forms of automobility used until that time. As opposed to a group of independent vendors, which is the case today, there was instead a group of merchants who worked on behalf of a select number of companies—to her recollection, there were only three or four. Each vendor travelled the streets in their own truck, and each brand had its own sonic signature, identifiable by its own distinct tune. Maria's observations fit neatly into the material history of chime music, and as we will find out momentarily, so too are they in step with the market structure of mobile ice cream sales in Havana in the mid-twentieth century.

Although chime music is without question the definitive sound of the ice cream vendor, these familiar tunes weren't always the vendor's acoustic herald. Prior to that, vendors employed a series of innovations developed by Harry Burt, founder of the Good Humor brand. In Youngstown, Ohio, 1920, Burt not only produced one of the earliest

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Revolution, Nichols Electronics supplied Havana's ice cream vendors with their chime music technology. At the time, the company distributed its product across the United States and to several international destinations. Today, Daniel T. Neely writes, Nichols Electronics "distributes product to mobile vendors throughout the Americas, Europe, and Asia, [and is] rightly considered the largest and most important manufacturer of chime music in the world" (2014, p. 154). More about the Nichols Electronics company can be found at http://www.nicholselectronicsco.com.

[28] Maria was born in 1949 in the district of Dragones; as luck would have it, a mere couple of blocks from the intersection at which I captured the aforementioned recording. She is a classically trained musician, and for nearly 40 years, she made her living as an opera singer performing both in Cuba and abroad. Maria had since stopped performing and spent much of her time working as something of a public ambassador for musical events and cultural festivals in the city of Havana. I met her through a friend, on account of our shared interest in music. So it came as a bit of a surprise (and perhaps even a momentary affront) that I was more interested in knowing about the music of the ice cream vendor than I was about her prestigious singing career. However, once she began speaking about her past, her childhood home, and her city, her memory was far more nuanced (and interesting) than even she imagined. In fact, through her memory of sound, Maria not only found new ways of recalling her own personal history, but she also encountered a new way of thinking about her city.

versions of the frozen novelty (which was effectively chocolate covered ice cream on a stick), but he also paired two emergent national trends as a means of selling his new product: fast food and automobility. At the time, the automobile industry was undergoing rapid growth, and food items such as hamburgers and hot dogs began appearing on the menus of suburban restaurants. Inspired by these growing economies, Burt invested in a series of refrigerator trucks in order to distribute his new frozen novelties. As a way of attracting the attention of potential customers, he employed the sound of bells so that he could "draw curious children into the streets to see what the fuss was about" (Reagan, 2014). Before long, Burt's ice cream trucks could be spotted in as many as sixteen different states, affording the musical sound of bell ringing national appeal, making its streetside audibility synonymous with the presence of the ice cream vendor.[29] In Havana, brands such as *Hatuey*, *Guarina*, *San Bernardo*, and *El Gallito* borrowed Burt's developments, and their ice cream could be found not only in parlours and cafés, but most prominently, in vehicles that traversed the streets of the city (García, 2011). By the time Havana underwent its westward suburbanization in the 1940s and '50s, mobile ice cream sales were booming.

[29] As Neely (2014) points out, the bell ringing of the vendors was significant because it tapped into bell ringing's larger social history. It has, for centuries, been a sound associated with spiritual traditions, and in cities, towns, and villages throughout the West, it has demarcated the geo-social limits of specific communities. Notably, the work of the World Soundscape Project addressed the sounds of bell towers in the city of Vancouver (1973) and in their later work, in the village of Dollar, Scotland (1977). About bells in Vancouver, the group says, "sounds such as school and church bells may be called centripetal—that is, they attempt to unify the community by drawing people to specific meeting points" (1973, p. 41). Similarly, French historian Alain Corbin has argued that the sound of village bells constructs an "auditory space that corresponds to a particular notion of territoriality, one obsessed with mutual acquaintance" (2004, p. 184).

Figure 7: The Guarina vendor on the streets of Havana, 1946
The image was obtained on www.havanacollectibles.com, the photographer is unknown.

However, not all vendors used the ice cream truck as a mode of transportation. Some simply walked the streets while pushing a handcart with an insulated cooler, as depicted in the above image of the Guarina vendor (Figure 7). Others travelled the city in a horse-drawn carriage. Known as a *quitrines*, these vehicles were put to use by several *vendedores ambulantes* including, notably, the ice cream vendor. This is, in fact, precisely the way that many residents of Havana recall ice cream being delivered. For instance, in Roberto Diego López's memoir *Island of Memory* (2015), he writes that in 1940s Havana, "ice in big blocks for houses without refrigerators arrived in wagons drawn by mule and some of the salesmen of El Gallito ice cream used horse-drawn wagons" (2015, p. 47). Similarly, Iris M. Díaz (2010) writes in her autobiography,

> I remember the hoof sounds of a horse pulling the Hatuey ice-cream cart and the cries of a peddler ringing his bell and yelling, "¡Helado!" Children ran into the street holding onto their nickels and dimes to buy that creamy vanilla ice-cream cone, then balancing the cone in one hand as they tried petting the horse with the other. The sweetest sounds were the happy voices of children calling each other, "Angelina, come out to play!".

Here, Díaz offers an evocative description of late 1940s/early 1950s Havana that, on the one hand, is suggestive of the ice cream vendor's acoustic signature: the combination of bell ringing, the sound of the voice in the form of the *pregón*, and in this case, the

clacking of hooves as the horse trotted up the street. On the other hand, Díaz is additionally quite explicit about the participatory sounds that surround the vendor: the children playing, calling out to one another, congregating in the public spaces of the neighbourhood. The arrival of the vendor was, unsurprisingly, a moment of merriment and sociality for the neighbourhood community, which is depicted in the image below (Figure 8).

Figure 8: The Hatuey vendor on the streets of Havana, date unknown
The image has been made available courtesy of the University of Miami Libraries, Cuban Heritage Collection. It is available for preview online at http://merrick.library.miami.edu/cdm/ref/collection/cubanphotos/id/2955.

The Early History of Havana's Ice Cream Vendor

If the economic, social, and cultural vibrancy of mid-twentieth century Havana produced what is now known as the city's "golden age", so too was it the golden age for its ice cream vendors. A series of companies comprised the city's ice cream market, and shops, parlours, and café's that sold ice cream were littered across the city. Additionally, and indeed more importantly for our purposes, ice cream vendors traversed the city streets in the name of these companies, and did so either on foot while pushing a hand cart, while riding a *quitrines* (a horse-drawn carriage), or while driving the iconic ice

cream truck. The widespread presence of these vendors was an integral part of the vibrant social life of the city, which is a recurring image in the memory of both present-day residents and the diasporic community alike. And during these moments sound figured centrally: it notified residents of the vendor's arrival; it was symbolic of a tasty consumable food item with wide appeal; and it brought residents out of their homes and into the streets to participate in a moment of neighbourly dialogue. The mid-twentieth century however, vibrant as it may have been, was by no means the moment during which Havana's ice cream vendor came into being. For this, we must listen further still into the city's past, as far back as the turn of the twentieth century, to hear the ways that the ice cream vendor accrued its social and cultural meaning.

In Cuba, the second half of the nineteenth century was a prolonged moment of social and political upheaval. A series of independence wars were waged as the island colony aimed to put greater political distance between it and the Spanish Crown. The battle begun by the Ten Years War (1868-1878), and extended by the Little War (1879-1880), finally culminated in the birth of the Cuban Republic in 1902 following U.S. intervention in the Cuban War of Independence (1895-1898). Yet, for all the intermittent violence that defined the final decades of the 1800s, the island's quest for national sovereignty and self-determination was not limited to military action alone. In the realm of everyday life, new ideas, customs, and behaviour gained traction. Sports such as baseball and boxing replaced bull fighting as a national pastime. Protestantism offered an alternative moral order that represented a welcome departure from the traditionalism of Catholicism. And new habits of hygiene, ways of dressing, eating, and dancing were integrated into the everyday practices of Habaneros. A local culture began to take shape that, for the first time, resembled North American customs more closely than those carried over from Europe. At once a rejection of the perceived backwardness of Spanish culture and an appeal to modernizing the island, this process of transculturation represented a means for residents to perform acts of citizenship with the intent of defining the traditions and customs of the impending nation.

Historian Louis A. Pérez Jr (1999) has carefully followed the cultural exchange between Cuba and the United States during precisely this era (that is, the mid-late-1800s). In so doing, he argues the following: "Much in the Cuban sense of future and place in that future was shaped by or otherwise derived from the encounter with the North…the experience was vital, for it enabled a great many Cubans to become familiar

with the modern world, out of which alternative ideological systems and moral hierarchies passed directly into what was then being assembled as Cuban…some of the central sources of nationhood were derived from experience in the North" (pp. 6-7). Historian Mariel Iglesias-Utset develops a similar argument in her work on the U.S. occupation of Cuba, which lasted from 1898-1902. Iglesias-Utset (2011) suggests that "the refashioning of cultural elements into a new symbolic representation of *Cubanía* (the belief in a unique Cuban identity and national consciousness) was accomplished through the creative manipulation of a host of rituals and symbols…it involved the adoption of novel practices and conventions, some of which had a formality that was tied to the exercise of citizenship" (p. 3). Both authors ultimately contend that Cuban national identity, and the aspiration to formalize the institution of citizenship in a nation-state that is sovereign, were expressed in terms of what Iglesias-Utset (2011) refers to as "symbolic performances". And such performances were found not simply in punctuated moments of economic, social, or military rupture, but more importantly, in the everyday life of residents themselves.

It is perhaps no coincidence, then, that the practice of streetside ice cream vending arrived in Havana at this very moment following its proliferation in cities such as Glasgow, London, and notably, New York. These vendors performed a series of decisive functions amidst the city's political geography, the most discernible of which was that they offered an opportunity for the working class to indulge in what historically was a bourgeois delight. Vendors made publicly available a novelty food item that, as food historian Laura B. Weiss (2011) observes, "almost anyone could afford" (p. 42). Of equal importance, was that ice cream vendors were participants in Havana's project of cultural modernization. Their presence not only represented, but it also gave life to "symbolic performances" that enabled residents of Havana to participate in the very same cultural practices as those found in other global cities, and in particular, in cities across the United States. It is important to note that such practices were expressed not only in visual, material, or economic terms—so too were they articulated sonically. And it is through that sonic articulation that we find what is perhaps the most salient dimension of the ice cream vendor's symbolic potential. For the sounds associated with Havana's ice cream vendors enabled locals to inhabit the acoustic spaces of the city on their own terms and not those of the Spanish Crown.

Figure 9: Ice cream vendor on the streets of Havana, 1890-1910
The photo is archived in digital format at the Library of Congress Archives in the Prints and Photographs Division. It is available for preview and download online at http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/det1994012682/PP/.

This photograph (Figure 9), taken in Havana some time between 1890 and 1910, can be read not only as a silent image, but as an audiovisual text. Without any visible technology with which to herald his presence (the photo is taken at least a decade before Harry Burt began the practice of bell ringing in Youngstown, Ohio), it is likely that this vendor relied on his own voice in the form of a *pregón*. We might imagine the vendor hollering *"¡Helados! ¡Helados!"*, as vendors did during the 1940s and 1950s, before the adoption of chime music. We might imagine the slow rumble of the cart's wooden wheels rolling over the pebbles and gravel of the unpaved road. We might imagine the jangling of the inverted glass cups as the cart bounced along. But above all, we might imagine the enthusiastic voices of children and neighbourhood residents congregating in the street to buy what was known as a "penny lick" (a glass full of ice cream). Presumably, the vendor filled the cups, and residents spent some time by his side consuming the frozen treat. Once eaten, the glass was returned and wiped clean, ready to be filled for

the next paying customer.[30] The result was a host of sounds that filled the streets: all of which were unmistakably associated with the ice cream vendor. And in light of Havana's narrow streets and its Spanish colonial architecture, each of these sounds moved across the liminal spaces of the built environment, and each marked a moment of sweet indulgence and neighbourly dialogue in the life of the city—as they did throughout much of the twentieth century, and as they do still today.

Conclusion

Throughout much of my stay in Havana, I read the city's mobile ice cream vendors as little more than a street merchant with an interesting sound, one to which I brought my own series of associations and personal history. But after speaking with a number of friends, clearly its significance was quite different than I could have ever imagined. After being silenced for upward of two decades, the music of the ice cream vendor is once again heard on the streets of the city. Yet, in order to truly hear its meaning, we must listen in ways that extend far beyond my own ethnographic encounters alone. We must listen further into the past to unearth the social, cultural, and political history out of which the practice of mobile ice cream vending in Havana emerged. Only then can we hear the meaning communicated by these sounds in the present-day city. It was with this in mind that I followed the various permutations of Havana's mobile ice cream vendors temporally, over the course of the twentieth century, and spatially, according to the global mobilities upon which the practice was contingent. Such an approach carried my line of inquiry from my own personal encounters with the vendors to such places and historical moments as 1920s Youngstown Ohio, 1957 Minneapolis, and as far back in time as Havana at the turn of the twentieth century among others. In so doing, I was informed by media texts that ranged from popular

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[30] This is in step with the work of the "hokey pokey vendor": the name of the vendor that sold ice cream streetside in cities across the United States and Europe at the time. The origins of the term "hokey pokey" are obscure, however Laura B. Weiss (2011) suggests that one possibility comes from the fact that most hokey pokey vendors on the streets of London, Glasgow, and New York were of Italian descent. And their signature street cry used to capture the attention of customers was "*gelati, ecco un poco"*, which translates to "ice cream, here is a little". The local population obviously misunderstood, and instead heard the phrase "hokey pokey", making the ice cream vendor known in English-speaking cities as the "hokey pokey vendor". As Weiss remarks, vendors walked the streets singing their heralding tune:

"Hokey-pokey, pokey ho. Hokey-pokey, a penny a lump. Hokey-pokey, find a cake; hokey-pokey on the lake. Here's the stuff to make you jump; Hokey-pokey, penny a lump. Hokey-pokey, sweet and cold; For a penny, new or old."

music, to personal memoirs, to historical photographs that I read from the perspective of a sound historian.

Methodologically, this chapter borrows directly from the historiographic approach of Bruce R. Smith (2004), which he refers to as “acoustical archaeology” or “historical phenomenology”. The visual reading of historical texts from a sound-based perspective, alongside listening to the sounds of popular music as well as those that comprise the everyday life of the city, enabled me to “un-air”, as Smith terms it, not simply the history of a street merchant, but a history of the city more broadly. In so doing, this chapter gives life to a narrative that positions ice cream as an integral part of the Cuban diet; it offers the history of a food item that is intimately connected to the Cuban landscape; it represents the ice cream vendor as a street merchant with importance enough to be featured in popular song; and it locates the origin of the mobile ice cream vendor during a historical moment in which everyday cultural practices expressed the ideals of national independence and self-determination. In short, it presents the idea that both ice cream and its mobile delivery have been, and are still today, integral to the cultural fabric of the city. In this regard, the story of Havana’s ice cream vendor contributes a new perspective to writing scholarly histories of Cuba, and of the Caribbean more broadly. It belongs to a region-specific approach to sound studies, motivated in part by Alejandra Bronfman and Andrew Grant Wood’s call for “new histories of Latin America and the Caribbean significantly informed by sound” (2012a, p. xvi).

But above all, the ice cream vendor affords an important perspective through which to write an unexplored history of Havana. It animates a narrative grounded not in political rupture, but in historical continuity; it develops an account of the city not from the top-down, but rather, from the bottom-up; and it does so by locating a geography characterized not by unequivocal exclusion, but one that, quite simply, belongs to those who live there. Such an approach renders audible the enactment of citizenship by listening for the sounds that firmly ground citizens in the very spaces that, time and again, have been destabilized by forces imposed from above. To hear how citizens inhabit the city of Havana, we must simultaneously listen trans-liminally, across the open spaces of the built environment, and into the city’s history, which still resonates through the sounds of neighbourhood communities, interpersonal dialogue, and social interaction. The heralding music of the ice cream vendor is one sound that does precisely that: for some it offers a sense of childhood nostalgia, for others, it conjures the

taste of a delicious frozen snack. But in every case, to listen to it is to enact a form of civic memory that orients residents according to both the spaces they inhabit and the social and cultural history to which they belong. It comprises a moment, liminal as it may be, during which the city is lived, experienced, and imagined according to the interests of no one other than citizens themselves.

In the next chapter, I carry my sound-based inquiry of Havana eastward still, to the site of the original city: the municipality of Habana Vieja. In so doing, I encounter a geography characterized, on the one hand, by tourist spaces that are economically inaccessible to the local population, and on the other, the intense ruination of the built environment on account of decades of neglect. Because of the simultaneous presence of both poverty and affluence, ruin and renovation, we find one of the most acute expressions of Havana's logic of exclusion. However, I argue that in the study of sound, there emerges an important and as of yet unexplored approach to evaluating these geographies. To be sure, the sounds of these spaces are predominantly comprised of international travellers walking the streets, Cuban culture being bought and sold, and a host of languages that are non-native to the island of Cuba. But if we listen closely, and with enough attention and detail, so too can we hear the ways in which the local population maintains access to the spaces of their city. We hear residents creatively and collectively accessing some of the many urban spaces of the city's tourist geographies—in spite of their exclusionary logic. But in order to do so, I was compelled to think in new ways not only about Habana Vieja, but also about the very act of listening. As such, the next chapter takes the reader through a series of my own personal listening experiences, each of which uncovered new information about my own relationship to Havana's tourist geographies.

Chapter 6.

Learning to Listen: Tourism, Music, and the Politics of Presence in Habana Vieja

> *At La Mina, at La Lluvia de Oro, in the cafés on Obispo Street—in Mercaderes, along the Avenida del Puerto, in the small shops and restaurants of Old Havana—the exorcism of silence has top priority. It is another plot, another policy, and it has its own internal logic. (Quiroga, 2011, p. 273)*
>
> *Cuba is for everybody…except Cubans.*
>
> *—Cuban dicharacho (common expression)*

The municipality of Habana Vieja is the quintessential expression of Cuba in the global imaginary. Neoclassical buildings line narrow cobblestone streets. Flawless pastel-coloured facades present a picturesque combination of colonial architecture and urban design. Vendors call out to passers-by, selling Cuban kitsch such as keychains, hand carvings, and paintings. Musical ensembles can be heard throughout the district, performing only the most recognizable songs from Cuba's musical oeuvre. Cafés offer a place to pause and enjoy the taste of a *café Cubano* (a Cuban espresso). Bars sell daiquiris and rum among other spirits and cocktails. Both food stands and sit-down restaurants alike offer meals that include *arroz con frijoles* (rice and beans), chicken, and pork—all of which are staples of the Cuban kitchen. Nearby hotels offer a place for travellers to rest their legs after a long day of sightseeing. Even the district's many decaying buildings found just off the beaten path of the tourist geographies are also part of its appeal. And much like any internationally desirable destination in the Caribbean, Habana Vieja is situated nearby some of the island's renowned beaches, which are located just 30 minutes east of Havana. From the city to the seashore, the music to the cuisine, Habana Vieja has indeed been cast as the model representation of all things Cuba. However, for a district that is nearly five centuries old, Habana Vieja is vastly different today than it was even three decades ago.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, Cuba entered a moment of profound economic crisis. Referred to as the "Special Period", the severity of

the crisis compelled the socialist government to concede to the pressures of the global economy by implementing a series of market mechanisms, the most notable of which was the return of international tourism. And at the centre of these efforts was Habana Vieja. The combination of beaches just outside the city limits, alongside the district's architectural patrimony, recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 1982, made it a strategic location upon which the government could easily capitalize. It did so by establishing a state-run development corporation to oversee all aspects of public works, historic preservation, and the refurbishing of older buildings. Habaguanex, which operates under the direction of city historian Eusebio Leal Spengler, began with a one-million dollar grant donated by the state in 1994 and has since functioned independently of government assistance. Unlike virtually every other state-run organization in Cuba, Habaguanex has complete control over its day-to-day operations, and it retains the profits accrued from Habana Vieja's hotels, cafés, restaurants, and museums. But mere steps beyond the revitalized tourist geographies, Habana Vieja's built environment is falling into ruin. Debilitated by not only environmental factors such as humidity, tropical storms, and the intense Caribbean heat, but also, by the absence of maintenance efforts extending across a number of political eras, some estimates suggest that the historic district endures an average of 3.1 building collapses per day (Eaton, 2017).

The re-emergent tourist economy on the one hand, and severe architectural ruination on the other, makes Habana Vieja the single most politically contested municipality in the city. Here, economic and social inequality is rampant, and is of course most apparent in the gap that separates the local population and international travellers. Most of the district's commercial establishments accept only *pesos convertibles* (the convertible peso, designed for the tourist economy) rather than the Cuban peso, which makes them inaccessible to most residents. In fact, until 2008, it was state-sanctioned policy that prevented locals from entering tourist spaces such as hotels. The policy has since been dismantled, though authorities such as security guards and state police continue to view locals with suspicion. Because it is unlikely that they can financially afford to be in these spaces, guards and police assume that their reason for being there is to create mischief amongst tourists. This typically takes the shape of residents engaging in informal transactions that include sex work and the sales of illicit material goods, enabling them to capitalize on the tourist economy. Transactions between locals and international travellers, though considered both illicit and immoral by the Cuban

state, are nevertheless commonplace since they represent an important means for residents to engage *la lucha*: to make ends meet in light of the city's precarious economic and material conditions. Amongst locals and international travellers, and amongst locals themselves, Habana Vieja is characterized by inequitable conditions that generate a logic of spatial exclusion.

Because of this inequality, Habana Vieja was indeed one of the only districts in the city in which I felt somewhat conflicted about conducting research. It was a geography that made the politics of my presence palpable, for the inequality between who I am, where I was, and who surrounded me—a white, Western male with class privilege afforded greater freedom and mobility in the Caribbean than locals themselves—became tangible. I thought of the micro-level, interpersonal interactions that I experienced as much more than inconsequential encounters. They were also moments that illuminated a series of global relationships in which I was (and am) entangled. They were historically conditioned, punctuated moments that Westerners have forged largely in the name of conquest and empire. Caribbean Studies scholar Mimi Sheller (2003) observes that "the emotive and figurative moorings of the colonial relations that shaped economic, cultural, material, and human exchanges between the North Atlantic region and the Caribbean in previous centuries continue to inform that relation today" (p. 7). This history compels me to grapple with the politics of my own presence as both an international traveller *and* an ethnographer who is there to study the city. The conflict I felt regarding my positionality as someone who is non-native to Havana delimited the extent to which I was willing to listen for quite some time—both while I was there, and after I returned to Vancouver. How should I position myself in relation to these histories? How am I to listen to the district?

On the one hand, Habana Vieja's ongoing revitalization represents what some advocate is a more sustainable brand of socialism (Lamrani, 2014; Lasansky, 2004). The Cuban government maintains that the influx of tourist dollars, first and foremost, attends to the needs of the local population by revitalizing the built environment and by funding social service programs. On the other hand, Habana Vieja's project of international tourism is severely limiting the ability for residents to access the spaces of the district. It is creating rising levels of inequality, compelling residents to engage in illicit activities in order to maintain a presence in these spaces (Carter, 2008). These tensions are all manifest in the historic district's acoustic environments, but in sound alone, we

hear a city that cannot be characterized solely in terms of neither the former nor the latter. Instead, the Habana Vieja that emerges in sound complicates both perspectives, and adds nuance to this polemic: there is no one straightforward narrative with which to characterize the historic district. I argue that in sound, residents are not altogether excluded from the spaces of Habana Vieja, nor do they necessarily have to engage in illicit or semi-legal practices in order to produce them. Instead, they are always and already an integral part of these geographies. And if we listen with a discerning and attentive ear, we hear how the local population collectively articulates their embodied presence in a district that has been—and continues to be—destabilized by the forces of global capital.

This chapter captures a moment in the everyday life of Habana Vieja, just as much as it documents and communicates a process of my own listening—and learning—through movement, experience, and reflection. In it, I offer the details of three divergent yet complementary moments that comprised my listening experiences while there. I begin with a recording I made of a soundwalk on calle Obispo and a subsequent interpersonal encounter that opened up new ways for me to listen. I then raise questions about the contents of the recording, which in no intangible way are conditioned by my own visual appearance as an international traveller walking the streets of the city. My own personal acoustic signature is always already present amidst Habana Vieja's soundscapes—whether or not I myself am audible—simply on account of my embodied presence. And finally, I draw upon these reflections in order to explore one of the district's most prevalent and noteworthy sounds: the sound of music. Most, though as I observe, certainly not all, instances of musical sounds are symbolic of the material consumption and indulgence of Habana Vieja. So I listen to the immediate environment in order to hear the ways that everyday sounds function in the context of Habana Vieja. I listen inward, as I grapple with the politics of my own presence as a sonic ethnographer. And finally, I listen out, to space beyond space, to hear the wider narratives that are brought to bear on my experiences in Habana Vieja. In so doing, I encounter residents maintaining a presence in spaces in danger of being lost to global capital.

The Limits of My Listening

One of the soundwalks that I conducted in Habana Vieja was along calle Obispo, a main artery that runs through the heart of the district. The walk extended the entirety of

the street, and the recording, which is 14 minutes and 28 seconds, spans the entirety of the walk.[31] I began at Avenida Bélgica, directly across from the famous Floridita bar, and I travelled eastward, ending in Plaza de Armas. I did the walk in the late afternoon on a weekday during the month of November (at 4:30pm on Monday the 26th, 2012, to be precise), which is not exactly high tourist season, but it certainly isn't low-season either. At the time, people filled the streets, and the sounds that I captured were very much indicative of the typical events and activity that take place in Habana Vieja's tourist geographies. Audible are the footsteps and voices of people walking in the streets, many of whom were speaking foreign languages; live bands performing either in public squares or streetside cafés; the broadband sound of construction equipment, indicative of restoration projects taking place throughout the district; the voices of wait staff calling out to tourists, encouraging them to sit down and have a meal; and the clacking of musical instruments such as maracas and clave sticks played by vendors outside their shops, aiming to capture the attention of potential customers. Notably absent are the sounds of automobile traffic since most streets in Habana Vieja are for pedestrians only.

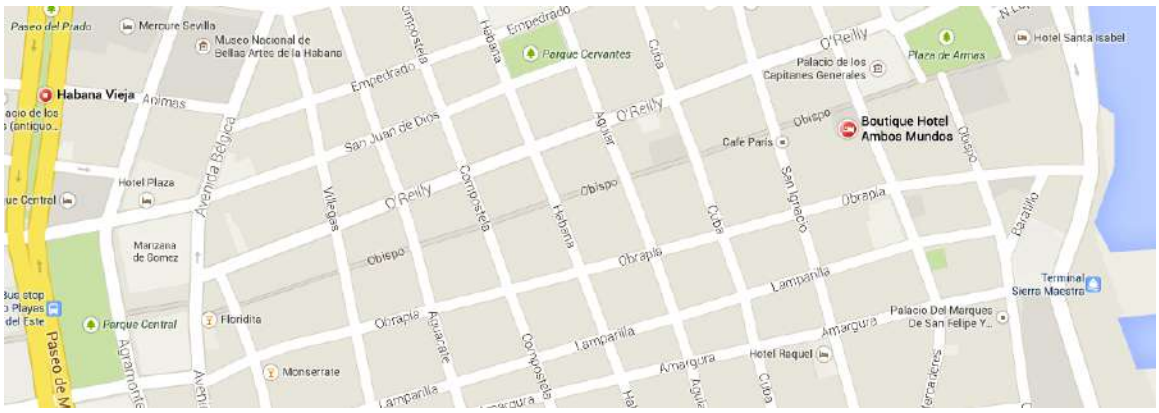

Figure 10: Map of soundwalk route in Habana Vieja
Image courtesy of Google Maps

Before, during, and after my soundwalk, and also upon the first several listens to the recording, my impression of Obispo was that this street, like many others in Habana Vieja, was overwhelmingly populated by international travellers. Residents, by contrast, were far less audible, and by extension, I surmised, far less present. This rather preliminary observation is corroborated by scholarly literature on Habana Vieja (Scarpaci, 2000; 2005; Lasansky, 2004) that suggests the emergent tourist economy

[31] The recording is listed in the spreadsheet included in the Appendix at #48.

has made it difficult for the local population to maintain a presence in the spaces of the historic district. The restoration and the subsequent conversion of heritage buildings into commercial establishments has not only relocated residents to less desirable parts of the city (Scarpaci, 2000, p. 731), but more importantly, these new spaces are designed for the use of international travellers and are financially out of reach for the local population. The result is a form of gentrification that stands in contradistinction to that which is characteristic of most Canadian, American, and Western European cities. Whereas the "gentry class" in these cities is invariably more affluent than locals but is comprised of individuals of the same nationality, "in Cuba" Joseph Scarpaci (2000) writes, "the gentrifiers are a transient group made up of foreign tourists or business people" (p. 726). And their acoustic presence, as urban studies scholars Andrea Colantonio and Robert Potter (2006) have observed, has become an unwelcome part of everyday life in the district: "residents of the central areas of Havana have raised concerns about the noise pollution stemming from the air conditioning systems of hotels and the loud music played in bars to attract tourists" (pp. 70-71).

But surely, I thought, there must also be an audible local presence in the spaces of Habana Vieja as well. It is after all one of the most densely populated districts in all of Latin America (Scarpaci et al., 2002, p. 326), and is inhabited by a population whose everyday needs must be met. Voices speaking Cuban Spanish, residents hollering and whistling at one another, and the clacking of passing bicycles are examples of the events and activity of locals themselves. Indeed, each of these sounds emerges on the recording that I captured, all of which were quite apparent and I was easily able to locate. But I wondered, what further ways do residents articulate their presence in this district? Are there no other sounds, and therefore no other everyday practices to discern? Since I was not privy to the everyday activity of this neighbourhood at an intimate level, I brought these questions to my friend Dennis, a longtime resident of Havana.[32] My hope was that, by revisiting the recording of my soundwalk with someone familiar with the city, I might be able to locate some of the subtle ways that residents

[32] Dennis is a friend of mine who I met through my host supervisor at Fundación Fernando Ortiz, Dr. Francos. Dennis is his son, and we are similar in age. At the time, Dennis was involved with a bioacoustics research project at the University of Havana that studied echolocation amongst bat populations in the Cuban countryside. Because he was already quite interested in sound, he was curious about the possibility of also studying the city through sound and listening. As such, Dennis accompanied and guided me on some of my travels to various parts of Havana that he considered worth documenting in sound.

make use of their neighbourhood spaces in spite of the tourist presence. By listening through the noise of the district, Dennis might point out some of the sounds that I had originally missed. In turn, I might then listen to this recording, and perhaps even to some of the others that I captured, with new ears, so-to-speak.

While listening to the recording, one of the first sounds Dennis noticed—and predictably so—was the call of a street vendor selling his wares. "*Vamo' la manzana, el chivirico…que me voy…el pastel, el manis, el sabroso garapiñado!*": "hey residents of the city block, I have sweets…I'm on the move…cakes, peanuts, and tasty candy!". The vendor was selling an assortment of typical Cuban sweets, all of which are very popular amongst the local population. At the moment his voice emerges (which can be heard beginning at 3:46 of the recording), the vendor is located somewhere up the street—likely about a block and a half from where I stood. Presumably, he was pushing a cart that carries the food items, but the sound of wheels rolling over the cobblestone is inaudible (my assumption is that it was simply masked by all the noise). Nevertheless, his *pregón* fills the spaces of the neighbourhood, but it emerges only to disappear in no more than two or three seconds. To hear it requires both a keen aural sensibility and an intimate knowledge of the spaces and places of the city. It requires a "sense of place" that is attuned to the sounds of not only the historic district, but to the sounds of the city more broadly—the sounds that can be heard in neighbourhoods throughout Havana. This was a moment that was initially all but lost on my ears, the ears of an unfamiliar listener.

Dennis's observation pointed out that, on the one hand, a local economy still remains in Habana Vieja in spite of the ubiquity of heritage tourism. Though the vendor would surely oblige to sell his desserts to international travellers, that he addressed "*la manzana*"—residents of the city block—suggests he deals in Cuban pesos and that his target audience is those who inhabit the historic district. And as I observed in Chapter Five, these sounds are at once old sounds, heard for decades on the streets of the city, yet so too is their presence related to the rise of the *cuentapropista*: private entrepreneurs who represent a growing portion of the island's workforce. But in this case, more important than the history of Havana's street vendors is that the presence of this particular vendor illuminated the differences in the ways Dennis and I listen to the city. Dennis observed a moment that I either dismissed or altogether overlooked. His cultural knowledge mobilized acoustic spaces that I initially neglected to engage. To

perceive the presence of the vendor required a listener whose knowledge of the city was nothing less than that of a full-time resident. Dennis's listening impressed on me the nuance and detail with which residents of the district attend their neighbourhood spaces in order to hear the *pregón* of the street vendor. It also demonstrated that, in order to do so, residents must listen trans-liminally, to and through the open spaces of the built environment, while also listening through the noise of the tourist industry.

Although Dennis and I clearly attend to the sounds of the city in different ways, it is also worth noting that the very sounds we are likely to encounter would also be quite different. This is particularly the case in a district such as Habana Vieja, a geography through which countless people move—people from elsewhere in the city, elsewhere on the island, and from elsewhere around the globe. Amidst geographies such as this one, inconspicuous as it may seem, one's visual appearance conditions their encounters in very real ways. To encounter an international traveller walking along calle Obispo prompts those who work in the tourist economy to attract their attention as a means of persuading consumption. It also prompts *jineteros/as* (street hustlers), those who work in the informal economy, to approach them with a similar intention.[33] Conversely, the presence of someone perceived as a local likely generates little to no response by either those who work in the tourist industry, nor those who work on the informal economy. Instead, it raises the suspicions of state authorities, who quietly surveil tourist geographies in order to prevent street hustlers from engaging in illicit transactions. With this in mind, I must account for more than just the ways in which I positioned my respondents, which is indeed the obligation of most any sonic ethnographer. So too must I account for the inverse: *how locals positioned me* as I moved through the spaces of Habana Vieja.

[33] In Cuba, *jineterismo* is the practice of street hustling which has become increasingly prevalent in Havana throughout the post-Soviet era. Most commenters regard its emergence a result of the island's return to international travel, which generated a formal economy regulated by the state, and an informal economy upon which residents candidly capitalize. Informally, locals can earn an income that greatly exceeds what is possible by working a state-sancitoned job. They do so by acquiring material goods through contacts with foreigners, either by befriending or by engaging in sexual relationships with them. According to official discourse, *jineterismo* is both morally reprehensible and illegal and it is regarded as anti-revolutionary.

Listening to My Presence

As I listen to the recording of my soundwalk on calle Obispo, I wonder if I realized that I was not nearly as obscured by the streetside hustle and bustle as I thought I was? If I was aware that my very presence altered the soundscape I encountered in subtle, although tangible ways? At times, I passed for a local, particularly when I was walking with friends from Havana in parts of the city that are not typical tourist destinations. But in Habana Vieja, a space that has been restored and revitalized to accommodate tourists, I suspect that I was often and quite easily identified as an international traveller—which, ultimately, I am. That this is the case compels me to acknowledge the role of my body, my comportment, and the ways in which my identity was made visible as I travelled the streets of Havana. Here, I borrow from sociologist Amanda Coffey (1999), whose work problematizes the presence of the ethnographer, and the ways in which it is brought to bear on the observations they generate. She refers to this presence, which itself is embodied, physical, and it therefore performs both racial and gendered identities, as "the ethnographic self". Although there was nothing explicit about my physical presence that identified me as an ethnographer as such, my perceived identity as an international traveller indeed shaped the people and therefore the sounds that I encountered, which in turn conditions the ethnographic account(s) I generate.

My presence on calle Obispo (alongside hundreds of other international travellers) gave life to a host of sounds, most of which are rather predictably associated with the tourist economy. The shaking of maracas, the clacking of clave sticks, and the calls of servers outside restaurants aiming to attract diners were all sounds I encountered in abundance throughout my walk. And many of these sounds were both made for, and directed at me. As someone who is "read" not simply as an international traveller, but as an international traveller who also happens to be a white male, I am positioned as part of the global upper-middle class. The assumption is that I have the economic capital to engage in global mobility (which is confirmed by my very presence in Havana), and by extension, that I am also able to participate in the city's tourist economy: dining at restaurants, purchasing material goods, and finding accommodations at nearby hotels. I represent the quintessential demographic to indulge any and all material goods and services in Havana. As such, there are prolonged moments of my soundwalk during which the acoustic environment is comprised mainly (or even only) of

the sounds of the tourist economy. And during those moments, its composition is precisely in line with the design of the space. Calle Obispo, throughout much of my walk, functioned acoustically in much the same way that it looks visually: as a district designed by Havana's office of the city historian in the name of heritage tourism.

Figure 11: Architecture in Habana Vieja (Plaza Vieja)
Photo taken by author

Yet, the sounds that my presence generated were in no way limited to the sounds of the formal tourist economy alone. So too did I encounter the sounds of an informal economy that is also designed to capitalize on the presence of international travellers. This became most apparent during the moments in which I was approached to engage in dialogue by locals milling about within the district. Curiously, such an encounter did not occur on my calle Obispo soundwalk (likely because of the congestion of the space and the need for most everyone to remain in constant movement), though it did happen on a soundwalk I conducted just minutes later on the Paseo del Prado.[34] While I was at the northernmost point of the Prado, exiting the street at the malecón (see Figure 10), a gentleman approached me after noticing what he thought were earbuds in

[34] See recording #18 in the Appendix, entitled "Prado Soundwalk 2". The encounter is audible beginning at 11:20 of the recording.

my ears.[35] "*¿Que musica?*" he asked, "what music are you listening to?". I told him that the device was not headphones, but binaural microphones instead. Somewhat surprised, he asked if I was a journalist. I said "*soy un anthropólogo—como estudiante*", "I'm an anthropologist, a student", and that I was here to learn about local culture. "*Cultura Cubana es fácil*": "Cuban culture, that's easy", he said. But just as he did so, one of his friends nearby caught his attention. He responded, turned toward his friend, and walked away. I then said "'*ten un buen dia*", "have a good day", which ended this fairly brief and seemingly inconsequential encounter.

Figure 12: Paseo del Prado at the Malecón
Photo taken by author

This exchange, succinct as it may have been, I attribute at least in part to the gentleman's interest in who I was on account of how I looked. After all, he initiated the discussion upon noticing what he thought were headphones in my ears. But surely it was more than the headphones alone that captured his attention. His reading of me as an international traveller prompted him to initiate the exchange—quite possibly with the intent of nothing more than engaging in a moment of small talk. Perhaps he simply

[35] This, I find particularly telling of the extroverted street life of Havana, because in most other cities, the use of headphones signals precisely the opposite: "leave me alone".

wanted to say hello, to find out where I am from and to ask about my travels. But based on most of my encounters on the streets of Habana Vieja, so too could it have been initiated with the intent of proposing an informal transaction. Various material goods such as cigars or rum are often offered to travellers by residents who are referred to as *jineteros*, or street hustlers. Such exchanges are commonplace, and function as a means for residents to engage *la lucha*: to make ends meet in light of the city's precarious economic and material conditions. A definite gendered dimension is implicit amidst many of these exchanges, and this is indeed the case when peddling items such as cigars or rum, where both the buyer and seller are typically male. Perhaps this gentleman decided not to pursue this line of inquiry upon finding out I was a researcher who presumably has a knowledge of the city's informal economy that exceeds that of the average tourist. Or, perhaps he simply wanted to stop and say hello.

Whatever his intentions were, this encounter compelled me to momentarily pause and to engage in dialogue. The sound of this gentleman's voice asking "*¿que musica?*" was a polite invitation to respond to what was seemingly a sincere question. Such an act is by no means a necessary, or for some people, even an anticipated attribute of the typical tourist experience. Instead, it is, in many ways, an intervention in it. It is a moment during which a resident both vocalizes their presence and personalizes it by addressing an individual they assume is an international traveller. And like most interpersonal encounters no matter the context, such an exchange is invariably accompanied by eye contact, making one's physical presence explicit if it already wasn't. During such moments, residents reject their role as figures whose presence simply authenticates the tourist landscape. They refuse to remain what ethnographer Thomas F. Carter (2008) terms "phantoms": "alienated individuals for tourism", positioned by the tourist gaze as little more than "ethereal commodities" (p. 242). But above all, residents refuse to remain silent and therefore silenced on account of the noise of the tourist industry. In this sense, the local population not only rejects the tourist gaze, but so too do they reject its sonic equivalent. We might therefore interpret the sounds of locals dialoguing with international travellers as the sounds of individuals communicating a politics of presence. These are the sounds of residents who aspire to produce the

spaces of the city in spite of—or, in response to—international travellers, whose presence is ubiquitous.[36]

However, the acoustic articulation of a local politics of presence is by no means limited to highly individualized, interpersonal encounters alone. So too do sounds generated for a much wider audience also respond to the exclusionary logic of the district's tourist geographies. Voices speaking in Cuban Spanish, residents hollering and whistling at one another, and the clacking of passing bicycles, all of which are made apparent in my soundwalk recordings, also communicate the embodied presence of residents. But in order to hear these sounds as political events, I am compelled to, at once, trouble my positionality as both an international traveller and as an ethnographer *and* consider how the sounds I experienced and documented are also embedded in broader narratives of historical change. Only then can some of the many encounters between residents and myself, and some of the many encounters between residents and international travellers more broadly, be read as subtle, on-the-ground interventions: as momentary sonic reminders that a local population inhabits these spaces today, and has inhabited these spaces for centuries. They are moments during which the acoustic spaces of the city are produced by the sounds, and therefore the intentions of residents themselves. They are moments that articulate the collective, embodied presence of the local population. I explore this idea further in the following section using the single most ubiquitous type of sound heard in Habana Vieja: the sounds of music.

Recovering a Musical Presence

What would the municipality of Havana so often cast as the quintessential representation of Cuba be without the sounds of music to bring it to life? Vendors shake maracas, click clave sticks, and tap bongos with the aim of attracting the attention of passers-by. Even if the vendors themselves aren't musicians, somehow, they know how to make the instrument move just the way that it should. A *comparsa* (a group of singers and dancers) parades through town playing musical instruments such as *tumbadora* drums, *timbales*, and a traditional Cuban wind instrument known as a *corneta china*.

[36] It is worth noting that Cuban authorities regard locals engaging in conversation with travellers as suspicious, and as such, it is actively discouraged. This is particularly the case for black men and women, who are often profiled as *jineteras/os*, even if their intent is not to engage informal economic transactions.

Emulating the groups that decades ago used to perform in Havana's *Carnaval*, a Cuban version of Mardi Gras, the rhythms of these mobile groups fill the streets with sound and offer a colourful spectacle that captivates tourist audiences.[37] But perhaps the most notable of all of Habana Vieja's musical performances are the *son* sextets and septets heard at various locations throughout the district. From inside restaurants, cafés, or in public squares, music spills out into the streets prompting passers-by to pause for a quick photo and take in a song or two, or to have a seat and enjoy lunch or dinner while listening to a performance. Much to the chagrin of locals, the repertoire of the bands is mostly limited to a specific musical style and to what seems like little more than a handful of tunes: classics such as "Guantanamera", "Son de la Loma", and "Chan Chan" among others, are requested and performed time and again throughout the day.

Most of the music heard in Habana Vieja is made for, and directed at, the ears of international travellers. It invites them into a given space, it makes audible what is popularly (read: globally) conceived of as the typical Cuban sound, and it constructs the impression of an "authentic" Cuban reality. In this sense, the soundtrack of Havana's tourist district functions quite literally as programmed background music—sometimes called "muzak"—inviting consumption by attending to the expectations of travellers. And their expectations have been conditioned to no small degree by the island's increased export of music following its reintegration into the global market in the 1990s. Notable in this regard is of course the worldwide success of the Buena Vista Social Club. The release of the band's self-titled album (1997) and corresponding documentary film (1999) represented an integral contribution to the global acclaim of *son*: a musical form made popular in Cuba as early as the 1920s and 1930s. Its most recent revival gave new life to not only a musical form, but to a musical soundscape that is precisely in step with the heritage tourism sold in Habana Vieja. While international travellers are drawn to Havana's tourist geographies on account of the visual appeal of the city's architectural patrimony, so too is their intrigue at least in part conditioned by the nostalgic sounds used to represent the island's musical culture. The problem however, is that this

[37] A recording of a *comparsa* on the streets of Habana Vieja is available in my Havana sound archive, and is listed in the Appendix at #50.

representation only strengthens the global perception of Havana, and of Cuba more broadly, as a place that is "of the past", frozen in time, and that belongs to history.[38]

By prioritizing *son* as a musical form, Havana's working musicians, its commercial establishments, and its Office of the City Historian renders audible not the sounds of the cultural present, but rather, the sounds of the cultural past. This generates a soundscape that in turn appeals to a primarily Western audience seeking not cultural geographies contemporaneous with its own, but rather, ones that communicate the present-day, lived experience of a previous historical moment. As sociologist John Urry observes (2002, p. 4), the tourist sensibility dictates that the experience of modernity belongs not to locals but to international (again, primarily Western) travellers. To be local, on the other hand, is to remain stuck in place and to dwell in the past. It is to presumably live in the absence of many of the tools and technologies characteristic of the Western present, amidst either seemingly pristine and untouched landscapes typified by the island's beaches, or those that are centuries old and falling into ruin, typified by the architecture throughout much of Habana Vieja and Centro Habana. The result is that this purposefully out-of-date, curated representation of Cuban culture, aesthetics, and everyday life has silenced most of the music generated on the island over the subsequent century. But Cuban artists have of course continued to innovate, and continued to develop new musical forms, even though a walk through Habana Vieja offers little indication of it. As musicologist Vincenzo Perna (2005) has rightly argued, although the success of the Buena Vista Social Club gave Cuban music a renewed global visibility (or, audibility, as it were), it ultimately came at the detriment of contemporary Cuban musicians by muting their contributions (p. 241).[39]

The ubiquity, the sheer volume, and the historical emphasis of a bygone era in Habana Vieja's soundscapes make it easy for an outsider (and at times, perhaps even

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[38] The narrative of history and nostalgia figures centrally in literature and advertising for Cuban tourism. Havana's office of the city historian aims to sell the city's "old world charm", the experience of colonial history, to international travellers. Such an approach is likely employed by most tourist destinations across the Caribbean, but in Cuba's case, the salience of this narrative is compounded by the island's revolutionary history and the ensuing economic embargo which, according to the Western imaginary, altogether excised the island from global history.

[39] There are moments, limited as they may be, where the sounds of Cuban musical forms such as *timba*—referred to in much of the Western world using the term "*salsa"*—are audible in Habana Vieja's acoustic environments. Much like *son*, so too is "*salsa*" conceived globally as a form of music that is typical of the Caribbean, even if tourists may not be quite as familiar with particular artists and/or compositions.

for a local), to overlook the few musical sounds that are made by and for residents themselves. It makes it easy to neglect, and therefore to silence the city's musical present which, albeit momentarily, emerges in the spaces and places of Havana's tourist geographies. But in order to hear it, we must listen closely, with a discerning and attentive ear. Using the tools and techniques I acquired by listening to the sounds of Habana Vieja alongside my friend Dennis, and by considering the politics of my embodied presence, I did precisely that with my soundwalk recording of calle Obispo. While capturing the recording, I happened to encounter a pedestrian or group of pedestrians listening to music through the speaker of a cell phone. Much like the *pregón* of the vendor recovered by my friend Dennis, the music emerges on my recording only to quickly disappear again.[40] Particularly notable about this moment is that the musical genre being listened to is not *son*, nor is it "*salsa*", but instead is *reggaeton*: a musical style with regional, rather than global appeal. Listened to primarily by audiences across the Caribbean (and of course by those living in the diaspora), *reggaeton* is mostly absent in the tourist imaginary. It is a contemporary dance form largely made for and consumed by locals, and in particular, youthful or teenage listeners. To hear *reggaeton* in Habana Vieja is to encounter listening contexts that are much more personalized and far less public than those designed with tourists in mind.

[40] The instance to which I am referring begins at 11:43 of the soundwalk recording, and it extends only until about 11:52. Not only is it a brief encounter, but because of all the ambient noise in the narrow streets, I have found that it is best heard with headphones rather than through speakers.

Figure 13: Calle Obispo
Photo taken by author

In addition to the genre of the music itself, particularly intriguing about this encounter is the listening practice out of which the music emerged. It is likely that the music I heard belonged to a teenager, which I presume not simply because of the musical style (that is, reggaeton), but because in both Habana Vieja and elsewhere in the city, cell phone listening is a common media practice. While walking (often to and from school), teenagers play music publicly, through their phone's micro-sized speaker. They do so not to attend to it directly, but instead, to use it as an acoustic backdrop for conversation as they move through the streets. The result is that, through both the sounds of their voices and using the music itself, they create an acoustic community that extends no more than a few feet, and it typically includes no more than two or three people. This presumably regional media practice is a modern (and more portable) equivalent to the "boom box" popularized in the 1980s, and it stands in contradistinction to the privatized approach of headphone listening found in cities elsewhere around the world. By extension, so too does it stand in contradistinction to the very design of the

media technology, which is intended to create individualized sonic experiences. Instead, residents engage communal forms of listening, which echo the collective emphasis of the non-mediated forms of sound-based communication I observed in neighbourhoods throughout the city. In so doing, residents "de-script" (Akrich, 1992) the intended uses of the technology so they can continue to share their communicative environments with those with whom they are walking.[41]

Though the collective, musical listening practices of teenagers in Havana may seem inconsequential, or even trivial, they nevertheless enable residents to assert a sonic presence in the acoustic spaces of the city. That they do so using *reggaeton* is particularly notable since it is a musical form that communicates a sentiment of political resistance and economic struggle. "Reggaeton circulates popularly", Cuban musicologist Joaquín Borges Triana (2015) argues, "because it fits into the practices of 'resolver' that are intrinsic to Cuban's contemporary psychology" (para. 3). It represents a means through which residents aspire to survive—and *inventar*, or invent—in order to mitigate the unequal conditions with which they are faced. By listening to these forms of music on the streets of Habana Vieja, residents collectively maintain their presence in spaces designed according to the city's past using the sounds of the present. And they do so by engaging musical sounds and musical practices composed not for tourist consumption, but that mobilize local (musical) communities. In so doing, residents make use of neighbourhood spaces on their own terms, in spite of the exclusionary logic of the district's tourist geographies. But in order to hear the political potential that they communicate, we must listen with an attentive and discerning ear. We must listen to these contemporary musical listening practices as a means of intervening in the musical heritage sold amidst Habana Vieja's tourist geographies. And we must listen for the ways in which these sounds articulate the presence of the local population, representing a form of political agency that we might term sonic citizenship.

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[41] What is notable about the propensity for residents to engage personal audio media technologies in a collective manner is that it echoes other technological practices that comprise everyday life in the city. In particular, there are presently several dozen wi-fi hotspots in Havana, many, if not all of which are outdoors. And what is most striking about these hotspots is that they function as spaces for interpersonal, non-digital socialization. Residents continue to dialogue with one another and the very act of web browsing or engaging with social media—practices that are typically considered a solitary activity—are engaged collectively.

Conclusion

Habana Vieja today, as it was in centuries past, constitutes the geography that opens up the city of Havana onto the rest of the world. It facilitates the global mobility of people, ideas, and material goods both to and from Cuba. As such, it is a municipality that has attracted a significant amount of scholarly attention. Habana Vieja has been explored and interrogated from a variety of perspectives, most if not all of which problematize its destabilization by the forces of global capital since the onset of the post-Soviet era. The historic district's "unbundling" (Sassen, 2000a), or "uncoupling" (Hill, 2007) from the state's political framework has made it the geography in which social and economic inequality is most palpable: both between locals and international travellers, and amongst locals themselves. Tourist routes wind through the streets of the old city, and have repurposed buildings that have stood for centuries. The corresponding economy functions not in Cuban pesos, but instead, in *pesos convertibles*, or convertible pesos (CUC), which is effectively a currency designed for the purposes of tourism alone. There is of course a large local population that still inhabits these spaces, yet this population is often overlooked by both the state and its emergent open market in favour of restoration undertaken in the name of international travellers. Because of Habana Vieja's position amidst a series of new global currents of mobilities, any ethnography conducted here demands that researchers situate themselves according to the myriad global mobilities that circulate through the district's geographies.

I aimed to do so, first, by acknowledging the limitations of my own listening. What I was able to discern on my own terms was limited by my non-native status, even though I was able to return to my sonic experiences time and again by way of audio documentation. So I began my exploration of the sounds of Habana Vieja by asking my friend Dennis for assistance, which he obliged to do by listening to a soundwalk recording I captured on calle Obispo. This experience helped me to hear a series of sounds that I previously overlooked, namely, the *pregón* (the heralding call) of the street vendor. By locating this sound, Dennis elucidated a far more discriminating approach to listening to the city than I myself was capable of enacting. He unearthed everyday events and activity that I otherwise overlooked. And he was able to do so, not because he was intimately familiar with this particular neighbourhood in Habana Vieja per se, but rather, on account of his familiarity with the city more broadly. The sound of the street

vendor is by no means specific to tourist geographies alone. Instead, it is heard in neighbourhoods across the city. In this sense, the sound of the vendor positions Habana Vieja not as an exceptional geography that should be conceived of as somehow separate from the rest of Havana, but as yet another district in the context of the broader city. The result of my listening experiences with Dennis was that I became aware of new ways of listening to the soundscape itself.

However, to question my own ability as a listener also required me to extend this line of questioning one step further. It demanded that I interrogate my own subjectivity as I travelled and recorded the streets of Habana Vieja, and how my embodied presence is brought to bear in the acoustic environment. Unlike the case studies that comprise Chapter Four or Chapter Five, where the events and activity that I observed would likely have unfolded whether or not I was present to bear witness to them, in the case of Habana Vieja, my physical presence quite literally conditioned the composition of the soundscapes that I recorded. Whether or not people were aware that I was conducting a recording, many locals were likely aware that I was, and am, an international traveller—a white, Western male with class privilege who is able to move more freely through the Caribbean than Cubans themselves. As such, their interaction(s) with me unfolded on those terms, which meant that in many instances, their aim was to get me to participate in the local economy—both formal and informal. By acknowledging the politics of my presence, and how that presence is situated historically, according to centuries of colonial or imperial relations with the wider world, I established a new way to conceive of these seemingly inconsequential encounters. They are not simply moments during which locals aim to engage in economic transactions, but instead, they are moments during which the inequality between who I am, where I am, and who surrounds me is made tangible. They are moments during which claims to space take on layers of added political significance.

With this conception of who I was and how I was perceived by others, I then turned toward an analysis of the soundscape itself. I did so by evaluating one of the most prominent and ubiquitous sounds heard within the district: the sounds of music. In so doing, I considered the types of music being performed, and the local meanings it articulates. I considered the history of the predominant musical form heard within the district, *son* music. Quite fittingly, this is a form of music that holds an integral place in Cuban cultural heritage, which makes it the ideal soundtrack to supplement the

experience of the district's architectural patrimony. But, in no way are the sounds of Cuba's musical history the only sounds that comprise the musical geographies of the district. Often overlooked and therefore silenced is the musical listening engaged by residents themselves. For youth, this often consists of *reggaeton*, and in particular, the sounds of *reggaeton* emanating from mobile devices. These too, represent an important, if often ignored series of musical practices that comprise the acoustic environments of Habana Vieja. These musical sounds mobilize acoustic communities charged with meaning, to which residents listen while moving through the spaces of the city. And these too are sounds that are representative of residents engaging in musical listening in the name not of the tourist economy, but on their own terms. They are the sounds of residents aiming to participate in a musical present that is overlooked by tourist expectations.

To hear these musical sounds as political events required me to learn to listen, which I did by both observing Dennis's listening, and by acknowledging how my own physical presence conditions the many sounds that I encountered. However, there is surely more to uncover in the acoustic environments of Habana Vieja than I was able to do in the present analysis. There is more to learn about the ways in which spaces are made and citizenship is enacted in and through sound amidst Havana's tourist geographies. But in order to do so, we must approach the very act of listening as a skill that can always be broadened—it is a process of learning that is always unfinished. It is for this reason that I use this final case study not only as a means of demonstrating the skill I acquired as both a listener and as a scholar undertaking a project on the city of Havana. I also use it as an opportunity to illuminate the limits of my ability, and to communicate that listening is an endeavour that is always incomplete. In order to acquire this ability, one must begin by dialoguing with others, and by listening alongside them. They must embed themselves in social and cultural contexts that compel them to open up new ways of attending to sound. With this in mind, I complete the case studies of the dissertation by acknowledging that my observations, however detailed, have hardly scratched the surface of the sounds of Havana. Yet in so doing, it is my hope that they offer some new thoughts, perspectives, but above all, ways of exploring the spaces and places of a city that scholars have yet to truly listen to.

Chapter 7.

Conclusion: Havana, Invented in Thin Air

Throughout this dissertation, I developed an account of sound and listening in Havana, just as I, conversely, developed an account of Havana in sound and listening. Such an approach diverged from more traditional scholarly approaches to evaluating the city, which instead tend to regard features such as its architecture and design, its municipal policy, or its economic activity as points of departure. Though both necessary and fertile, such approaches have tended to generate scholarly narratives of the city as a site of both contradiction and failure (Ponte, 2002; 2011; Redruello, 2011; Porter, 2008). Residents, according to these perspectives, lack political agency, and live amidst a terrain that is "dystopian" (Coyula, 2011), "in midair" (Álvarez-Tabio Albo, 2011), or that is altogether "illegible" (Rojas, 2011). They live, in short, amidst a landscape in which the geo-social bond of citizenship has been broken. However, others have generated a host of studies that foreground the opposite: the political agency of residents. These approaches develop narratives of the city from the bottom-up, and tend to prioritize such things as hands-on demonstrations of ingenuity with material technologies (Del Real & Scarpaci, 2011; Del Real & Pertierra, 2008); financial transactions negotiated in the city's informal economy (Carter, 2008; Berg, 2004); or racialized musical communities that articulate a politics of presence at the social and spatial margins of the city (Fernandes, 2006; 2011; Pacini Hernandez & Garofalo, 2004; Thomas, 2010). Such studies offer accounts of Havana that re-centre the perspective of the local population, and the creativity and ingenuity with which they live their city.

In response to these existing approaches, I evaluated the city of Havana by foregrounding not simply the perspective of the local population, but their lived experience in the context of everyday life. By exploring the tacit communicatory practices that comprise the everyday events and activity of the city, this project generated encounters with Havana that may otherwise have remained unheard and therefore silenced. Such an approach offers an as yet fully explored means through which to evaluate, on the one hand, the precarious economic and material conditions that compel residents to engage *la lucha*. In sound we hear, for instance, the dripping

and gurgling of water runoff that is symbolic of the city's infrastructural ruination; we hear the "noise" of international travellers in Habana Vieja and elsewhere communicate the pervasiveness of the tourist economy; and for the discerning listener, we hear the material scarcity that conditions numerous silences in various parts of the city. But on the other hand, so too can the study of sound also bring to bear some of the ways that residents creatively negotiate these exclusionary conditions. Sound and listening also articulates the practices of *inventar*, which function as improvisational, albeit temporary solutions to everyday problems. And in so doing, we hear some of the ways that residents collectively produce the spaces and places of Havana, thereby claiming the "right to the city". These stories, much like top-down articulations of power, are not only deserving of scholarly attention, but they represent a necessary point of departure for further research on the city.

I chose to focus on the notion of *inventar*, and I in turn titled the dissertation "Inventing Havana in Thin Air" by borrowing from both the everyday practices and everyday discourse in the city. To respond to the shortcomings of everyday life with creativity and ingenuity is to engage "*inventar*", to invent, or to engage "*resolver*", to solve or *re*solve. "Simultaneously a technical and a social skill", *inventar* is a philosophy of the everyday that enables "citizens to improvise in adverse circumstances" (Del Real & Pertierra, 2008, p. 78). It is both a term and a practice that emerged out of the crisis of the Special Period, and is one that I encountered regularly while living in Havana. Somewhat coincidentally, so too was the term *inventar* used in a historic speech delivered in Havana by then-President Barack Obama[42]. "*El Cubano inventa del aire*", he said. "The Cuban invents out of thin air". It is a phrase that Cubans across the island know all-too-well, and as such, it was received by the audience with much applause. That President Obama delivered this particular comment in Spanish was indeed an attempt to both appeal to, and to compliment the ingenuity of Cubans. Only after months of reflection did it become clear to me that sound and listening also function as a means through which residents engage the practice of *inventar*. What they invent however, is quite simply, their presence amidst the urban terrain. And they do so in ways that are tacit, embodied, and in the context of everyday life. They do so, seemingly, in thin air.

[42] The speech was delivered on March 22, 2016 in the Gran Teatro de la Habana Alicia Alonso, and was televised worldwide. It marked the first visit to Cuba by a U.S. President in nearly a century.

Throughout this dissertation, I developed ethnographic accounts of neighbourhood settings across Havana, which are the localized, circumscribed geographies in which the sounds of everyday activity and events bring the city to life. Here, open spaces such as doors and windows, and transitional spaces such as balconies and porticoes, facilitate communicatory exchanges across thresholds that at least theoretically divide public and private life. I referred to the act of listening to—and through—the physical spaces of the city as *trans-liminal listening*: a mode of communication characteristic of almost every neighbourhood in the city. By extending one's aural awareness beyond the limits of the visual environment, residents mobilize "acoustic communities" (World Soundscape Project, 1977; 1978), which are social formations that emerge not on the basis of audibility alone, but on account of the shared desire to circumvent the limitations of their material reality. Borrowing from both soundscape studies (Schafer, 1993; Truax, 2001) and the work of media historian Kate Lacey (2011; 2014), I conceived of the acoustic community as a (and at some moments, even *the*) means through which enables residents to temporarily attain a measure of control over the spaces of their neighbourhood. By listening through the open spaces of the built environment, residents collectively enact a social and spatial awareness that reclaims the spaces of the city, which I consider an enactment of sonic citizenship. Here, at the intersection of sound, listening, and the design of the urban landscape, Havana emerges not as a city falling into ruin, nor as one designed for international travellers alone. Instead, in sound we hear a city that, quite simply, belongs to those who live there.

The notion of sonic citizenship offers a means of conceptualizing sound and citizenship not as an institutionalized status bound to the political architecture of the nation-state, but rather, as a social practice that residents enact in the everyday spaces of the city. It does so by borrowing from conceptions of citizenship formulated in the context of other global cities, which are generated by individuals and communities who acquire the "right to the city". In so doing, this project builds upon existing scholarly research that conceives of citizenship as an urban condition (see Sassen, 2008; Holston, 1998; Cadava & Levy, 2003, Isin, 2000; Lefebvre, 1996; 2014), and it brings it into the context of Havana and into the realm of sound and listening. This was precisely the aim of Chapter Two: to survey particular strands of disciplinary knowledge with which to develop the theoretical foundation for my ethnographic observations. Sound, I argued,

represents an often overlooked part of urban life, yet it plays an integral role amidst the city's cultural geography. In particular, it establishes a means for residents to engage participatory modes of communication in light of the exclusionary logic of the city. Such an approach raises the critical question: beyond the examples presented in Chapters Four, Five, and Six, what other ways do residents employ sound and listening to negotiate Havana's tenuous material and economic conditions? This is a question that offers possibilities for further research on the city.

As a term and a concept, sonic citizenship opens up new ways of thinking about everyday urban life. It offers new approaches to understanding the politics of the urban terrain; it unearths unexplored narratives about the ways in which residents inhabit urban spaces; but above all, it looks—or rather, it listens—for the enactment of political agency when other, more traditional approaches may conclude it is absent. The utility of sonic citizenship is therefore not limited to a singular urban, or regional context, and as such, it extends far beyond the city of Havana alone. It is a fertile conceptual model that can be employed in the study of most any global city. It demands the study of sound and listening as tacit, embodied modes of communication, and in so doing, it listens for the ways in which individuals and communities alike make claims over the spaces of the global city. Citizenship, as a "practice and project", as Sassen (2008) observes, is contingent upon the ability for inhabitants to assert their collective, embodied presence amidst the urban terrain. Such an approach has yet to be explored, on the one hand, in the body of literature surrounding sound and citizenship, and on the other, in research on global cities. In this regard, sonic citizenship both borrows from and extends the agendas of sound studies and urban studies alike. Future research in both areas could therefore engage the idea of sonic citizenship, and listen to how residents worldwide inhabit urban centres on the basis of sound and listening.

Sonic citizenship as both a term and concept emerged through the methodology of sonic ethnography, the details of which I elucidated in Chapter Three. My approach to doing sound-based ethnographic research borrows equally from soundscape studies (Schafer, 1993; Truax, 2001; Westerkamp, 2006) and sensory anthropology (Erlmann, 2004; Howes, 2003; Pink, 2009), and it consists of on-the-ground techniques such as soundwalking, dialoguing with residents about their localized acoustic knowledge, capturing audio documentation, and above all, listening with curiosity, attention, and patience. My use of such techniques in Havana translated into what at the time felt like

an ad hoc fieldwork experience. I followed the sounds that captured my attention as someone who is not intimately familiar with their history, and at times, even their social function. In short, I followed my ear, so to speak. The support I received by the community at Fundación Fernando Ortiz clarified many questions I had, and pointed me toward particular places in the city that may have been of interest. By the end of my academic residency, I compiled nearly 70 digital recordings, which are now archived and housed at the Fundación in digital format, and are available for the use of local artists, scholars, and students. For my project however, the utility of these recordings was not immediately apparent. In fact, it was not until after I returned to Vancouver that I became aware of the importance of those recorded moments and how I might represent them in this dissertation. It took much reading, re-listening, and contemplation before arriving at what I considered the most effective way of doing so.

It was for this reason that the chapter in this dissertation dedicated to methodology proposed a theory of spatial listening rather than simply elucidating the details of what I did, what I heard, and what I recorded. Beginning with trans-liminal listening in the context of the local geography, and extending outward to listening to what I've referred to as "space beyond space", I argued for a particular approach to perceiving local worlds insofar as they are embedded in broader narratives of historical change. Sound, much like other attributes of spatial experience, also has a history that can be followed across both time and space. Borrowing from Doreen Massey's (1991) conception of place as a "constellation of social relations" (p. 28), I brought to bear the present-day meaning of sound, and its contingency upon global mobilities of people, ideas, and finance over the course of time. I thought not only in terms of the spaces in which sound can be heard, but about its history, and its relationship to regimes of power that emanate from disparate geographies. Sound, as a particular dimension of place, in turn also articulates the "constellation" to which Massey refers. Sonic ethnographers must therefore be experts in listening, but not simply to the sounds that surround them. They must also listen to the ways that local sounds acquire meaning in relation to events and processes that emanate from geographies both unseen and unheard. Such an approach can inform further sound-based ethnographic studies that seek to recover the stories of communities who have been subjugated, dispossessed, and silenced.

During all of my listening endeavours, the tenuous conditions of the city were present, even if I wasn't aware of it at the time. The first of which that I elucidated in the

pages of this dissertation took place in my own neighbourhood and consisted of the sounds of water, which I explored in Chapter Four. The sounds of errant streams and flows emanating from the rooftop above to the laneway below opened up a series of questions that I followed back to the architectural and infrastructural ruination of the neighbourhood in which I lived. Yet, after dialoguing with friends and acquaintances who reside in other parts of the city, I found that the material conditions I encountered were in no way limited to my neighbourhood alone. On the contrary, architectural and infrastructural degradation comprise everyday life in virtually every neighbourhood in Havana, and for most residents, such conditions are quite familiar. Overpopulation as a result of the crisis of the Special Period, the institutional neglect of Havana throughout the Revolutionary era, the infrastructural improvements made during the early years of the Republican era, and architecture built during the colonial era, all represent historical moments that are brought to bear in every episode of overflow, runoff and flooding. As such, the sounds of dripping water that woke me virtually every morning set me not only on a literal journey to the rooftop of my apartment, but also, on conceptual journey that brought me to a variety of moments and places in the history of the city.

Yet, it was not only my ethnographic and conceptual journey that began in sound and listening. In the context of my neighbourhood—and likely, many others in Havana—the entire episode of overflow and laneway flooding gets played out in similar ways. The sounds of the water runoff alert nearby neighbours of the overflow, which is further articulated by the voices of those at ground level and those whose apartments overlook the laneway. Since everyone is aware of the disruption it causes—in particular to those whose ground level apartment opens up into the laneway—they all chime in, in order to quickly and effectively mitigate the disruption. To listen to the running water is therefore to listen for the impending overflow with the best interest of each member of the community in mind. In so doing, the acoustic community is mobilized with the intent of bringing the overflow to an end before the laneway is flooded. Much more than a daily inconvenience, the sounds of overflow and runoff and the neighbourhood activity that follows represents some of the ways that my neighbours act communally in the context of the degradation and overpopulation of their built environment. These are the moments, ordinary as they may be, during which residents collectively enact a measure of control over their lived spaces. They are the moments that residents offer subtle (or, in this case, not-so-subtle) hints about the city they aspire to inhabit. But above all, the

moments during which residents coalesce in the acoustic community are precisely those during which sonic citizenship is enacted.

Another aural experience that began as nothing more than a casual encounter but evolved into the account I developed in Chapter Five consisted of the sounds of *el heladero*, the ice cream vendor. Drawing upon moments in Havana's history to contextualize my ethnographic observations, this chapter contributes not simply a present-day ethnography, but a lesser known aural aspect of the history of the city. It does so by developing, in reverse chronology, the various manifestations of ice cream vending on the streets of Havana. Ironically, this history begins not with a sound, but with a historical era defined by silence: for two decades, beginning in the early 1990s, mobile ice cream vendors stopped travelling the streets on account of Cuba's economic crisis. But because two decades alone do not comprise the complete history of the vendor, my questions extended much further into the past. The ice cream vendor first appeared on the streets of Havana in the late nineteenth century, and its original sonic signature was much the same as most other vendors on the streets today: the *pregón*. Throughout the century, ice cream vending took on a number of different configurations, and its sounds included bell ringing, which was used beginning mid-century right up until the 1980s, and of course, the novelty chime music heard in the city today. I offer this history as a means of arguing that, throughout much of the twentieth century, ice cream vendors—and their characteristic sounds—have mobilized acoustic communities that enable residents to inhabit the city on their own terms. It is a sound that conditions a series of moments during which sonic citizenship has been enacted over the course of the previous century.

By simultaneously listening trans-liminally across the open spaces of the built environment and into the city's history, which resonates through the sounds of the vendor and the communities that surround it, I animated a historical narrative grounded not in political rupture, but in historical continuity; I developed an account of the city not from the top-down, but from the bottom-up; and in so doing, I located an urban geography characterized not by unequivocal exclusion, but one that, quite simply, belongs to those who live there. To listen to the sound of the vendor is to enact a form of citizenship that grounds citizens firmly in spaces that, time and again, have been destabilized by forces imposed from above. Such an approach offers a particularly fertile point of departure for future work, insofar as it generates a new history—an aural

history—of the city. Following the work of historians Alejandra Bronfman and Andrew Grant Wood (2012), who issued a call for new sonic histories in the Caribbean and Latin America, my study of the ice cream vendor represents only *one* history of *one* possible sound that can be told in the context of Havana. There remain myriad histories to be "un-aired", to borrow a term from Bruce R. Smith (2004), about the city of Havana and those who live there. To do so is to encounter some of the many ways that residents live their city both today and throughout the past. This raises the critical question: what further histories of Havana emerge if we think with and through sound?

The final series of aural experiences that I elucidated in the pages of this dissertation took place in Havana's present-day tourist district. In Chapter Six, I recounted some of my experiences walking through the streets of Habana Vieja, a colonial geography revitalized in the name of the city's re-emergent tourist economy. A route best travelled by foot, these spaces, as well as the shops, bars, and cafés that line the streets, are often occupied by thousands of international travellers. Economically, the district remains out of reach for most residents, while homes even one block away from the tourist routes are in a state of disrepair to the extent that they are in danger of collapsing. However, the geography accommodates quite differently the demographic that I represent. That I was perceived as an international traveller—which indeed I am—conditioned the results of my ethnographic research since many of the sounds I encountered welcomed my presence. As a white, Western male, my positionality and therefore my very presence inspired both streetside merchants and the wait staff of restaurants alike to vocalize their intentions and to persuade me to consume. From time to time, even street hustlers discreetly captured my attention with the hope of generating transactions on the informal market. All of this conditioned an ethnographic experience in Habana Vieja that was politically charged in a way that other areas of the city were not. The differences between who I am and those who surround me were made tangible, which raised the question, how do I, a temporary resident of the city, listen to the many political tensions and struggles that comprise Habana Vieja's soundscapes?

In spite of the fact that residents are living amidst exclusionary geographies both economically and in terms of the built environment, I argue that sound and listening represent one way that they maintain an embodied presence in the spaces of the historic district. Street hawkers who sell their wares to residents, and the everyday activities of the local population remain audible in spaces that are overwhelmingly populated by

international travellers. Amidst a geography where the sounds of Cuba's musical past are ubiquitous, the present-day musical practices of residents are all but silenced. However, if we listen with a discerning ear, we hear them collectively engaging media practices that intervene with the musical histories being sold to tourist audiences. In particular, we hear teenagers listening to the sounds of *reggaeton*, a contemporary musical form, on their cellular phones as they walk the streets of the district. In order to hear these subtle, everyday sounds as political events, we must think about them historically, across political eras. We must remain mindful that the history of this geography is one of dispossession, which in turn conditions the relationship between residents and their city in the present. In so doing, I argued that the everyday events of residents in the spaces of Habana Vieja, subtle as they may be, offer a means for them to negotiate territorial dispossession through public, everyday practices. This raises the question: what are some of the many other ways that residents maintain access to the spaces of the heritage district, and how might we locate their sonic articulation?

Just as important as what was audible on my soundwalks through Habana Vieja was that which I could not hear. Inaudible, though no less present, were many of the informal economic practices that residents engage. Sex tourism in particular is an economy that is both ubiquitous and visually apparent. Women (and to a lesser extent, men) mill about on the streets and in the public squares just off the beaten path. They participate in an informal economy that I encountered on my many soundwalks, and on my many travels through the tourist spaces of the city. In sound however, that economy remains inaudible. Typically, sex workers communicate their intentions not aurally but visually, by making eye contact with passers by, some of whom are potential customers. They engage discreet embodied practices undertaken with a guarded presence. I regard my inability to sonically discern this activity, in part, on account of the decisions I made as I moved through the spaces of the district. I remained mindful of who I was, how I was positioned by others, with whom I spoke, and above all, the spaces through which I moved. But so too is it a shortcoming of the method itself: in silence, there remains much that is unspoken and unheard. This points toward the need to remain mindful of the limitations of sound and to be aware of both the multi-sensoriality *and* the historicity of embodied encounters. This idea pertains not only to the silence of sex workers in Habana Vieja, but also to other practices in other spaces of the city, where sound simply

cannot communicate the events and activity that comprise a particular neighbourhood or municipality.

That I was unable to hear evidence of illicit practices such as sex tourism amidst Havana's informal economy raises a further point about the limitations of the study. Throughout the dissertation, I develop a series of accounts that communicate the relationship between what I term "residents" and the urban terrain. Here, I take cues from the literature on citizenship in urban studies, which interrogates residents writ large and the practices that they engage in order to make claims over the spaces of the city. The "urban subject", as Saskia Sassen (2015) observes, "can partly override the religious subject, the ethnic subject, the racialized subject and, in certain settings, also the differences of class" (para. 27). Here, Sassen positions the struggle over space ahead of the multiplicity of ways in which the resident(s) might identify. However, as an informal economy such as sex work demonstrates, the urban experience is always and already delineated on the basis of the race, gender, age, and the social class to which one belongs. This is particularly salient in the context of Havana, where on the one hand, the issue of race has, throughout its history, been a determining factor in the level of citizenship one can acquire. On the other hand, so too does gender figure centrally as (young) women overwhelmingly comprise the demographic that participates in sex tourism. With this in mind, the study of sound in Havana (and elsewhere) demands the consideration of the aforementioned categories of analysis. Studies of race and gender in particular are themes that have long been considered by scholars who conduct ethnographic work in and on Cuba (Andaya, 2014; Berg, 2004; Sawyer, 2006; Fernandez, 2010), and they must be taken up in future sound studies research on the city.

In spite of these shortcomings, each of the case studies in this dissertation nevertheless offered new ways of engaging the political life of Havana. They offered as yet unexamined points of departure to interrogate the city not solely in terms of its architectural heritage, nor as a political institution, but as a social and spatial landscape inhabited by residents. And by bringing to light (or as Barry Blesser and Linda-Ruth Salter (2007) might term it, by "illuminating") several everyday moments, this dissertation offers more than simply a story about sound and listening in Havana. It also contributes more than yet another account of Cuban innovation and ingenuity—important as it may be to seek out these perspectives. Instead, it communicates a story about individuals

who live alongside one another, and whose relationship is, albeit momentarily, defined by communal participation and everyday acts of solidarity. It is a story about communities that are mobilized not simply on the basis of geographical proximity, but because of the need to establish a unity of purpose. And above all, it is a story about individuals who collectively aspire to mitigate situations in which the odds are stacked against them. For over 500 years, the political institutions that have governed Havana have imposed an exclusionary political will from above. Yet, time and again, residents have found ways to negotiate this exclusion from below. These negotiations, though easily overlooked and often silenced, also comprise the story of Havana. It is up to us to listen with a curious and attentive ear to recover some of them.

It is my hope that the account of Havana through sound that I offered in the pages of this dissertation can, to some modest extent, contribute a new approach to understanding the everyday life of the city. Any tangible change experienced by residents themselves must first be articulated in the ways in which we collectively conceive of Havana as a global (and globalized) urban centre. The study of sonic citizenship allows us to uncover new narratives of the city grounded not in the themes of dispossession or exclusion, but instead, in ways that foreground Havana's functionality and even vibrancy. There is no better moment to do so than the present, in light of the ongoing geo-political rapprochement between Cuba and the United States. Without careful and coordinated attention, the results of the present moment of transition could quite easily echo those that took place over a century ago, at the onset of Cuba's Republican era. If the island's largest and most populated city is to become a democratic and participatory urban centre, it will have to find a way to simultaneously delimit the authority of forces external to it, and to integrate and cultivate the knowledge that always already exists from within. Only then can its future course be charted, at least in part, by those who live there. Only then will Havana emerge as a city modelled after the aims, desires, and aspirations of residents themselves.

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Appendix

Whereas Chapter Three is dedicated to elucidating the theory that guides this project's methodological approach, this section instead provides further details of my on-the-ground fieldwork experiences. It articulates some of the many decisions I made while conducting fieldwork in Havana, and to a lesser extent, while assembling the project in Vancouver. In particular, the Appendix offers information about the formal interviews I conducted; it offers an account of my ethical considerations while generating field recordings and conducting interviews alike; it describes the documentary research that comprises much of Chapter Five; and lastly, it illustrates my approach to audio documentation while I was in Havana. Here, in this final section of the Appendix I consider the scholarly trajectory from which the methodological technique of field recording emerged (that of soundscape studies), and the influence it had on my work in Havana. I additionally include a chart that communicates the details of each recording that I captured including file name, date, time, and location.

Interviews

Unlike anthropological studies in which interpersonal dialogues comprise the primary mode of data acquisition, interviews with respondents assume somewhat of a peripheral status in this project. Instead, my own listening experiences, the audio recordings that document those experiences, and the historicity of the sounds that I collected, are what guides the research. In part, my emphasis on audio documentation comes as a result of my commitment to compiling an audio archive, which was one of the main contributions that I made to the collections of Fundación Fernando Ortiz during my academic residency (my other contributions were the presentation of my preliminary findings in a public lecture for the local academic community, and the publication of a corresponding academic article in the journal CATAURO, which is published by the Fundación). But at the same time, it is also a result of the influence of soundscape studies on my work, an area of study largely motivated by the practice of audio recording and the subsequent generation of a sound archive (World Soundscape Project, 1973; 1977; Schafer, 1993; Truax, 2001). The result was that I conducted few formal interviews: only four in total. Nevertheless, each of them served as supplemental

information that guided my thoughts, the questions that I asked, and the recordings that I eventually captured.

The four respondents with whom I conducted interviews were Maria, Christian, Hector and José. All of them are longtime residents of the city, and each was selected through a nonrandom convenience sampling technique. I was introduced to Maria through a friend on account of our mutual interests in music (even though the topic of my research was not music per se). The three other respondents however, I simply happened to encounter during my daily travels throughout the city. Christian, who is a student, spends much of his time walking the streets of El Vedado, travelling to and from school. The sidewalk was the place that we connected following a question he asked about my handheld recorder while I was recording a soundwalk. Hector, who is a landscaper, works streetside in municipalities across the city, and I approached him to speak with me after several days of polite salutations as I walked past his temporary job site in my neighbourhood. And José was again someone who I approached on account of his line of work. He is the *afilador de cuchillo* (the knife sharpener) who traverses neighbourhoods across the city, and who visited the neighbourhood in which I lived once or twice per week throughout the duration of my stay.

Maria is a former opera singer who lives in Centro Habana and works as Cuban cultural ambassador. At the time of our meeting, she was 64 years old and had completed a prestigious singing career. I was presented to her by our mutual friend as a visiting scholar conducting cultural research, and so as she understood it, the reason for our meeting was to discuss the topic of music. But when she found that my interests were not musical per se, but rather, that they concerned the sounds of the city more broadly, Maria was slightly taken aback. Nevertheless, upon considering her experience of sound outside the musical context alone, she found that she had a lot to say about the city of Havana, how it sounds today, and how it sounded in the past. In fact, Maria recounted experiences as far back as her childhood in Centro Habana and she did so with fondness—particularly when considering the sounds of the ice cream vendor. Maria's candid thoughts offer an important contribution to my analysis in Chapter Five, and a quote that emerged from our dialogue is the only direct quote from any of the four interviews that appears in the dissertation (she described the sound of the vendor as "*un sonido que llenó las calles*", a sound that filled the streets).

Hector, who was 54 years of age at the time we spoke, is educated as an architect yet works as a landscaper. He lives in El Vedado, and makes his living cleaning and manicuring the district's roadways, boulevards, and public parks. He has lived there since 1958, the year he was born, which also happened to be the year before the Revolution. Hector had much to say about the extent to which the district has changed since his childhood, socially, culturally, and in terms of its visual appearance.

Christian, who was 32 years old at the time, is a psychology student at the University of Havana who also lives in El Vedado—only four blocks from where I was staying. Among other things, we discussed his thoughts about the neighbourhood and his affinity for the city of Havana. We also talked about his life as a student (something that I was easily able to relate to), the amount of time he spends studying, and some of the other things he enjoys doing in the city, which include taking walks along the *malecón* (the city's waterfront esplanade), playing dominoes with friends, and so on.

Lastly, José is a *vendedor ambulate* who visited our neighbourhood at least once, maybe twice per week. He lives in the municipality of Marianao (which is southwest of El Vedado), and travels large parts of the city on his bicycle, soliciting customers for his knife sharpening services. I decided to speak with José after hearing his heralding call on numerous occasions. In much the same way as the ice cream vendor, so too are the sounds of the knife sharpener musical, however knife sharpeners make use of the pan flute rather than chime music. The topics of our discussion consisted mainly of those that surround José's chosen profession. For instance, we discussed how he became an *afilador de cuchillo* (a knife sharpener), for how long he's worked as one, where across the city the job takes him, and so on.

Following the interview with José, I asked him if I could document some of his signature sounds with my audio recorder, including both the pan flute, as well as the grinding sound of a knife being sharpened—a sound loud enough that nearby residents can easily hear it from within their homes. Interestingly, the device with which he sharpens knives is a contraption mounted on his bicycle. By drawing a leaver that realigns the bicycles gears, a grinding stone located in front of his seat begins to spin as he pedals (instead of the rear wheel). It is a fairly simple technology, though its design is also incredibly creative, and it is yet another example of local ingenuity with material technologies.

The recordings I captured of José, both the pan flute and the sharpening alike, are listed in the archive found here in the Appendix as recording numbers 36-39. The image below depicts José using his contraption to sharpen a knife.

Image of José, the *afilador de cuchillo* (the knife sharpener)
Photo taken by author

All of the interviews were comprised, at least in part, of questions that had to do with sound. Aside from José, who was the only respondent that did not live in one of my targeted municipalities, all three of the others lived in the municipalities in which I worked. I asked each of them to describe the neighbourhood in which they live, to discuss some of the sounds they associate with those neighbourhoods, and to recount some of their memories of sound and listening in either their neighbourhood spaces, or in spaces across the city more broadly.

In Chapter Six, my analysis is aided not by an interview per se, but by a listening session I conducted with my friend Dennis, who is also a full-time resident of Havana. It was a rather informal encounter, which took place after I requested he listen to a recording I captured while soundwalking on calle Obispo in Habana Vieja (recording #48). My motivation for asking him to do so is because the acoustic environments of Habana Vieja, and calle Obispo in particular, are unique relative to those found in the

rest of city in that they are comprised mainly of sounds made by and for international travellers. The questions that propelled our discussion were, broadly, is the social and economic exclusion of the tourist industry articulated in the soundscape? If so, how? And to what extent do residents engage in similar practices in the tourist spaces of Habana Vieja as they do throughout the rest of the city? I was curious about whether or not Dennis might be able to locate a sound, or a series of sounds that are indicative of local activity that I myself might have missed. And as I indicate in Chapter Six, Dennis did indeed point out several sounds that I did not hear while capturing the recording, nor did I hear them upon the first few playbacks. In particular, he was able to point out the distant sound of a street vendor selling candies and sweets. As a result, this listening experience is integral to the analysis that I pursue throughout the remainder of the chapter, which I in turn apply to the musical listening practices of residents.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout the project, I followed the guidelines established by Simon Fraser University's Office of Research Ethics. This included either signing a waiver and/or orally requesting informed consent prior to each interview. All of the respondents agreed with these conditions, which created no known risks to them.

Of the four formal interviews I conducted, I recorded three of them. One of the four respondents preferred not to be recorded, and instead I took written notes during that interview. Three of the four respondents went on record using their real names, though one requested anonymity. In that case, I have referred to the individual with the use of a pseudonym. All of the interviews were conducted in public spaces: at an outdoor café, at a restaurant, or in a neighbourhood park.

Much like formal interviews, decisions about where and when to make field recordings also raise ethical concerns. However, unlike formal interviews, the protocol for the ethics of field recording is far less straightforward. For instance, what to record? Which sounds are too personal? How could I negotiate the divide between public and private when the acoustic spaces of Havana are always some combination of both? In light of these issues, each recording context warranted its own series of decisions. However, as a rule, I refrained from documenting the sounds of private or intimate household matters. Instead, I tended to focus on the more common, and what might

typically be considered socially benign sounds that emerged from people's homes. For instance, music playing on a stereo, cooking in the kitchen, the sounds of the television or radio, and so on.

However, the ethics of audio recording become most tangible not in the act of documentation as such, but rather, in their representation. In this sense, ethics is not simply a question of *what* is recorded, but also of *how* the researcher works with the sounds. Sound artist John Drever (2002) refers to the indiscriminate use of sounds by sound artists as a form of "sonic fetishism" or "sonic tourism, where the concert performance is akin to a public showing of personal holiday slides" (p. 21). Sonic ethnography is of course propelled by a different series of motivations than sound art, but the concern over representation remains the same. As such, I developed this study not by using all or even most of the sounds that I experienced while in Havana; instead, I worked selectively and extensively with only a small number of sounds that comprise my sound archive. I did so in order to generate the necessary social, political, and above all, historical context that surrounds each one. Only then can the representation of a localized soundscape and the everyday practice of listening be attuned to the balance of power that sound articulates (or imbalance as is often the case). That is to say, my aim with working with a select number of sounds was to establish the ways that the localized context within which they are heard are embedded amidst broader global narratives of historical change.

Documentary Research

I returned to Vancouver from Havana with a wealth of material: written notes, audio recordings, and personal experiences alike. However, for some time, I remained uncertain about which recordings and which experiences might be worthy of further exploration. The sound of the ice cream vendor in particular piqued my curiosity, not simply because it was a sound that I was familiar with long before my visit to Havana, but because of all that it entailed: it was a sound heard often on the streets of the city, it is easily recognized by most residents, it is produced by a material technology, and above all, it fell silent for nearly two decades at the onset of the Special Period, which offered a political dimension to the sound that was quite palpable.

The combination of these circumstances encouraged me to pursue a line of questioning surrounding Havana's ice cream vendor that propelled me further into the city's past. What did the vendor sound like before it was silenced? What did it sound like before the chime music box was used to herald its presence? And ultimately, when did ice cream vendors first appear on the streets of Havana?

These questions compelled me to think in new ways about the vendor, and so too did they push me to think in new ways about how to answer them. I drew from the sound of popular music by using the song "Helado Sobre Ruedas" by Gema y Pavel, which offered information about the collective sentiment that surrounded the silencing of the vendor. At the time, I was familiar with the band, but not the song. However, while reading through Robin Moore's *Music and Revolution* (2006), I fortuitously noticed in his treatment of contemporary *nueva trova* a reference to the song "Helado Sobre Ruedas" (Ice Cream on Wheels). This was useful to me for a variety of reasons, but it also raised the question: how did the vendor sound before it was silenced?

Delving into the history of the ice cream vendor's heralding music (the most comprehensive of which is the work of musicologist Daniel T. Neely) offered a robust illustration of the history of the street vending practice not in Havana, but in the United States. My task then, was to map this history onto Havana. To do so, I began by exchanging a series of emails with Mark W. Nichols, the President of Nichols Electronics, the most popular commercial manufacturer of ice cream music boxes anywhere in the world. This conversation offered me a thorough explanation of the material technology that vendors used (that is, the electronic music box) beginning in the 1950s, which was the case in the United States and Cuba alike.

However, what it did not tell me was how ice cream vendors sounded before this moment. To find out, I took up two complementary approaches: searching for references to the ice cream vendor in literature, and finding photos that illustrate what they might have sounded like. In literature, there are indeed no shortages of memoirs of the island, many of which were authored by members of the diasporic community. Online, I found two incredibly useful accounts in this regard, one by Roberto Diego López (2015), and the other by Iris M. Díaz (2010). Both authors recall, quite fondly, the presence of the ice cream vendor on the streets of the city and in Díaz's case, even the excitement that it generated.

I supplemented these accounts with two separate photographs, one of the Guarina vendor that I located on the website www.havanacollectibles.com (they were selling the hardcopy of the photo for US$75—a transaction I was tempted to make but ultimately did not), and the other in the Cuban Heritage Collection, an online archive hosted online by the University of Miami Libraries. Both photos helped me to reconstruct the sounds of the vendors throughout the mid-century (which included bell ringing, and the sounds of a *quitrines*, or a horse-drawn carriage), before the electronic music box was widely used.

Still however, the ice cream vendor's presence in Havana predates the mid-century representations found in the memoirs and in the previous two photos. Evidence that this is indeed the case, I located in a photograph in the Library of Congress Archives, which is also available online. The photo is taken some time between 1890-1910, which corresponds to the precise historical moment that ice cream vendors took to the streets in cities worldwide. As such, this is the earliest text-based reference I was able to locate (in writing or photos alike) of ice cream vendors on the streets of Havana.

Audio Recordings

Most of my recordings were captured in the three areas of study central to the project: El Vedado, Centro Habana, and Habana Vieja. However, because I decided to thoroughly explore only a select few sounds (and therefore recordings), most of them do not appear in the pages of this dissertation. In addition, I captured audio recordings in other parts of the city that were also omitted from the dissertation (for instance, at Estadio Lantinoamericano, the baseball stadium in the municipality of Cerro). To be sure, there is much that could be said about all of these recordings, and each one can potentially be unpacked and developed into its own case study. Such an endeavour represents possibilities for future work on the city. The sound archive is housed at Fundación Fernando Ortiz, where it remains possible for a local artist, student, or scholar to take up a critical interrogation of these recordings.

The centrality of audio recording in the methodology of this project emerged in large part out of my role as a recordist for the 2010/2011 collection of sounds that comprise the Vancouver Soundscape Tape Collection. An ongoing project with a history that extends as far back as the 1970s, The Vancouver Soundscape was one of the first

comprehensive studies of an urban soundscape anywhere in the world. The first iteration of sounds that comprise the tape collection were captured in the 1970s by the original members of the World Soundscape Project. The second iteration came twenty years later, in the late 1990s, and were captured by recordist Robert MacNeven. The third iteration was developed twenty years later still, when I retraced the footsteps of those who developed first two collections, bookending forty years of sonic history in Vancouver.

My experience as the recordist for the Vancouver collection translated into the approach that I took up in Havana. This included such techniques as the decision to verbally comment at the outset of each recording about the date, time, location, and at times, even the weather conditions. In certain cases, I interjected in field recordings with running commentary, which is a particularly useful technique in situations in which I was mobile. All of these techniques enabled me to listen back to the recording and to immediately recognize the context in which they were captured.

However, field recording served not as an end in and of itself, but rather, as a means to an end. The small number of audio documents that I decided to work with, I used as a point of departure with which to think outward both geographically and temporally. On the one hand, I sought to situate the significance of these sounds in the neighbourhood setting. But on the other hand, I aimed to contextualize these sounds amidst broader narratives of historical change. Such an approach employs sound and listening to make observations not about the soundscape *per se*, but about everyday life in Havana, and the struggles faced by residents. By putting the localized observations of sonic ethnography in touch with global-historical narratives, I was able to listen to what I term “space beyond space”.

In terms of recording technique: some were made from a stationary, or fixed position. In such cases, I stood (or sat) in one place, while allowing the events and activity to unfold around me. Others were made while I was on the move, which typically entailed recording while soundwalking. The decisions that guided both approaches were made on the basis of the size of the geographical area I aimed to document. For larger spaces, such as calle Obispo in Habana Vieja, I took up a mobile approach. However, for events that took place in a circumscribed area, I remained stationary. This was of

course the case for all of the recordings that I captured while on the balcony of my residence in El Vedado.

There were also however, moments during which I desired a close-up account of the sounds that I captured. For instance, the series of recordings I made of the episode of water overflow and runoff (which comprised the topic of Chapter Four), were captured with the microphone sitting mere inches from the water. I did so in order to document the sounds of the water along each step of its route throughout the domestic spaces of my neighbourhood. Now, when representing the sequence, I can play very brief examples of the sounds of water as it moves through each part of its journey. Below, I include an example of one of the photos that visually documents me as I record the sounds of water in my neighbourhood.

A photo of me recording the sounds of water as they fall into the sewer
Photo taken by author

In the chart below, not all of the recordings are catalogued according to the place in which they were captured, nor are they listed chronologically, though I have attempted to offer geographical information for each. Instead, I have organized them haphazardly, according to either *theme* (i.e. music sounds), the *moment* at which they were recorded

(e.g. during a blackout), or the geographical *location*. All field recordings were captured in .wav format, however two of the three recorded interviews were captured in .mp3 format. The collection of recordings is both in my own possession, and is also available for retrieval at Fundación Fernando Ortiz in Havana. All of the recordings listed below were captured using a Zoom model H2N handheld audio recorder, and most of them were captured using the on-board microphone. There are several however that were captured using binaural, in-ear microphones, which is the case on the calle Obispo soundwalk (recording #48) that figures centrally in Chapter Six.

Lastly, I supplemented all of my audio recordings with corresponding visual documentation. While capturing sound with my handheld recorder, I was also sure to capture photographs using my smartphone. Not only does this allow for multimedia representation possibilities, but the metadata stored on a photograph offers information about both the date and time it was captured, as well as geo-location information which allows me to retrace my footsteps with precision.

	Theme/Moment/Location	File Name	Date	Duration
1	23 & L	ZOOM0054.WAV	Dec. 1, 2012	5:55
2	Balcony 1 (15 y Paseo—home)	ZOOM0010.WAV	Sept. 27, 2012	8:59
3	Balcony 2	ZOOM0013.WAV	Sept. 27, 2012	4:10
4	Balcony 3	ZOOM0049.WAV	Nov. 26, 2012	1:33
5	Balcony 4	ZOOM0059.WAV	Dec. 2, 2012	3:16
6	Balcony 5 (Sunday Morning Soundscape)	ZOOM0069.WAV	Dec. 9, 2012	8:02
7	Baseball Game/Ciudad Sportivo/Adult Game	ZOOM0071.WAV	Dec. 9, 2012	23:34
8	Baseball Game/Ciudad Sportivo/Children's Game	ZOOM0070MS.WAV	Dec. 9, 2012	8:11
9	Baseball Game/Stadio Latino Americano/ Hav vs SCU 1	ZOOM0074.WAV	Dec. 18, 2012	3:43
10	Baseball Game/Stadio Latino Americano/ Hav vs SCU 2	ZOOM0075.WAV	Dec 18, 2012	5:17
11	Baseball Game/Stadio Latino Americano/ Hav vs SCU 3	ZOOM0076.WAV	Dec. 18, 2012	1:44
12	Baseball Game/Stadio Latino Americano/ Hav vs SCU 4	ZOOM0077.WAV	Dec. 18, 2012	1:55
13	Blackout (Apagon at 15 y Paseo)	ZOOM0017.WAV	Sept. 29, 2012	12:45
14	Carlos Tercero (Commercial Centre) 1	ZOOM0056.WAV	Dec. 1, 2012	11:14
15	Carlos Tercero (Commercial Centre) 2	ZOOM0057.WAV	Dec. 1, 2012	5:03
16	Carlos Tercero (Commercial Centre) 3	ZOOM0058.WAV	Dec. 1, 2012	7:18
17	Prado Soundwalk 1	ZOOM0052.WAV	Nov 26, 2012	3:26
18	Prado Soundwalk 2	ZOOM0053.WAV	Nov. 26, 2012	14:51
19	Soundwalk from Hotel Inglaterra to Capitolio	ZOOM0059.WAV	Nov. 26, 2012	9:08
20	Cuatro Caminos Mercado 1	ZOOM0024.WAV	Oct. 4, 2012	3:36
21	Cuatro Caminos Mercado 2	ZOOM0025.WAV	Oct. 4, 2012	3:16
22	Cuatro Caminos Mercado 3	ZOOM0026.WAV	Oct. 4, 2012	2:03
23	Infanta & Carlos Tercero	ZOOM0055.WAV	Dec. 1, 2012	6:19
24	La Virgen de la Caridad (church)	1 – at church daytime.WAV	Sept. 8, 2012	5:07
25	La Virgen de la Caridad (procession)	2 – procession.WAV	Sept. 8, 2012	12:12

26	La Virgen de la Caridad (soundwalk)	3 – soundwalk after procession.WAV	Sept. 8, 2012	6:36
27	La Virgen de la Mercedes	ZOOM0009.WAV	Sept. 24, 2012	5:10
28	Landscaping/Boulevard Sweeping	ZOOM0064.WAV	Dec. 5, 2012	1:50
29	Landscaping/Chapear	ZOOM0060.WAV	Dec. 5, 2012	1:21
30	Landscaping/Street Sweeping 1	ZOOM0062.WAV	Dec. 5, 2012	6:16
31	Landscaping/Street Sweeping 2	ZOOM0063.WAV	Dec. 5, 2012	2:36
32	Vendedores Ambulantes 1	ZOOM0014.WAV	Sept. 27, 2012	1:17
33	Vendedores Ambulantes 2	ZOOM0019.WAV	Sept. 28, 2012	1:14
34	Vendedores Ambulantes 3	ZOOM0021.WAV	Sept 28, 2012	1:48
35	El Heladero (Centro Habana)	ZOOM0029.WAV	Oct. 6, 2012	2:47
36	Knife Sharpener 1	ZOOM0012.WAV	Sept. 27, 2012	0:57
37	Knife Sharpener 2	ZOOM0022.WAV	Sept. 29, 2012	3:29
38	Knife Sharpener 3	ZOOM0033.WAV	Oct. 27, 2012	6:22
39	Knife Sharpener 4	ZOOM0034.WAV	Oct. 27, 2012	0:39
40	Mandy the Book Vendor 1	ZOOM0065.WAV	Dec. 5, 2012	3:37
41	Mandy the Book Vendor 2	ZOOM0066.WAV	Dec. 5, 2012	0:22
42	Mandy the Book Vendor 3	ZOOM0068.WAV	Dec. 5, 2012	0:33
43	Live Band @ Av de los Presidentes 1	ZOOM0072.WAV	Dec. 10, 2012	3:14
44	Live Band @ Av de los Presidentes 2	ZOOM0072.WAV	Dec. 10, 2012	2:55
45	Nadilla Project w Pampi 1	ZOOM0047.WAV	Nov. 21, 2012	14:23
46	Nadilla Project w Pampi 2	ZOOM0048.WAV	Nov. 21, 2012	4:26
47	Calle Neptuno Soundwalk (Centro Habana)	ZOOM0027.WAV	Oct. 4, 2012	27:39
48	Calle Obispo Soundwalk (Habana Vieja)	ZOOM0051.WAV	Nov. 26, 2012	14:21
49	Plaza de la Paloma (Habana Vieja)	ZOOM0031.WAV	Oct. 9, 2012	2:24
50	Comparsa in Old Havana	ZOOM0030.WAV	Oct. 9, 2012	1:17
51	Avenida Paseo Soundwalk	ZOOM0067.WAV	Dec. 6, 2012	17:05
52	Thunderstorm 1 (Balcony @ 15 y Paseo)	ZOOM0005.WAV	Sept. 20, 2012	2:07
53	Thunderstorm 2 (Balcony @ 15 y Paseo)	ZOOM0006.WAV	Sept. 20, 2012	2:51
54	Thunderstorm 3 (Balcony @ 15 y Paseo)	ZOOM0007.WAV	Sept. 20, 2012	2:12
55	Thunderstorm 4 (Balcony @ 15 y Paseo)	ZOOM0008.WAV	Sept. 20, 2012	4:03
56	Ruins @ Calzada y 2	ZOOM0061.WAV	Dec. 4, 2012	4:05
57	Water Project Garage 1	ZOOM0035.WAV	Oct. 27, 2012	1:20

	(15 y Paseo)			
58	Water Project Garage 2 (15 y Paseo)	ZOOM0036.WAV	Oct. 27, 2012	1:17
59	Water Project Garage 3 (15 y Paseo)	ZOOM0037.WAV	Oct. 27, 2012	0:52
60	Water Project Ground Level 1	ZOOM0044.WAV	Oct. 27, 2012	4:57
61	Water Project Ground Level 2	ZOOM0045.WAV	Oct. 27, 2012	13:06
62	Water Project Rooftop 1	ZOOM0038.WAV	Oct. 27, 2012	8:05
63	Water Project Rooftop 2	ZOOM0040.WAV	Oct. 27, 2012	5:32
64	Water Project Rooftop 3	ZOOM0041.WAV	Oct. 27, 2012	2:53
65	Water Project Rooftop 4	ZOOM0042.WAV	Oct. 27, 2012	2:11
66	Water Project Rooftop 5	ZOOM0043.WAV	Oct. 27, 2012	1:58
67	Interview w Christian (student)	Interview w Christian.MP3	Oct. 5, 2012	18:32
68	Interview w Hector (architect)	Interview w Hector.MP3	Oct. 2, 2012	27:28
69	Interview w José (affilador)	Interview w José.MP3	Oct. 28, 2012	16:05