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DESIRING NATION: PROSTITUTION, CITIZENSHIP, AND MODERNITY IN CUBA, 1840-1920

BY

TIFFANY A. THOMAS-WOODARD

B.A., Spanish, Southwestern University, 1996
B.A., Art History, Southwestern University, 1996
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DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

History

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

May, 2007

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DEDICATION

For Blair, siempre

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Ph.D. Fellowship allowed me to live and work in Cuba for nine months in 2003. Finally, a CCWH Berkshire Conference of Women Historians Award, an American Historical Association Albert J. Beveridge Grant for Research in the History of the Western Hemisphere, a University of New Mexico Latin American and Iberian Institute Ph.D. Fellowship, and a Dean's Dissertation Scholarship provided much-needed financial support during the final writing phase.

Havana became a second home to me during the summer of 1996, when, as an undergraduate student at Southwestern University, I received the opportunity to carry out my first foreign research project. As my fascination with Cuban history has evolved and expanded since that time, so too has my circle of beloved Cuban friends and colleagues. In the summer of 2000 I had the great privilege of being adopted by Dr. José Tabares del Real of the Fundación Fernando Ortíz in Havana who generously provided the initial orientations for this project. Though I had hoped that my 2003 trip would provide countless additional hours of impromptu history lessons while strolling through Havana's busy streets or sipping *mojitos*, my hopes were dashed by Dr. Tabares' untimely death only months before my return to Cuba. Though he was not present to guide my research, I hope he will be pleased with the result. Without my in-country academic rudder, I initially feared my project would go careening into the rocks of general dissertation disorientation. Thankfully, many other generous Cubans stepped in to take me under their wing. Of these new mentors, I must certainly mention Marcelino Fajardo at MINREX and Tomás Fernández Robaina at the Biblioteca Nacional who helped to guide me through Cuba's bureaucratic maze during my initial weeks in Havana.

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the Manuscripts and Archives Collection at Yale University, and the National Archives of the United States of America in Washington, D.C. I am also eternally indebted to the interlibrary loan staff at the University of New Mexico and at California State University, Fullerton who valiantly tracked down key primary source materials for me—often with only a title to guide them.

During all the years of my nomadic wanderings (most, but not all, of them with an academic purpose), my family has been a safe harbor. My beloved parents, Wade and Gail Thomas have offered their home, their encouragement, and their friendship without hesitation and never once agreed with me when I said this task was impossible. My sister, Lauren Menn, has somehow magically transformed from a sweet, shy little girl into a beautiful, intelligent woman who inspires her big sister to be courageous. Both she and her husband, Anthony, are sources of endless joy to me. My brother, Jared Thomas, is one of the most truly creative individuals I have ever known and his profound insights on life motivate me to "think big." My maternal grandparents Mart and Patricia Melton are exactly how all grandparents should be—unflinchingly enthusiastic, dutifully curious, and exceptionally kind. Although my paternal grandparents are no longer with us in body, their indefatigable spirit and legacy of love is my bedrock.

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DESIRING NATION: PROSTITUTION, CITIZENSHIP, AND MODERNITY IN CUBA, 1840-1920

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Ph.D., History, University of New Mexico, 2007

ABSTRACT

This dissertation uses prostitution as a lens through which to study the intersections of gender, sexuality, and nation-building in late colonial and early republican Cuba. Between 1840 and 1920, Cuba underwent a series of profound transformations spurred by the abolition of slavery, national wars of independence, mass migration, and foreign occupation. My investigation of Spanish, Cuban, and U.S. sources reveals that as Cubans struggled to define a sense of national identity in the face of changing political alliances and shifting populations, prostitution became a focus for the expression of contemporary social and sexual anxieties. State policies, designed to control prostitutes' lives and labors during this period, thus occupied a heavily contested and dynamic terrain upon which state and local imperatives frequently collided. I find that state agents, local citizens, and prostitutes negotiated every aspect of Cuba's regulatory project, from the geographic boundaries of Havana's tolerance zone to the legal and medical precepts that guided the

treatment of venereal disease. For their part, prostitutes continuously subverted the supervisory and disciplinary intentions of the state by appropriating and rearticulating key aspects of government policy and ideology to suit their own needs. These negotiations over the form and function of Cuba's regulatory mechanism ultimately shaped, and were shaped by, broader competing discourses about citizenship, the legitimate exercise of state power, and the development of Cuba as a "modern" nation. This study thus contributes not only to the study of prostitution in Latin America, but also to our understandings of the complex intersections of power, identity, sexuality, and state formation during one of the most dynamic periods of Cuban history.

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INTRODUCTION

> Deviance is not a quality that lies in behavior itself, but in the interaction between those who commit an act and those who respond to it.
>
> Howard Saul Becker, *Outsiders*[1]

On 23 September 1888, a Cuban prostitute known only as, "La Madrileña," published a letter in Havana's daily newspaper, *La Cebolla.* A scathing critique of the state of Cuban politics and society, the commentary read:

> The Municipal Mayor, who is old and so grouchy even a fly won't land on him, has ordered that we not exhibit ourselves in the doorway of our establishment. Is this fair? In what country are industrialists prohibited from exhibiting their merchandise to the public?
>
> We, the "horizontals" of this capital pay more tax to the State than is required to exercise the vote. Yet, even though we contribute more than the other classes to the nourishment of the Treasury with the sweat of our…brows (frentes), we are treated like slaves, as if we were outside of the law. That is to say, we are considered citizens with duties but not rights.[2]

There is perhaps no more appropriate way to introduce a study of the structure and significance of prostitution in Havana, Cuba between 1840 and 1920 than by citing the lucid statement of an outraged prostitute living and working at the turn of the century. Within these few short lines are references to several of the key areas of contemporary

---

[1] Howard Saul Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: Fress Press, 1963), 12.

[2] *La Cebolla* (23 September 1888): 1. The original Spanish reads: "El Alcalde Municipal, que es viejo y regañon, no se le para una mosca encima, ha dispuesto que no podamos exhibirnos en la puerta de nuestro establecimiento. ¿Es esto justo? ¿En qué país se prohibe al industrial exponer al publico su mercancia? Las horizontales de esta capital pagamos más contribución al Estado que la que necesita para ser elector y elegible. Y, sin embargo, aunque contribuimos más que las otras clases a nutrir los fondos del Erario con el sudor de nuestras…frentes, se nos trata como si fuéramos esclavos, como si estuviésemos fuera de la ley. Es decir, que se nos considera ciudadanas para cumplir deberes pero no para gozar derechos."

national debate. Motivated perhaps first and foremost by the author's ire concerning legislation intended to limit the ability of prostitutes to solicit customers openly, this statement also offered a pointed critique of prevailing definitions of citizenship, the rights of the laboring classes, and the methods employed to "modernize" the Cuban nation.[3] Drawing on the emotionally-charged discourses of a burgeoning Cuban labor movement and poking at the still tender wounds of a national abolition struggle resolved only two years prior, this statement sounds an important note in the changing official discourse on urbanity, respectability, government, and nationhood in turn-of-the-century Cuba.

Negotiating Prostitution

Between 1840 and 1920, Cuba experienced three wars of independence (1868-1878, 1879-1880, and 1895-1898), abolition (1886), U.S. intervention (1898-1902 and 1906-1909), and the founding of the first Cuban republic (1902-1933). During this tumultuous time, Havana not only served as the island's principal commercial port but also as a primary destination of unemployed rural workers, emancipated slaves, and international migrants fleeing war-torn Europe. As Havana's population soared, the market in female prostitutes both grew and changed in nature. Successive waves of economically

---

[3] It should be noted that Cuba was by no means the only country implementing policies against public solicitation. Alain Corbin has likewise noted the existence of a body of legislation in nineteenth-century France—known as the "French System"—meant to discipline the prostitute by creating an enclosed milieu invisible to children and "honest" women that could more easily remain under constant supervision of the authorities. See Alain Corbin, *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France after 1850* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990). For information on the similar developments occurring in England between 1860 and 1914, see Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

oppressed local and foreign females migrated to the capital and many found employment providing sexual services for Havana's rapidly expanding population of urban male laborers.

The shifting geographic, social, and economic topography of mid-nineteenth-century Havana greatly impacted colonial policy toward prostitution. Prostitutes seeking access to clientele took up residence within the centralized commercial zones of the walled city. The presence of these "public women" within honorable neighborhoods prompted varying levels of anxiety among public officials and private citizens concerned with the potential impact of prostitution on the health and morality of both city and nation.[4] Colonial officials were thus forced to re-imagine Havana's socio-spatial landscape by reformulating existing social legislation in order to geographically segregate prostitutes—as well as many other members of the "unruly masses"—to the margins of the city. As we will see repeatedly throughout this study, however, official attempts to relegate prostitutes' lives and labors to the edges of the capital city were rarely successful.

---

[4] Some of the most influential contemporary works on the subject of prostitution included: Ramón María Alfonso, *La reglamentación de la prostitución: Breves apuntes sobre como debe ser en Cuba* (La Habana: Imprenta El Siglo XX, 1912); Céspedes, *La prostitución,* 1888; Matias Duque, *La prostitución, sus causas, sus males, su higiene* (La Habana: Imprenta y Papelería de Rambla, Bouza y Cia, 1914); Hortensia Lamar, "Lucha contra la prostitución y la trata de blancas," *Revista Bimestre Cubana*, 18:2 (March-April 1923): 128-140; María A. Martínez Guayanes, "La prostitución, sus causas y sus remedios." *La sufragista* 2:6 (August 1923): 3; Erasmo Regüeiferos y Boudet, *Paulina Luisi; discurso pronunciado en la Academia de ciencias, a las tres de la tarde del día 18 de marzo de 1923* (La Habana: Imprenta "El Siglo XX," 1927); Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, *Males y vicios de Cuba republicana sus causas y sus remedios*, Segunda Edición (La Habana: Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana, 1961).

In this study, I define prostitution as a form of labor that involves attending to the sexual desires of a particular individual (or individuals) with bodily acts in exchange for monetary compensation, goods, or protections.[5] Facile references to "the world's oldest profession" obscure the differences in social and cultural context that shape the significance and structure of prostitution within any particular historical space.[6] Although official government data indicate that the majority of registered prostitutes in Havana were Cuban women who came either from the city proper or from surrounding municipalities, the actual ethnic, class, regional, and cultural makeup of prostitutes was far more complex than these reports reveal. In their court testimonies, the women identified themselves with their particular towns or countries of origin, with a specific racial or ethnic group, and even with a specific brothel, madam, or pimp in order to define their social position relative to other prostitutes working in the city. Prostitutes also moved in and out of other types of work according to the exigencies of the labor market and individual economic circumstances. In this context, "prostitute" was a highly flexible signifier for many different kinds of women engaged in many different kinds of

---

[5] Here, I build upon the excellent definition of the term articulated by Noah Zatz. Zatz evokes the broader term of "bodily acts" in recognition of the fact that prostitutes may not be asked for physical contact at all but instead for a private performance of some other sexual fantasy. In this study I will exclude other kinds of sex work such as posing for a photograph or performing on stage. See Noah Zatz, "Sex Work/Sex Act: Law, Labor, and Desire in Constructions of Prostitution," *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 22:21 (1997): 279.

[6] For a discussion of the difficulties of defining prostitution, see Alison Jaggar, "Prostitution" in *The Philosophy of Sex: Contemporary Readings*, ed. Alan Soble, 2d ed. (Savage, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1991), Zatz, "Sex Work/Sex Act,"and Shannon Bell, *Reading, Writing, and Rewriting the Prostitute Body* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

labor.[7] By focusing on prostitution as a permeable site of international and regional female labor, rather than a homogeneous occupation, this study will historicize prostitutes' experiences as they moved across both geographic and social boundaries.

In addition to reconstructing these diverse social and racial characteristics, this study traces the discourse on prostitution in Havana during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this study, discourse refers not only to language used to describe prostitution in various official and unofficial sources, but also to the social institutions and practices that helped to constitute, and were constituted by, that language, including brothels, tolerance zones, hospitals, prisons, and courts.[8] Equally constitutive of this discourse on prostitution were the everyday aspects of the prostitutes' own lives. I am keenly interested in understanding how women negotiated their way through the vagaries of the shifting urban labor market, police incursions, social and racial prejudice, family responsibilities, and governmental intrusions. In short, this study analyzes the ways in which individuals or groups of prostitutes shaped the terms of their lives and labors and, thereby, the wider discourse on sexuality and nation.

My investigation into Spanish, Cuban, and U.S. sources reveals that as Cubans struggled to define a sense of national identity in the face of changing political alliances

---

[7] See Gail Hershatter, "Courtesans and Streetwalkers: The Changing Discourse on Shanghai Prostitution, 1890-1949," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 3:21 (1992): 262-263.

[8] I owe this succinct definition to Gail Hershatter, but the argument that material and ideological changes cannot and should not be examined separately and neither can be regarded as ultimately determinative of the conditions of prostitutes' lives is derived from Foucault's path-breaking work on the history of sexuality. See Hershatter, "Courtesans and Streetwalkers," 248 and Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1 (New York: Random House, 1978).

and shifting populations, prostitution became a focus for the expression of contemporary political, social, and sexual anxieties. State policies, designed to control prostitutes' lives and labors during this period, thus occupied a heavily contested and dynamic terrain upon which state and local imperatives frequently collided. I find that state agents, local citizens, and prostitutes negotiated every aspect of Cuba's regulatory project, from the geographic boundaries of Havana's tolerance zone to the legal and medical precepts that guided the treatment of venereal disease. For their part, prostitutes continuously challenged the supervisory and disciplinary intentions of the state by appropriating and rearticulating key aspects of government policy and ideology to suit their own needs. These negotiations over the form and function of Cuba's regulatory mechanism ultimately shaped, and were shaped by, broader competing discourses about citizenship, the legitimate exercise of state power, and the development of Cuba as a "modern" nation.

On Writing a History of Cuban Prostitution

Cuba has long been the object of considerable interest in the academic world, both within Cuba and without. Researchers in the fields of history, anthropology, sociology, and literature have all contributed to the task of mapping Cuba's complex history, but the existing literature has tended to view that history as a series of political and economic processes leading, in a seemingly inevitable fashion, to a revolution in 1959.[9] The

---

[9] For examples, see Robin Blackburn, "Prologue to the Cuban Revolution," *New Left Review* 12 (October 1963): 52-91; Ramón Eduardo Ruiz, *Cuba: The Making of a Revolution* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Pres, 1968); Denis B. Wood, "The Long Revolution: Class Relations and Political Conflict in Cuba, 1868-1968," *Science and Society* 34: 1 (Spring 1970): 1-41; Luis E. Aguilar, *Cuba, 1933: Prologue to*

teleological tenor of Cuban historiography has been challenged by an emerging body of historical literature focused on the events and processes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These events have been interpreted not as precursors to modern revolution but as significant developments in their own right. Combining in-depth archival research in Cuba with methodologies gleaned from recent scholarship on race, labor, nationalism, and postcolonial theory, Ada Ferrer, Joan Casanovas, Rebecca Scott, Aline Helg, and Alejandra Bronfman have illustrated that notions of freedom, citizenship, class, race, and labor were all contested social constructs forged in the context of abolition, the wars for independence, U.S. economic and political tutelage, and republican state formation.[10]

Revolution (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1972); Ramón Bonachea and Marta San Martin, *The Cuban Insurrection, 1952-1959* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1974); Jaime Suchlicki, *Cuba: From Columbus to Castro* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974); Instituto de la Historia de Cuba y del Movimiento Comunista y de la Revolución Socialista de Cuba, *Historia del movimiento obrero cubano*, 2 vols. (Havana: Editora Política, 1985); and Sheldon Liss, *Roots of Revolution: Radical Thought in Cuba* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987).

[10] Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Joan Casanovas, *Bread, or Bullets!: Urban Labor and Spanish Colonialism in Cuba, 1850-1898* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998); Rebecca Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985) and Aline Helg, *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886-1912* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), and Alejandra Bronfman, *Measures of Equality: Social Science, Citizenship, and Race in Cuba, 1902-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004). For other works that depict persons and events as more than mere precursors of the Cuban Revolution, see César Ayala, *American Sugar Kingdom: The Plantation Economy of the Spanish Caribbean, 1898-1934* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Gladys Marel García-Pérez, *Insurrection and Revolution: Armed Struggle in Cuba, 1952-1959* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998); Oscar Zanetti and Alejandro García, *Sugar and Railroads: A Cuban History, 1837-1959* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Angel Smith and Emma Dávila-Cox, *The Crisis of 1898: Colonial Redistribution and Nationalist Mobilization* (New York: St. Martin's, 1999); and Alejandro de la Fuente, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality,*

Within the rapidly expanding literature on Cuba's colonial and republican periods, however, there has been little systematic study of women and gender. With the notable exceptions of K. Lynn Stoner and Verena Martinez-Alier, the bulk of work on women and gender in Cuba has focused on women's experience since the Cuban Revolution of 1959.[11] In contrast, the body of gender history for other Latin American countries is now considerable. Recent works by Sueann Caulfield, Ann Farnsworth-Alvear, Thomas Klubock, Elizabeth Hutchison, Karen Rosemblatt, Heidi Tinsman, Eileen Findlay, and Lara Putnam, among others, have expanded our understanding of the complex relationship between women and the state, sexuality and power, and race and national identity, particularly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[12] While

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and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

[11] K. Lynn Stoner, *From the House to the Streets: The Cuban Woman's Movement for Legal Reform, 1898-1940* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991) and Verena Martinez-Alier, *Marriage, Class and Colour in Nineteenth-Century Cuba: A Study of Racial Attitudes and Sexual Values in a Slave Society* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1974). For studies of women's roles in Cuban society since 1959, see Margaret Randall, *Women in Cuba: Twenty Years Later* (Brooklyn: Smith Press, 1981); Deborah Shnookal, ed. *Three Decades after the Revolution: Cuban Women Confront the Future* (Melbourne: Ocean Press, 1991); Elizabeth Stone, ed., *Women and the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1981); Guillermo Wasmer, ed., *Women: A Revolution within the Revolution* (La Habana: Orbe Publishing House, 1982); Debra Evenson, "Women's Equality in Cuba: What Difference Does a Revolution Make?" *Law and Inequality* 2 (July 1986): 295-326; Marjorie King, "Cuba's Attack on Women's Second Shift, 1974-1976, *Latin American Perspectives* 12-13: 1-2 (Winter and Spring 1977): 106-119; Sheryl Lutgens, "Reading Between the Lines: Women, the State, and Rectification in Cuba," *Latin American Perspectives* 22:2 (Spring 1995): 100-124, Muriel Nazarri, "The Woman Question in Cuba: An Analysis of Material Constraints on its Solution," *Signs* 9:2 (Winter 1983): 246-263.

[12] Sueann Caulfield, *In Defense of Honor: Sexual Morality, Modernity, and Nation in Early Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); Ann Farnsworth-Alvear, *Dulcinea in the Factory: Myths, Morals, Men, and Women in Colombia's Industrial Experiment, 1905-1960* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000);

it has not been their primary arena of concern, these new gender scholars also share a common interest in the subject of sexual commerce. Drawing on contemporary sociological studies, medical and police records, and census records, these authors have done much to highlight the important role that prostitution, and the debates concerning its practice, played in shaping contemporary thought on the subjects of nation, gender, race, and labor.

Despite a recent surge of interest in conducting in-depth studies of Latin American forms of prostitution, the body of historical literature is still developing.[13] For more than a decade, Donna Guy's study of prostitution in turn-of-the-century Argentina stood as the only monograph-length examination of prostitution in a Latin American

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Thomas Klubock, *Contested Communities: Class, Gender, and Politics in Chile's El Teniente Copper Mine, 1904-1951* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); Elizabeth Quay Hutchison, *Labors Appropriate to Their Sex: Gender, Labor, and Politics in Urban Chile, 1900-1930* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); Karin Alejandra Rosemblatt, *Gendered Compromises: Political Cultures and the State in Chile, 1920-1950* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Heidi Tinsman, *Partners in Conflict: The Politics of Gender, Sexuality, and Labor in the Chilean Agrarian Reform, 1950-1973* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002); Eileen Findlay, *Imposing Decency: The Politics of Sexuality and Race in Puerto Rico, 1870-1920* (Durham: Duke Press, 1999); Lara Putnam, *The Company They Kept: Migrants and the Politics of Gender in Caribbean Costa Rica, 1870-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Sueann Caulfield, Sarah C. Chambers, and Lara Putnam, eds., *Honor, Status, and Law in Modern Latin America* (Duke University Press, 2005).

[13] Katherine Bliss, *Compromised Positions: Prostitution, Public Health, and Gender Politics in Revolutionary Mexico City* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2001); William E. French, "Prostitutes and Guardian Angels: Women, Work, and the Family in Porfirian Mexico," *HAHR* 72 (November 1992): 529-53; David J. McCreery, "'This Life of Misery and Shame:' Female Prostitution in Guatemala City, 1880-1920," *JLAS* 18 (November 1986): 333-53; Lara Putnam, *The Company They Kept: Migrants and the Politics of Gender in Caribbean Costa Rica, 1870-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Margareth Rago, *Os prazeres da noite: prostituição e códigos da sexualidade feminina em São Paulo, 1890-1930* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1991).

country published in English. A social and intellectual history of prostitution, Guy's book addresses how contemporary contentions about sexuality shaped the contours of Argentina's nation building process. She further argues that these debates on prostitution revealed fears that women's participation in the urban workforce would undermine family, class, and state authority.[14] By connecting prostitution to broader state formation processes, Guy's study established an early model for evaluating the historical significance of prostitution that has been either emulated or reformulated by subsequent scholars. As I will discuss further below, historians of gender and sexuality who have built upon Guy's work, namely Sueann Caulfield (Brazil), Lara Putnam (Costa Rica), Eileen Findlay (Puerto Rico), and Katherine Bliss (Mexico), have pushed the literature on prostitution in Latin America in exciting new directions.

This dissertation intersects with five larger questions relating to gender, sexuality, and nation-building. Namely, I am concerned with connecting prostitution (both as a system of control and as a lived experience) to questions of space and sexual geographies; bodies and disease; race and ethnicity; identity and agency; and citizenship and nationhood. First, much like historians Sueann Caulfield, James Green, and Eileen Findlay, I endeavor to trace how social debates relating to issues of public morality and honor shape sexual geographies.[15] For the cases of Rio and Ponce, these authors analyze

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[14] Donna Guy, *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires: Prostitution, Family, and Nation in Argentina* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990).

[15] See Sueann Caulfield, *In Defense of Honor: Sexual Morality, Modernity, and Nation in Early-Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), esp. chap. 2, James Green, *Beyond Carnival: Male Homosexuality in Twentieth Century Brazil* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), and Eileen J. Suárez Findlay, *Imposing Decency: The Politics of Sexuality and Race in Puerto Rico, 1870-1920* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999). For a key theoretical source on the intersections

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how urban spaces are coded, defined, and often ultimately "moralized"—to borrow Caulfield's formulation—by state officials determined to exert control over popular social and sexual practices. At the same time, meanings imposed upon public spaces by state officials were frequently challenged and rearticulated by groups and individuals operating on the ground and these conflicts exerted a profound shaping force upon urban landscapes (both physically and symbolically). Following on this important scholarship, I give significant weight to discussions of the dynamic negotiations that shaped urban geography, zoning legislation, and mapping projects as they related to the development of Cuba's regulatory apparatus over the course of the nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Havana.

Secondly, this work overlaps a growing body of scholarship concerned with questions of body, medicine, and disease as they relate to nation building processes.[16] Over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the prostitute body (both physical and symbolic) became a particular obsession for Cubans struggling to respond to shifting constructions of public health, sexuality, and vice. Isolated, examined,

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of gender and space, see Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994). Other foundational theoretical works on space include Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 1991) and James Scott, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

[16] The literature on this topic is vast and still growing, however, I would certainly recommend as a starting point: Charles Rosenberg and Janet Golden, *Framing Disease: Studies in Cultural History* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992); Diego Armus, ed., *From Malaria to AIDS: Disease in the History of Modern Latin America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Tony Ballantine and Antoinette Burton, eds., *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Warwick Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies: American Tropical Medicine, Race, and Hygiene in the Phillipines* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); and Stoler, *Haunted by Empire*.

categorized, and sanitized, prostitutes' bodies became flesh and blood maps of the inconsistencies of international scientific and medical thought on the connections between prostitution and public health, the ambivalences of colonial and neocolonial state regulatory policies, and the methods of resistance employed by the women themselves to thwart the incursion of state medical authorities upon their bodies.

Thirdly, this study examines the intersections of prostitution with questions of race and ethnicity. Recent studies conducted by Findlay, Caulfield, and Bliss engage extensively with the complex connections among proper sexual norms, cross-class alliances, and racial double standards that emerged in response to the radical demographic shifts that followed abolition, urbanization, and industrialization processes.[17] These authors find that words like "progress," "order," and "honor" became national battle cries in Puerto Rico, Brazil, and Mexico respectively and that those who stood in the way of achieving these ends—namely racial minorities, women, and the poor—became a source of national apprehension. As the perceived embodiment of a variety of interrelated social ills, prostitutes frequently found themselves standing in the crosshairs of the modernizing mission.

For the Cuban case, I similarly find that concerns with issues of race and prostitution intersected frequently during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially as state officials grappled with the consequences of urban demographic shifts caused by the rapid influx of ex-slaves and foreign laborers into Havana in the years following abolition (1886). Although the discursive connections drawn between race and

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[17] See Findlay, *Imposing Decency*, Caulfield, *In Defense of Honor*, and Bliss, *Compromised Positions.*

prostitution were somewhat less explicit before that time, prostitutes were indeed subject to policies intended to segregate undesirable social and ethnic groups—including individuals of African, Mexican, or Asian descent—to the margins of the colonial walled city. As the abolition of slavery and decades of warfare rocked the island into the late-nineteenth century, Cuba's political and scientific elite, seeking a plan of action to deal with the island's perceived social chaos, gravitated toward the writings of criminal anthropologists like Cesare Lombroso, which defined criminals as a clearly identifiable social group sharing basic physiognomic, psychological, and cultural traits that distinguished them from the rest of the population.[18] Spurred by this new racialized theory of a distinct "criminal class," the noted Cuban physician, Dr. Benjamin de Céspedes, published a highly polemical treatise on prostitution in Havana in 1888, which blamed Cuba's chaotic social, political, and economic climate on the African-descended and peninsular laborers who flooded Havana in search of housing and employment. According to Céspedes, rampant prostitution was the direct result of the dramatic social and moral decline that accompanied the arrival of these groups into the capital city, and the publication of his work set off a veritable firestorm of debate concerning the connections between shifting racial demographics and rising levels of prostitution.

With the end of Spanish colonial rule and direct U.S. military intervention on the island after 1902, however, connections drawn between issues of race and prostitution underwent a dramatic shift. Eager to construct and assert internationally a new Cuban national identity based on the ideas of independence, progress, and modernity, many

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[18] See Cesare Lombroso, *Crime: Its Causes and Remedies*, trans. Henry P. Horton (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1918) and *Delitti di libidne*, 2nd ed. (Torino: Fratelli Bocca, 1886).

Cuban social reformers during the early republican period lambasted Spanish (and to a lesser extent U.S.) authorities, who they argued had promoted regulated prostitution, and slavery before that, on the island merely as a means of extracting wealth from Cuba. By mobilizing a discourse of colonial exploitation of Cuba's socially and economically vulnerable classes (most often slaves and prostitutes), republican reformers linked the institutions of regulated prostitution and slavery to the exploitation of Cuba writ large.

Fourthly, this study is concerned with questions of agency and resistance. Like the scholars referenced above, I maintain that elite concerns with questions of sexuality, public health, and progress tell half the story. Equally important to any study of prostitution are the ways in which definitions of progress, citizenship, and nationhood impacted the options available to, and decisions made by, prostitutes themselves. Thus, I am especially concerned with issues of agency and resistance as they relate to the ways in which not only state officials and local residents, but also prostitutes themselves struggled to secure their own particular goals and in so doing shaped the discursive parameters of the regulatory system. As historian Cristina Rivera-Garza states in her recent work on prostitution and public health in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Mexico, "little attention has been paid to the role of prostitutes themselves in the breakdown of the [regulatory] system."[19]

Tracing prostitutes' interactions with the array of state authorities that comprised Cuba's regulatory apparatus is, however, a highly complicated (and often impossible)

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[19] Cristina Rivera-Garza, "The Criminalization of the Syphilitic Body: Prostitutes, Health Crimes, and Society in Mexico, 1867-1930," in *Crime and Punishment in Latin America: Law and Society in Late Colonial Times*, eds. Ricardo D. Salvatore, Carlos Aguirre, and Gilbert M. Joseph (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 152.

task. Utilizing the microhistorical techniques advocated by Lara Putnam and José Moya, among others, I have been able to track several groups of prostitutes over time as they collided repeatedly with the officials and institutions of the state regulatory system.[20] Though hardly illustrative of broad social patterns, these cases do offer some insight into the ways that prostitutes—often of similar racial, ethnic, or geographic background—collaborated with one another in order to thwart the disciplinary efforts of state authorities. This is not to say, however, that all prostitutes were united by a common sense of solidarity in the face of state incursions upon their lives, labors, and bodies. While prostitutes often banded together to challenge state authorities or local citizens who threatened their livelihood, there is significant evidence that prostitutes also lashed out at one another for similar, as well as other, reasons. In short, I find that lines of domination and resistance were drawn not only between state officials and prostitutes, but also among prostitutes themselves.[21]

Finally, like many other historians of gender and sexuality in Latin America, I utilize prostitution as a lens through which to study broader nation building processes in

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[20] Lara Putnam, *The Company They Kept: Migrants and the Politics of Gender in Caribbean Costa Rica, 1870-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002): 10-15, Lara Putnam, "To Study the Fragments/Whole: Microhistory and the Atlantic World," *Journal of Social History* (currently under revision), and José Moya, *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998): 405. See also Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon, "The Singularization of History: Social History and Microhistory within the Postmodern State of Knowledge," *Journal of Social History* 36:3 (spring 2003): 701-735 and Nacy Stieber, "Microhistory of the Modern City: Urban Space, Its Use and Representations," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58:3 (1999): 382-391.

[21] Reflecting this notion that "othering" occurs even within marginal groups, Eileen Findlay contends that "[c]hallengers of the established order can very quickly become its defenders, particularly once they have gained some access to power."Eileen J. Súarez Findlay, *Imposing Decency: The Politics of Sexuality and Race in Puerto Rico, 1870-1920* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 11.

late colonial and early republican Cuba.[22] I find that state agents, local citizens, and prostitutes negotiated every aspect of Cuba's regulatory project, from the geographic boundaries of Havana's tolerance zone to the legal and medical precepts that guided the treatment of venereal disease. These negotiations over the form and function of Cuba's regulatory apparatus ultimately shaped, and were shaped by, broader competing discourses about citizenship, the legitimate exercise of state power, and the development of Cuba as a "modern" nation.

Prostitutes in the Archives

Historians of the subaltern classes work extensively in the silences and gaps that run through state archives. The work of mapping prostitutes' lives and labors over time is complicated by both the inconsistent nature of state attention to the issue of prostitution as well as the women's own actions. Like Ann Stoler, I have tried to read my documents "along the grain" and not "against," so as to avoid, to the extent possible, reading *for* prostitute resistance (with all the romanticism such an approach implies). To "read along the grain" is to seek to understand how state agendas of control and patterns of prostitute resistance and/or compliance were mutually constituted and dialogic.

State regulation of prostitution in Cuba between 1840 and 1920 was a dynamic process. While prostitution was a consistent source of anxiety for state officials and local elites, a set of complex international, national, and local forces—ranging from national

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[22] See, for example, Caulfield, *In Defense of Honor*, Katherine Elaine Bliss, *Compromised Positions: Prostituiton, Public Health, and Gender Politics in Revolutionary Mexico City* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press), 2001, and Eileen Findlay, *Imposing Decency*.

wars to local prostitute resistance—shaped the ways in which that anxiety was manifested discursively during the period under study.[23] Furthermore, my task to locate prostitutes has, like that of nineteenth and twentieth-century state authorities in Cuba, been greatly complicated by their frequent evasive maneuverings. Prostitutes resisted state fixity in order to avoid all the limitations and exactions that rootedness, containment, categorization, and registration entailed.[24] Prostitutes were indeed targets of state agendas, but they were also *moving* targets. Therefore, my ability to know anything of prostitutes' lives and labors depended almost entirely on discovering those documented moments when they became ensnared in the state regulatory apparatus.

During the course of my research I investigated several rich bodies of documents relative to this project: criminal, medical, immigration, and litigation records; legislative debates; contemporary guidebooks and novels; and media accounts. The bulk of these records are housed in the Archivo Nacional de Cuba, the Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, the Instituto de Historia, the Museo de Historia de las Ciencias en Cuba "Carlos J. Finlay," and the Archivo Histórico Provincial de Matanzas. These diverse sources shed light not only the discursive uses others made of prostitution, but also the dynamics of

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[23] Ann Laura Stoler, ed., *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 20.

[24] For a discussion of the complex notions of state fixations and official categorization, see James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), Raymond B. Craib, *Cartographic Mexico: A History of State Fixations and Fugitive Landscapes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), and Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

commercial sex itself, including its geographical contours, clientele, and supportive institutions.

The Archivo Nacional de Cuba houses documents pertaining to Havana's legislative, economic, and social history. In particular, I focused on those of the Audiencia de La Habana, the Gobierno General, the Gobierno Superior Civil, the Junta Superior de Sanidad, the Secretaría de Gobernación, the Secretaría de la Presidencia, and the Secretaria de Hacienda Asuntos Políticos. These repositories contain extensive collections of court, incarceration, medical, and immigration records. Because of their perceived threat to public health and order, female prostitutes figure prominently in these documents. Manuscript court documents provide detailed information on both plaintiffs and defendants, while data concerning the employment history, family background, marital status, and medical history of individual prostitutes can be found in the files of law enforcement agencies.

The Museo de Historia de las Ciencias en Cuba "Carlos J. Finlay," contains the files of Cuba's Special Hygiene Section, whose physicians administered the bi-weekly pelvic examinations of registered and clandestine prostitutes, as well as multiple medical journals from the period. In addition, I conducted research at the Instituto de Historia and the Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, where I located popular press and magazine collections and contemporary novels and plays that reveal the meanings ascribed to prostitution by various members of Havana society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the daily press increasingly targeted the social and sexual anxieties of an emerging urban middle class audience with articles bearing such sensational titles as "Women, Indirectly Responsible

for the Degeneration of the Cuban Soul" and " Social Parasitism in Our America."[25] Prostitutes—typically portrayed as either threats to social order or victims of oppressive social relations—became a popular symbol of the ills of modern urban society. Detailed descriptions of brothel brawls and the activities of Hygiene Section officials were standard fare in local newspapers and numerous magazines. Contemporary novels and plays occassionaly referenced the exploits of famous prostitutes, pimps, and even customers.

Also significant for my research were sources found in regional archives. While the majority of documents related to this study are located in Havana, these sources provide scant information about the practice of prostitution in nearby provinces such as Matanzas, which supplied women to the Havana trade. The Archivo Histórico Provincial de Matanzas contains documentation that includes demographic, criminal, legal, and medical information concerning women who migrated, either permanently or periodically, to Havana in search of employment. My investigation of regional archival sources sheds some light on the forms and functions of prostitution in areas other than the capital city.

Finally, the National Archives and the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. yielded sources relating to prostitution regulation during the period of U.S. intervention in Cuba (1898-1902 and 1906-1909). My archival research in Havana revealed that many of the documents relating to prostitution during this period were removed from the island following the establishment of Cuba's republican government in 1902 and subsequent

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[25] Dulce María Borrero de Lujan, "La mujer, responsible indirecta de la degeneración progresiva del alma cubana" *Revista Bimestre Cubana* vol. XVIII no. 2 (marzo-abril 1923): 110-119 and Julio Salas, "El parasitismo social en nuestra América," *Revista Bimestre Cubana* vol. XVI no. 5 (septiembre-octubre 1921): 257-261.

withdrawal of U.S. administrative and military personnel. During my research, I focused on two key document collections: the Records of the Military Government of Cuba (1898-1903) and the Records of the Provisional Government of Cuba (1906-1909). These collections contain official correspondence, decrees, laws, budgetary and military reports, and census records that not only detail the impacts of U.S. intervention in Cuba, but also reflect administrative concerns with issues of urban police, hospitals, and the treatment of contagious diseases like syphilis.

Each of the sources discussed above reflects the tremendous social and economic changes experienced by Cuba, and Havana in particular, at the turn of the century. Definitions of urbanity, respectability, citizenship, even nationhood, were at stake and "the prostitute"—variously understood by contemporaries as a necessary outlet for innate male lust or as a marker of national decay—became a focus of modern social and sexual anxieties. Through the analysis of these diverse sources, my study examines prostitution as a product of changing economic, social, and cultural conditions. I analyze not only the discursive uses others made of prostitution, but also the dynamics of commercial sex itself, including its geographical contours, clientele, sexual politics, and supportive institutions. At the center of this study of prostitutes are the women themselves, including the everyday practices they engaged in to shape the social conditions in which they lived and worked, and how they saw themselves in relation to one another, the surrounding community, and the nation as a whole.

Chapter Outline

This dissertation is organized chronologically rather than thematically. Although both organizational structures hold merit, this project is rooted in my understanding of prostitution as a form of labor that shaped, and was shaped by, shifting state policies according to a temporally specific historical process. In other words, the point here is not simply to reconstruct chronologically Cuba's prostitution story, but rather that the chronological frame makes the relevance of that story to larger questions of colonialism and nationhood more apparent. I contend that the constant interplay between state agendas of control and the myriad methods prostitutes devised to resist official incursions into their lives, labors, and bodies shaped the form and function of Cuban prostitution during this dynamic period.

Chapter 1 explores how the shifting geographic, social, and economic topography of mid-nineteenth-century Havana impacted colonial policies toward prostitution. A booming mid-century tobacco industry and rapidly expanding urban population forced colonial officials to profoundly re-imagine Havana's socio-spatial landscape. The resulting physical changes to the capital city, in turn, sparked increased anxiety about the presence of the unruly masses within honorable neighborhoods. Colonial officials responded by reformulating existing social legislation in order to segregate geographically such individuals to the margins of the city. Prostitutes were amongst those (including stigmatized racial groups) forced to relocate to areas outside the city center. Initially prohibiting prostitution outright, colonial officials in the mid-nineteenth century eventually shifted their efforts toward enforcing a policy of tolerance. Hoping that this new policy would allow them to contain prostitution within an isolated area, authorities

were instead forced to deal with the various methods prostitutes employed to exploit the inherent weaknesses and contradictions of tolerance policy. Court cases, social legislation, filed grievances, and interdepartmental police memos reveal the multivalent tensions between elite residents, local police officers, colonial officials, and prostitutes living in mid-nineteenth century Havana.

Chapter 2 is set within the vastly altered urban topography that resulted from the destruction of Havana's colonial city wall in 1863. Over the course of two decades, Havana was transformed from a colonial fortress into a burgeoning urban metropolis. New neighborhoods and administrative districts sprung up across the city to provide for the capital city's booming urban population. As Havana continued to grow and change throughout the 1850s and into the 1860s, the ongoing battle to marginalize prostitution at the edges of the capital city continued to challenge the patience and ingenuity of colonial authorities. The ambiguous terminology and ill-defined policies of tolerance in mid-nineteenth-century Cuba reflected colonial authorities' general conflicted attitudes toward and approaches to the issue of prostitution regulation and facilitated prostitute resistance. Namely, the colonial state's emphasis on relocating women deemed "publicly scandalous" left considerable room for state officials' subjective assessment of individual behaviors. Determined to secure their access to clientele, prostitutes continuously undermined the central goal of tolerance policy by refusing to relocate to the designated tolerance zone. In spite of widespread prostitute noncompliance, law enforcement officials maintained doggedly their conviction that the success of tolerance policy hinged on the diligent enforcement of eviction and relocation orders. With these oppositional forces at work, tolerance policy continued to unravel throughout the 1860s and would

eventually snap by the mid-1870s when colonial officials recognized that they had clearly underestimated prostitutes' canny ability to subvert state policies that hindered their ability to secure an income.

Chapter 3 examines the period between 1875 and 1886, a crucial era in the history of prostitution in Cuba when the central tenets and institutions of Cuba's regulatory system assumed the basic form they would maintain into the early 1890s. While the ratification of state regulatory policy seemed to promise an end to Havana's prostitution woes, contemporary agents of the regulatory system were more likely to be found scratching their heads than offering one another congratulatory claps on the back. The institutional components of the system indeed proved expensive and difficult to administer, but even more frustrating was their limited ability to extend the reach of agents of the regulatory system into the labyrinthine world of Havana's tolerance zone. Prostitutes continuously subverted the supervisory and disciplinary intentions of the regulatory system by refusing to be contained, located, or fixed in space, by choosing to handle internal disputes on their own rather than call on the intervention of state authorities, or simply by changing their names. Institutional documents relating to prostitution regulation for this period reveal the continued focus of colonial administrators on prostitution as a fiscal, jurisdictional, and administrative issue. By contrast, the various official complaints, criminal cases, and published criticisms of regulatory officials produced during this period reveal an imperfect system fraught with multiple fissures and shaped by the antagonisms and struggles over power, meaning, and influence of various segments of colonial society. This constant tug-of-war shaped the institutions designed to control prostitution, which, in turn, affected the material

conditions of prostitutes' lives and the nature of state regulatory policy in the late nineteenth century.

Chapter 4 begins with a discussion of the escalating concern with prostitution in the years leading up to Cuban independence. Dr. Benjamin de Céspedes' controversial tome *La prostitución en La Habana*—the first large-scale study of Cuban prostitution—provides a useful lens into contemporary debates on race, citizenship, progress, and modernity as they related to the prostitution question at the end of the nineteenth-century. The range of responses elicited by Céspedes' work reveals the gravity of the topic for various sectors of late-nineteenth-century Havana society, namely Afro-Cubans and the capital's growing population of *dependientes* (semifree peninsular laborers). This chapter then examines the newspaper *La Cebolla*—one of many public reactions to the growing disdain for public prostitution prompted by Céspedes' work—including the political and social scene that prompted its publication, the nature of its content, and the events that led to its eventual shut-down by the Havana court system. While scholars are currently debating the exact nature of this source's production, I find significant evidence that *La Cebolla* was a collaborative effort between the newspaper's anarchist editor, Victorino Reineri, and a specific group of prostitutes residing in Havana who found common ground in a desire to lampoon corrupt colonial officials.[26]

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[26] Beatriz Calvo Peña contends that Reineri alone penned the periodical as a satirical anarchist response to colonial corruption on the island and Cuban historian María del Carmen Barcia Zequeira speculates that wealthy prostitutes both financed the periodical publication and submitted articles for publication. See Beatriz Calvo Peña, "Prensa, política y prostitución en La Habana finisecular: El caso de *La Cebolla* y la 'polémica de las meretrices,'" *Cuban Studies/Estudios Cubanos* 36 (2005): 23-49, and María del Carmen Barcia Zequeira, "Entre el poder y la crisis: Las prostitutas se defienden," in *Mujeres latinoamericanas: Historia y cultura, Siglos XVI al XIX* (Tomo I), ed. Luisa Campuzano. (Havana: Casa de las Américas, 1997), 263-273.

Chapter 5 contends that the period of U.S. intervention in Cuba was ultimately fraught with profound contradictions. Whereas the dramatic rupture of Spanish political and social forms seemed to signal Cuba's advancement into modern nationhood, the limited attention occupying authorities gave to issues of social and moral reform tethered the island to its colonial past. The official sanction of prostitution in Cuba by U.S. authorities seemed jarringly out of synch with the island's new "modern" status. This contradiction illustrates that U.S. authorities in Cuba prioritized certain kinds of reform measures on the island and not others. The questions at the heart of this chapter were: Why did U.S. officials preserve (and even bolster) Cuba's regulatory system while simultaneously condemning prostitution on the U.S. mainland? The implications of the limited U.S. reform agenda in Cuba stretched far beyond the temporal boundaries of the intervention period, as lingering questions about the disparity between the expansive political and economic reform agenda enacted during the "era of light and hygienic progress" and the limited nature of social reform on the island during those years helped shape the contours of republican *cubanidad* (Cuban national identity).

Chapters 6 argues that following the withdrawal of U.S. military personnel in 1902, Cuba's regulatory system was subject to increased scrutiny by individuals and groups who questioned the larger connections between prostitution regulation and the future moral welfare of the Cuban social body. What was the root cause, they asked, of Cuba's prolonged struggle with the issue of prostitution? What were the economic, political, social, and moral consequences of this struggle? How should the nation proceed on this issue in order to ensure progress in line with the world's modernizing nations? Contemporary constructions of prostitution as a system of colonial exploitation

challenged previous justifications for the regulatory system as a necessary outlet for innate male lust. If the roots of prostitution lay in history and politics rather than biology, the critics of regulation argued, could the problem not then be remedied by a national government committed to social and moral reform? With the dawn of the new Cuban Republic, therefore, nationalistic social critics and reformers pressured state authorities to assure the nation's progress by pushing the state agenda beyond political stabilization and economic recovery toward issues of social regeneration.

Desiring Nation

In her path-breaking study of prostitution in Shanghai, Gail Hershatter writes: "The categories through which prostitution was understood were not fixed, and any attempt to trace them touches on questions of urban history, colonial and anti-colonial state-making, and the intersection of sexuality, particularly female sexuality, with an emerging nationalist discourse."[27] Whether understood as a threat to social order, a painful economic choice on the part of women and their families, or a legitimate form of work, prostitution in turn-of-the-century Cuba was a prism through which the problems, fears, agendas, and visions of various sectors of society were refracted. The contours of this national conversation were shaped by the protracted process and profound outcome of abolition; U.S. social and political tutelage; mass national and international migration; the development of reformist conversations on the position of women in general and prostitutes in particular; and struggles over the meanings of marriage and family, amongst others.

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[27] Gail Hershatter, "Courtesans and Streetwalkers: The Changing Discourses on Shanghai Prostitution, 1890-1949," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 3:2 (1992): 245.

While extreme changes in Cuba's economic, social, and political topography during this period may have increased popular concerns with the presence of prostitutes within the capital city, shifting definitions of national progress as they related to public health, state-sanctioned vice, popular morality, and family helped shape the language through which prostitution acquired meaning. For their part, prostitutes engaged in everyday practices that resisted and restructured these dominant discourses in ways that belied their portrayal as either dangerous pariahs or innocent victims. As the opening quote to this chapter so eloquently explains, prostitutes in turn-of-the-century Cuba did not easily fit into the puzzle of the modernizing state. Yet, as I will illustrate, attitudes towards prostitutes and ideas about prostitution ultimately proved to be a crucial piece in a national endeavor to define a people and assemble a nation. This study thus contributes not only to the study of prostitution in Latin America, but also to our understandings of the complex intersections of power, identity, sexuality, and state formation during one of the most dynamic periods of Cuban history.

CHAPTER ONE

Zones of Delinquency, Zones of Desire: Locating Public Women in the Walled City, 1840-1863

> The city is a map of the hierarchy of desire, from the valorized to the stigmatized. It is divided into zones dictated by the way its citizens value or denigrate their needs. Separating the city into areas of specialization makes it possible to meet some needs more efficiently; it is also an attempt to reduce conflict between opposing sets of desires and the roles people adopt to try and fulfill those desires. In part because of these zones, the city has become a sign of desire: promiscuity, perversity, prostitution, sex across the lines of age, gender, class, and race.
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> Pat Califia, *Public Sex* (1994)

> Cities . . . are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else.
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> Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* (1974)

A city map offers a glimpse into a society's hopes, dreams, fears, and desires. The way a city is organized reveals a great deal about how its residents view their relationship to the outside world and to one another. Maps are never mere facsimiles of established spatial relationships but rather they serve as a means of symbolically and visually ordering space, of overlaying the chaos and bustle of urban life with the veneer of order, purpose, and meaning. With compass and pen, state-appointed mapmakers transform isolated, loosely defined, or geographically impenetrable areas of the city into rigidly bounded zones offering the promise of perfect state control over the lives of groups and individuals living within the city. The projection of an ideal, maps rarely correspond to any true lived experience. Static lines of demarcation and grids of meaning superimposed

upon urban areas characterized by shifting populations and rapidly expanding infrastructures quickly become anachronistic when a city enters a new cycle of growth or change. As growing cities push against, and ultimately burst, the seams of geography and meaning, state officials are forced to construct new maps keyed to new political, social, and economic relationships within the city. More than a mere redrawing of lines on a map, these large-scale re-imaginings of urban landscapes can have a profound effect on the myriad socio-spatial relationships contained within those spaces. Ultimately, both urban geography and the lives of urban inhabitants are shaped by the constant tension between state efforts to define, contain, and control urban areas, and peoples' determination to move unfettered across those imposed boundaries.[1]

As a booming tobacco industry swelled Havana's urban population during the 1840s, local citizens expressed increased anxiety with the influx of unruly masses (immigrants, ex-slaves, migrant workers, prostitutes) into honorable neighborhoods. Colonial officials were, in turn, forced to profoundly re-imagine Havana's socio-spatial landscape by reformulating existing social legislation in order to segregate geographically such individuals to the margins of the city. This chapter explores how the shifting geographic, social, and economic topography of mid-nineteenth-century Havana impacted colonial policy toward prostitution. Based in an understanding of Cuba's mid-nineteenthy century tolerance policy as essentially a mapping exercise, this chapter contends that colonial authorities intended not to repress prostitutes' activites outright,

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[1] See Scott's discussion of the concept of "legibility" as it applies to mid-nineteenth century city planning and administration. James C. Scott, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 2-3, 54-55, 183-184.

bur rather to contain and segregate them at the margins of society. In so doing, colonial authorities endeavored to exert some control over prostitutes' movements and assuage angry local citizens living in central areas of the city who wished to see their honorable neighborhoods purged of scandalous women. Hoping that this new policy would allow them to contain prostitutes within an isolated area, authorities were instead forced to deal with the various methods prostitutes employed to exploit the inherent weaknesses and contradictions of colonial policy. Court cases, social legislation, *quejas* (filed grievances), and interdepartmental police memos reveal the multivalent tensions between elite residents, local police officers, colonial officials, and prostitutes living in mid-nineteenth century Havana.

The Case of a Prostitute, a Pimp, and a Robbery

On the morning of 17 August 1853 three individuals sat at Havana's police headquarters: a twenty-two-year-old prostitute from the Canary Islands named Antonia Armas, a Italian cook from Cárdenas named don Gaspar Amoretti, and a French traveling businessman named don Bernardo Pujibet.[2] At midnight the previous evening, a police officer patrolling Havana's Third District had responded to a call concerning a scandal occurring at the La Pajarera (Birdcage) tenement house. Arriving at the scene of the scandal, the officer found Armas, Amoretti, and Pujibet in the middle of a violent confrontation. All three individuals were consequently arrested and escorted to police headquarters for questioning. Responding to initial interrogation, Pujibet claimed that Armas and Amoretti had robbed him. After further questioning, Pujibet confessed that he had, in fact, met

[2] ANC/GSC, leg. 344, no. 12431 (1853), "Sobre escándalos de la mujer pública Da. Antonia de Armas, y D. Gaspar Amoretti."

Armas and Amoretti a few days prior. Acting as Armas' pimp, Amoretti had apparently offered Pujibet her sexual favors. Having brokered the arrangement, Amoretti then proceeded to convince Pujibet to finance several days of dining and drinking in the capital city. According to Pujibet's testimony, the robbery occurred when, "after dining sumptuously," he decided to "take doña Antonia up on her offer."[3] Pujibet alleged that his departure to Armas' private room at the tenement house provided Amoretti the opportunity to execute his plan to "make off with the eight gold coins in his pocket."[4] With this formal accusation of robbery, authorities launched an investigation into each accused individual's background and character.

Authorities would not have to look hard to find evidence concerning Armas' history. In the six years since migrating to Havana from the Canary Islands, she had already tangled with colonial authorities on more than one occasion. In addition to multiple arrests for public intoxication, Armas had been charged with public nudity, evading authorities (by moving to Cárdenas), failure to pay fines, and three counts of verbal assault (one of which lead to her expulsion from the barrio Santa Clara). Furthermore, when questioned about Armas' background and character, a police officer from the barrio Tacón, Don José Quirós, declared that "doña Antonia's scheming and corrupt behavior [was] most reproachable."[5] To substantiate this statement, Quirós

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[3] The original Spanish reads: "después de haber cenado opíparamente"… "llebar [sic] a efecto la oferta de Doña Antonia."

[4] The original Spanish reads: "gozarse en ocho onzas que llebaba [sic] en el bolsillo."

[5] The original Spanish reads: "la conducta de Doña Antonia de Armas es la más reprobada por su manejo y corrupción."

claimed that Armas spent her evenings traveling between "boarding houses, restaurants, and [other] nocturnal establishments with men engaging in serenades and baccanals."[6] Police possessed considerably less information on Amoretti. Officials in Cárdenas sent word that Amoretti was married with children and had a reputation as an alcoholic who "passed his time in a drunken stupor with (prostitutes)."[7] After first meeting Armas in Cárdenas—where she was evading authorities in Havana—Amoretti had apparently convinced her to return to the capital city as his consort.

With this evidence of a lengthy history of reprehensible conduct (conducta reprehensible) in both cases, authorities were able to avoid a court trial and proceed directly to sentencing. One week after their arrest, therefore, Amoretti was sentenced to two months forced labor and Armas was sentenced to six months internment at the Casa de Recogidas.[8] In an unexpected twist, however, Armas was released from the Casa de Recogidas just one week later. Within days of Armas' imprisonment, Pujibet appeared before authorities declaring his intent to marry her. Believing marriage to be the best means for reforming the incorrigible Armas, authorities ordered both parties to sign an official document declaring their mutual consent and then authorized Armas' release into

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[6] The original Spanish reads: "fondas, restauranes [sic] y cooredorías nocturnas siempre con hombres en serenatas y bacanales."

[7] The original Spanish reads: "siempre en briaguez con estas."

[8] Unfortunately, little more is known about Amoretti's fate. By late February 1854, he had apparently returned to Cárdenas where he was embroiled in an employment battled with the Lieutenant Governor of Cárdenas. Declaring him to be "un hombre sospechoso y picapleitos" who had misrepresented his previous employment history, the Lieutenant Governor removed Amoretti from his post as Interim Lieutenant of the Caserío (hamlet) of Cantel "por inepto." Amoretti filed a petition for reinstatement but his request was denied. ANC/GSC, leg. 1028, no. 35589 (quejas, 1854), "Expediente sobre queja de D. Gaspar Amoretti contra el Teniente Gobernador de Cárdenas."

Pujibet's care. By mid-September, however, neither party had appeared to formalize the marriage nor could either be located for questioning. After weeks of searching the city, officials finally found Armas living at #79 Havana Street in the Second District. When questioned by officials as to her marital plans, Armas declared that she "never had any intention to marry."[9] This act of defiance resulted in the immediate reinstatement of her original six-month sentence. Within one month, however, Armas successfully petitioned for clemency in honor of the birthday of the Princess of Asturias and was released from the Casa de Recogidas. Inexplicably, Pujibet proved unwilling to forfeit his dream of marrying Armas and requested an official intervention to finalize their commitment. Upon questioning, Armas declared that she had been forced to contract marriage with Pujibet and that he physically abused her. A physical examination did, in fact, reveal the presence of two wounds (equimosis)—one on Armas' abdomen and one on her chest. Thus, on 3 January 1854, the Political Governor of Havana charged Pujibet with physical battery and threatened him with imprisonment if he ever interfered in her life again.

A criminal case involving a prostitute, a pimp, a robbery, two rejected marriage proposals, an acquitted accomplice, and a plaintiff-turned-convicted-criminal may appear too sensational to serve as the kind of representative case typically found in an opening chapter. Full of drama, public scandal, and intrigue this was, however, precisely the kind of situation likely to elicit a police response in 1853. The motivations for this official interest may be surprising in light of the subject of this study. While authorities were certainly eager to punish crimes such as robbery, they were not particularly concerned that both defendants had ties to prostitution. By 1853, colonial officials had shifted their

[9] The original Spanish reads: "ni piensa ni jamás ha pensado en casarse."

policy on prostitution from outright prohibition to tolerance. Consequently, Armas' incarceration resulted from her extensive history of police entanglements and not her status as a prostitute. Rather, two other factors made the difference in this case: the address where the crime occurred and the year.

The great irony of the case against Antonia Armas and don Gaspar Amoretti is that if they had robbed Pujibet just one year earlier, they might well have gone unpunished. In many ways, Armas and Amoretti were the victims of bad timing. Prior to 1853, the area that became Havana's Third District was not an official district at all but rather a set of loosely defined and overpopulated extramural neighborhoods. Considered to be geographically, socially, and economically marginal, these areas were of relatively little concern to colonial authorities and thus were patrolled by a mere handful of police officers. By 1853, however, Havana's urban physiognomy had begun changing dramatically. The city wall was being dismantled, and areas once considered outside the administrative purview of local law enforcement officials were now considered an integral part of the city and worthy of police surveillance. Thus, by 1853, the La Pajarera tenement house was situated within an official administrative district with an on-duty police officer stationed nearby. The kind of violent public scandal perpetrated by Armas, Amoretti, and Pujibet was, therefore, likely to elicit a police response. The case against Armas and Amoretti thus illustrates an important theme running throughout this discussion of prostitution in mid-nineteenth-century Havana—timing and location mattered.

A Tale of Two Cities (Within a City)

To speak of Havana in the mid-nineteenth century is to speak of two cities within a city. Prompted by rising concerns with city defense during the 1650s, colonial officials began exploring a number of potential measures to secure Havana, including turning the city into an island by digging a large canal or moat around its perimeter. Governor Juan Montaño Blásquez (1656-1658) offered an alternative—the construction of a large fortified wall.[10] A project nearly seventy years in the making (1674-1740), the construction of Havana's city wall was a massive undertaking that required the mobilization of a substantial slave labor force and considerable economic resources.[11] The final wall measured 10 meters high and 1.4 meters wide.[12] Though initially intended as a military defense mechanism—a purpose it never had to serve—Havana's city wall succeeded rather to create two spatially differentiated populations.

In his study of mid-nineteenth-century Havana, Francisco González del Valle claims that in order to understand life in Cuba's capital city, one must "hacer un recorrido imaginario por las dos Habanas, la de intramuros y la de extramuros."[13] Likewise, Emilio

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[10] Francisco González del Valle, *La Habana en 1841, obra póstuma ordenada y revisada por Raquel Catála* (Havana: Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana, 1952), 133.

[11] Manuel Fernández Santalices, *Las calles de La Habana intramuros: Arte, historia y tradiciones en las calles y plazas de La Habana vieja* (Miami: Saeta Ediciones, 1989), 97.

[12] Manuel Fernández Santalices, *Las calles de La Habana intramuros: Arte, historia y tradiciones en las calles y plazas de La Habana vieja* (Miami: Saeta Ediciones, 1989), 75.

[13] Francisco González del Valle, *La Habana en 1841, obra póstuma ordenada y revisada por Raquel Catála* (Havana: Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana,

Roig de Leuchsenring posits that "the oldest and most permanent division in Havana has been that produced by the wall, [which divides the city] into two large zones: Intramural and Extramural."[14] The division between the two Havanas implied by the city wall was not, however, as absolute as these statements might seem to suggest.

A steady flow of carriages, commodities, and citizens in and out of the city fostered both social and economic connections between the two communities. As we will see, the city wall only became increasingly anachronistic over the course of the nineteenth century. Yet, the wall nonetheless served as a powerful symbolic line dividing the inner sanctum of the city center (defined as decidedly urban, civilized, honorable, orderly, progressive) and the urbanizing areas (defined as dangerous, dishonorable, unruly, and backward) lying beyond.[15] In this way, the wall played a powerful role in defining progress, citizenship, and honor in mid-nineteenth century Cuba.

1952), 81. The original Spanish reads: "hacer un recorrido imaginario por las dos Habanas, la de intramuros y la de extramuros."

[14] Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, *Las calles de La Habana, bases para su denominanción. Restitución de nombres antiguos, tradicionales y populares* (Havana: Municipio de la Habana, 1936), 18-19. The original Spanish reads: "la más antigua y permanente división de La Habana ha sido la natural producida por la construcción de las murallas, o sea, en dos grandes zonas: Intramuros y Extramuros."

[15] María Soledad Zárate Campos notes that in the late nineteenth century, Santiago de Chile's urban populace was divided geographically by a roadway that served to distinguish the "proper city," occupied by members of the upper class, from outlying areas occupied by marginalized groups. María Soledad Zárate Campos, "Vicious Women, Virtuous Women: The Female Delinquent and the Santiago de Chile Correctional House, 1860-1900," in *The Birth of the Penitentiary in Latin America: Essays on Criminology, Prison Reform, and Social Order, 1830-1940*, eds. Ricardo D. Salvatore and Carlos Aquirre (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996, 80-81.

The area lying within Havana's city wall (intramuros) measured a mere 1,931 square *varas* or approximately 660 acres[16] and was divided into sixteen neighborhoods.[17] This circumscribed area was the social, economic, and political core of not only the city but also the entire island. As the hub of Havana's economic activity, the city port and its environs served as the preferred location for the capital city's businesses, plazas, and aristocratic residences.[19] Boasting the city's principal commercial establishments, such as "French dress shops, confectioners and sweet shops, bustling cafes, amusement arcades, and stores," Obispo and O'Reilly streets were considered among the most important of Havana's nineteenth-century urban thoroughfares.[20] Elaborate colonial mansions lined

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[16] Jacobo de la Pezuela, *Diccionario geográfico, estadístico, histórico de la Isla de Cuba*, vol. III (Madrid: Imp. del estab. de Mellado, 1863): 57. According to the *Oxford Spanish Dictionary*, a *vara* is a unit of length approximately equivalent to one yard. Carlos Styles Carvajal and Jane Horwood, eds., *The Oxford Spanish Dictionary*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 755.

[17] Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, *Las calles de La Habana, bases para su denominanción: Restitución de nombres antiguos, tradicionales y populares* (Havana: Municipio de la Habana, 1936), 19. The city's original four neighborhoods quadrupled in 1807. The resulting sixteen neighborhoods were Casa de Gobierno, Fuerza, Santo Domingo, San Telmo, Santo Angel, Monserrate, San Juan de Dios, San Felipe, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Santa Teresa, Ursulina, Belén, Espíritu Santo, Paula, and San Isidro. The six neighborhoods created extramuros were Jesús María, Guadalupe, San Lázaro, Chávez, Peñalver, and Nueva Paz. See Francisco González del Valle, *La Habana en 1841, obra póstuma ordenada y revisada por Raquel Catála* (Havana: Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana, 1952), 93.

[19] Manuel Fernández Santalices, *Las calles de La Habana intramuros: Arte, historia y tradiciones en las calles y plazas de La Habana vieja* (Miami: Saeta Ediciones, 1989), 24.

[20] Jacobo de la Pezuela, *Diccionario geográfico, estadístico, histórico de la isla de Cuba,* vol. III (Madrid: Imprenta del establecimiento Mellado, 1863), 78, and Francisco González del Valle, *La Habana en 1841, obra póstuma ordenada y revisada por Raquel Catála* (Havana: Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana, 1952), 83. The original Spanish reads: "casas de modas francesas, confiterías y dulcerías, los más concurridos cafés y billares y algunas boticas."

the bustling streets of Cuba, San Ignacio, Mercaderes, Inquisidor, Oficios, Baratillo, San Pedro (running north and south), and Empedrado, Obispo, O'Reilly, Obrapía, Lamparilla, Amargura, and Teniente Rey (running east to west).[21] The coastal neighborhoods of San Juan de Dios and Templete—particularly the stretch from Mercaderes to O'Reilly—contained the most luxurious of Havana's elite residences.[22]

Though enclosed on all sides by a wall, Havana's inner-city population was by no means homogenous. Even the center had its fringes. Beyond the boundaries of the affluent neighborhoods of Havana's local aristocracy lay the city's popular neighborhoods. Far from the bustling commercial district, these areas were considered remote, solitary, dark, and least desirable for residence. Over time, therefore, these areas became home to Havana's economically, socially, and geographically marginal populations. Situated in areas lying in the shadow cast by the high city wall, and lit only by the occasional gas lantern, these areas were indeed physically dark.[23] Yet, colonial

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[21] Manuel Fernández Santalices, *Las calles de La Habana intramuros: Arte, historia y tradiciones en las calles y plazas de La Habana vieja* (Miami: Saeta Ediciones, 1989), 24.

[22] Manuel Fernández Santalices, *Las calles de La Habana intramuros: Arte, historia y tradiciones en las calles y plazas de La Habana vieja* (Miami: Saeta Ediciones, 1989), 93.

[23] Havana was, like most colonial cities, poorly lit. Gas lighting was introduced in 1846, but electric lighting was not introduced for another four decades—and even then only in select centralized locations. In February 1888, Havana's Parque Central became the first location within the city to be lit by electricity. Despite initially proposing to wire the city's two principal commercial streets (Obispo and O'Reilly) for electricity, the Compañía Hispanoamericana de Alumbrado y Fuerza eventually conceded to light the park instead. See Manuel Fernández Santalices, *Las calles de La Habana intramuros: Arte, historia y tradiciones en las calles y plazas de La Habana vieja* (Miami: Saeta Ediciones, 1989), 18, and Francisco González del Valle, *La Habana en 1841, obra*

legislation further darkened these areas symbolically by designating them as the only appropriate areas for certain activities. Religious festivities associated with local *cabildos de nación* (mutual societies organized around African ethnic groups), for example, were confined to the streets and alleyways nearest the wall.[24] Thus coded as socially marginal, these intramural areas lying along the fringes of the city wall continued to house the city's ethnic and economic underclasses. Individuals of African descent inhabited the neighborhoods San Felipe (Pluma), Santo Cristo (Legía), Santo Angel (Cangrejo), and San Francisco (Llagas),[25] while Yucatecan contract laborers inhabited a circumscribed

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póstuma ordenada y revisada por Raquel Catála (Havana: Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana, 1952), 87-88.

[24] In her study of race in nineteenth-century Cuba, Aline Helg states that "[t]he *cabildos de nación*—religious and mutual aid societies originally supported by Spain to promote Christianity while maintaining divisions among the population of color—allowed descendants of distinct African ethnic identity to perpetuate part of their cultural heritage." Aline Helg, *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886-1912* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 29, 66. The geographic limitations placed on the festivities of *cabildos de nación* were first codified in the 1792 *Bando de Buen Gobierno y Policía*—which dictated that the *cabildos de negros* "se pasen a las orillas de la Ciudad desde la puerta Antigua de la Tenaza, hasta la de la Punta, excepto el frente de la de Tierra"—and continued into the mid-nineteenth century. See *Bando de buen Gobierno del Excmo. Sr. Conde de Santa Clara, Gobernador y capitan General, publicado en la ciudad de la Havana, el día 28 de enero año de 1799* (Havana: Reimpreso en la imprenta de la Capitanía General, 1799), Geronimo Valdés, *Bando de gobernación y policía de la Isla de Cuba*, 2a ed. (Havana: Imprenta del Gobierno por S.M., 1842), 25, (esp. articles 87 and 88), and *Ordenanzas municipales de la ciudad de La Habana* (Havana: Imprenta del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1855), 24 (esp. articles 65 & 66).

[25] The various neighborhoods listed above were interchangeably refered to by official and popular African names (in parentheses)—a practice that further underscores the overlapping, layered nature of urban geography and social meaning in colonial Havana. See Lydia Cabrera, *La sociedad secreta Abakúa, narrada por viejos adeptos* (Havana: Ediciones C.R., 1959), 38, and Manuel Fernández Santalices, *Las calles de La Habana intramuros: Arte, historia y tradiciones en las calles y plazas de La Habana vieja* (Miami: Saeta Ediciones, 1989), 25.

and isolated portion of the southernmost corner of the walled city popularly referred to as Campeche.[26] As new socially undesirable groups (like prostitutes) were defined, these groups were likewise pushed to the edges of the walled city. These areas maintained a reputation as economically, socially, and ethnically marginal well into the twentieth century.

If areas lying at the city edges were considered solitary, dark, and dishonorable, even more marginal were settlements lying outside Havana's fortified wall. The capital city's extramural barrios occupied an uneasy and complex position within the imagination of colonial authorities. Ill defined, expansive, and increasingly populated, these areas were considered uncivilized, potentially dangerous, and almost impossible to police. Police control during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries remained highly focused within the city walls. Of Havana's five police brigades, four brigades (64 officers) were charged with patrolling intramural areas, while only one brigade (16 officers) was charged with patrolling extramural areas. Furthermore, all five police headquarters were located within the city walls.[27] This marked imbalance in policing

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[26] Though not an officially recognized neighborhood, the barrio Campeche (named after the Mexican port city) apparently referred to an area between Merced and Desamparados streets in the southernmost corner of the walled city that overlapped the Paula and San Isidro neighborhoods. Manuel Fernández Santalices, *Las calles de La Habana intramuros: Arte, historia y tradiciones en las calles y plazas de La Habana vieja* (Miami: Saeta Ediciones, 1989), 25, 68. Dulcila Cañizares notes that this marginalized area of the capital city was also referred to as "Campechuelo" or the "Cuartel de Campeche." Dulcila Cañizares, *San Isidro, 1910: Alberto Yarini y su época* (Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 2000), 6. According to Rebecca Scott the 1862 census provides the earliest data revealing the size of the Yucatecan population resident in Cuba, which included 743 individuals (.1% of the total population). See Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985), 6-7.

efforts was not lost on local authorities. In an 1816 report, Havana's Police Council expressed concerns with the presence of "convicted criminals and delinquents" (reos y malhechores) who might "find refuge in extramural neighborhoods."[28] Dramatic population increases during the mid-nineteenth century further justified the need for increased control in these areas (Table 1).

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[27] Francisco González del Valle, *La Habana en 1841, obra póstuma ordenada y revisada por Raquel Catála* (Havana: Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana, 1952), 169. According to González del Valle, all five police headquarters were located within the city walls at the San Agustín convent (one brigade), the San Francisco convent (three brigades), and in a facility near the Tacón Theater (one brigade).

[28] Diputación de Policia, *Informe de la Diputación de Policia al Excelentísimo Señor Presidente Gobernador y Capitan General, del estado de sus tareas y providencias que deben adoptarse para conservar la pública tranquilidad* (Havana: Arazoza y Soler, 1816), 8. The original Spanish reads: "encontrasen estos un refugio un refugio en los barrios extramuros de esta Capital."

Table 1

Population Statistics for Havana by Location, 1827 and 1846

Year	Categorization According to Census	Total Population	Intramural Residents	%	Extramural Residents	%
1827	White	46,621	19,190	48%	27,431	51%
	Free People of Color	23,562	7,848	20%	15,714	29%
	Slave	23,840	12,942	32%	10,898	20%
	Total	**94,023**	**39,980**	**43%**	**54,043**	**57%**
1846	White	71,025	19,283	51%	51,742	56%
	Free People of Color	31,377	7,873	21%	23,504	25%
	Slave	27,070	10,404	28%	16,666	18%
	Total	**129,994**	**37,560**	**29%**	**92,434**[a]	**71%**

Sources: *Cuadro estadístico de la siempre fiel isla de Cuba, correspondiente al año de 1827* (Havana: Oficina de las Viudas de Arazoza y Soler, Impresores del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1829), and *Cuadro estadístico de la siempre fiel isla de Cuba, correspondiente al año de 1846* (Havana: Imprenta del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1847).

[a] Data indicating racial categorization or civil status for the 522 residents of Guasabacoa was not provided by the 1846 census, thus the composite data and percentages presented above are slightly skewed.

The first half of the nineteenth century was a time of unprecedented economic growth in Cuba. Joan Casanovas maintains that this "phenomenal expansion of the Cuban economy, mainly based on coffee, sugar, and tobacco exports, not only caused a population increase in rural areas, but also favored the growth of cities and towns at a pace unparalleled in the rest of Latin America."[29] These dramatic changes were the direct result of broad economic reform implemented by colonial officials in Cuba. Hoping to stymie the spread of independence fervor from the continent, the Spanish monarchy approved a number of liberalizing concessions for Cuba's creole elites. These concessions—including the abolition of the processing and shipping monopoly held by

[29] Joan Casanovas, *Urban Labor and Spanish Colonialism in Cuba*, 1850-1898 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), 15.

La Real Factoría de Tabacos de la Habana and ratification of a free trade decree—stimulated foreign demand for Cuban tobacco products. In order to provide for this soaring international demand, Cuban entrepreneurs began constructing an increased number of large tobacco factories and small workshops in the urban centers of western Cuba, namely Havana. The proliferation of tobacco processing centers dramatically increased the number of skilled and semi-skilled jobs available in the capital city, which, in turn, sparked an unprecedented population boom.[30] Therefore, while total population numbers for the island increased 28 percent in the nineteen years between the 1827 and 1846 censuses, the total population for Havana increased 38 percent during that same period (see Table 2).[31] A mark of the city's burgeoning economic prosperity, Havana's population boom was also the source of serious concern for colonial authorities. Namely, authorities feared that an expanding population would only lead to higher levels of social disorder and delinquency. Public scandal and intoxication, vagrancy, physical and verbal assault, and theft were all seen as potential repercussions of unchecked urban expansion. Especially troubling to authorities was the fact that the fastest growing area of the city was also the most poorly policed.

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[30] Joan Casanovas, *Urban Labor and Spanish Colonialism in Cuba*, 1850-1898 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), 15-18, 23-27.

[31] Havana's population relative to the island as a whole remained at around 14 percent throughout the nineteenth century. See Joan Casanovas, *Bread or Bullets! Urban Labor and Spanish Colonialism in Cuba, 1850-1898* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), 24.

Table 2

Comparative Population Statistics for Cuba and Havana, 1827 and 1846

Year	Categorization According to Census	Population Cuba	%	Population Havana	%
1827	White	311,051	44%	46,621	50%
	Free People of Color	106,494	15%	23,562	25%
	Slave	286,942	41%	23,840	25%
	Total	**704,487**		**94,023**	**13%**
1846	White	425,767	47%	71,025	55%
	Free People of Color	149,226	17%	31,377	24%
	Slave	323,759	36%	27,070	21%
	Total	**898,752**		**129,994**	**14%**
	Increase	**194,265**	**28%**	**35,971**	**38%**

Sources: *Cuadro estadístico de la siempre fiel isla de Cuba, correspondiente al año de 1827* (Havana: Oficina de las Viudas de Arazoza y Soler, Impresores del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1829), and *Cuadro estadístico de la siempre fiel isla de Cuba, correspondiente al año de 1846* (Havana: Imprenta del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1847).

By the mid-nineteenth century it was impossible to deny the expanding population of areas outside the city wall and their increasing importance vis-à-vis the city center. Remarking that extramural neighborhoods were "now more densely populated than areas within the city wall," the Police Council expressed uneasiness with the general lack of colonial governance and police control outside the city wall.[32] The previous system of organizing the relatively amorphous extramural areas into a few large districts and neighborhoods reflected authorities' general lack of concern for these areas prior to the mid-nineteenth century. As Havana's population began to explode, however, these

[32] Diputación de Policía, *Informe de la Diputación de Policía al Excelentísimo Señor Presidente Gobernador y Capitán General, del estado de sus tareas y providencias que deben adoptarse para conservar la pública tranquilidad* (Havana: Oficina de Arazoza y Soler, Impresores del Gobierno y de la Real Sociedad Patriótica por su Magestad, 1816), 8. The original Spanish reads: "tan poblados que contienen más número de almas que la población intramuros."

expansive and loosely defined extramural neighborhoods proved too unwieldy and difficult to police. Authorities hoped that by multiplying the number of official neighborhoods in these areas, they would better be able to fix in space Havana's expanding mobile population and extend police surveillance into new sections of the city. In 1841, therefore, colonial authorities doubled the number of official neighborhoods outside the city wall from three to six.[33] The eventual incorporation into Havana of the barrios Cerro, Jesús del Monte, y Arroyo Apolo, as well as areas across the bay such as Regla and Casa Blanca, further expanded the geographic and administrative boundaries of the capital city.[34]

The primary impetus behind the creation of new extramural neighborhoods in mid-nineteenth-century Havana was to place heretofore loosely defined areas squarely within the administrative purview of colonial authorities. These redistricting measures not only reflected colonial authorities' shifting administrative priorities, but they also profoundly reshaped the lives of Havana's citizens. The creation of new neighborhoods allowed authorities to classify zones within the city as desirable or undesirable, honorable or dishonorable, central or marginal, and within or without.

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[33] These six new extramural neighborhoods were Jesús María, Guadalupe, San Lázaro, Chávez, Peñalver, and Nueva Paz. Francisco González del Valle, *La Habana en 1841, obra póstuma ordenada y revisada por Raquel Catála* (Havana: Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana, 1952), 93.

[34] Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, *Las calles de La Habana, bases para su denominación. Restitución de nombres antiguos, tradicionales y populares* (Havana: Municipio de la Habana, 1936), 19.)

Female Delinquency, Female Discipline

As Havana's population increased during the mid-nineteenth century, colonial authorites became ever more concerned with securing public order within the city. The waves of laborers who poured into the capital city in unforeseen numbers embodied a devastating potential for disorder, chaos, and delinquency.[35] Increasing numbers of migrant and immigrant women generate a particular set of apprehensions stemming from a belief that migrating women were not true laborers, but rather displaced wanderers sure to cause trouble. Reflecting this spirit of trepidation, local law enforcement officials grumbled that "this class of women who travel from all parts and arrive in Havana determined only to pursue licentiousness and with no intention of working grows daily."[36]

Though often particularly connected to migrant and immigrant women, official definitions of female delinquency during the mid-nineteenth-century were actually quite broad. Rarely were fine lines drawn between categories of female delinquency. Consequently, the term "public women" (mugeres [sic] públicas) was commonly utilized to refer to a broad category of women including drunkards, thieves, carousers, vagrants, immigrants, and prostitutes. Local officials were less concerned with the moral implications of a woman's unruly behavior than its public manifestation. Female

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[35] Robert L. Paquette notes that according to the 1846 Cuban census, of the more than 55,00 foreign-born inhabitants living in Cuba at that time, the number of immigrants from the Canary Islands (19, 759 or 36 percent) was second only to that of immigrants from peninsular Spain (27, 251 or 49 percent). See Robert L. Paquette, *Sugar is Made with Blood: The Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict between Empires over Slavery in Cuba* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 41-42).

[36] ANC/GSC, leg. 1353, no. 52885 (1851-1853), "Expediente sobre las mujeres públicas." The original Spanish reads: "diariamente crece la clase de mugeres que de todas partes…vienen a la Habana sin otro objeto que el libertinage y no [a] trabajar."

delinquency was thus defined as any *publicly scandalous* behavior that disrupted social order. One of the practical problems posed by the detention of publicly scandalous women was the lack of a sufficient institutional framework to provide for their incarceration. The high administrative costs of constructing and maintaining penal institutions lead to a general dearth of prisons, jails, and correctional facilities on the island. The disciplinary complex established for female correction in Havana thus consisted of broadly defined penal institutions with multiple, overlapping purposes that reflected the broad definitions of female delinquency in mid-nineteenth-century Havana.[37]

Havana's first female correctional facility was housed within the San Francisco de Paula Hospital located in the far southwestern corner of the city in the barrio Paula.[38] **[Figure 1.1]** Founded in 1664, the hospital initially served a penal-medical function, housing both medically ill women and female criminals.[39] This "functional heterogeneity" quickly led to overcrowding and administrative anxiety.[40] Despite their

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[37] In her discussion of the history of recogimientos in colonial Lima, Nancy Van Duesen argues that colonial Latin American society was characterized by the existence of a range of female-centered lay and secular institutions with multivalent, overlapping missions designed to reform and rehabilitate morally corrupt women. Nancy Van Deusen, Between the Sacred and the Worldly: The Institutional and Cultural Practice of Recogimiento in Colonial Lima (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001): 8-9.

[38] For a general history of the facility, see Jorge Le-Roy y Cassá, *Historia del Hospital San Francisco de Paula* (Havana, n.p., 1958).

[39] No composite data indicating the number of female patients or female criminals housed at the San Francisco de Paula Hospital were located for the period discussed here.

[40] Here I use the terminology employed by Nancy Van Deusen in her work on recogimientos in colonial Lima. In contrast to other Latin American scholars who classify recogimientos into two distinct categories of voluntary protective institutions and involuntary punitive institutions (see, for example, Josefina Muriel de la Torre, *Los*

intentions to maintain racially segregated living quarters, facility administrators found it increasingly difficult to maintain a proper separation between convicted criminals and patients.[41] Anxious about this unseemly mix of honorable and dishonorable women, one of the facility's early Chaplains, don Rafael del Castillo, declared that it was simply impermissible to "confuse the poor widow, the penniless young maiden, [and] the mother of the needy family, secluded for reasons of charity, with adulteresses, prostitutes, and other such slaves to vice."[42] Concern with this unfettered social contact between women of disparate racial, economic, and even criminal backgrounds eventually prompted colonial authorities to establish an institution dedicated solely to the correction of

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recogimientos de mujeres: respuesta a una problemática social novohispana (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1995), 45), Van Deusen posits that these institutions were in fact multifunctional. Van Deusen also explores the tension and confusion wrought by the resulting intermingling of women from disparate backgrounds. See Nancy Van Deusen, *Between the Sacred and the Worldly: The Institutional and Cultural Practice of Recogimiento in Colonial Lima* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 8-9, and Nancy Van Deusen, "Defining the Sacred and the Worldly: *Beatas* and *Recogidas* in Late-Seventeenth-Century Lima," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* (Fall 1997): 446-448.

[41] In her discussion of *recogimientos* in colonial Lima, Nancy Van Deusen states that "all institutions for women…reproduced the shifting norms that reinforced racial, economic, and sexual hierarchies of difference in colonial society…What occurred within institutions often reproduced patterns in secular society." Nancy Van Deusen, *Between the Sacred and the Worldly: The Institutional and Cultural Practice of Recogimiento in Colonial Lima* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 7. For a general discussion of racially segregated living conditions in the San Francisco de Paula Hospital, see, Francisco González del Valle, *La Habana en 1841, obra póstuma ordenada y revisada por Raquel Catála* (Havana: Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana, 1952), 175.

[42] Original source quoted in Manuel Fernández Santalices, *Las calles de La Habana intramuros: Arte, historia y tradiciones en las calles y plazas de La Habana vieja* (Miami: Saeta Ediciones, 1989), 81. The original Spanish reads: "confundir a la viuda infeliz, a la doncella necesitada, a la madre de familia menesterosa, recogidas por la Caridad, con las adúlteras, las meretrices y las demás esclavas del vicio."

wayward women.[43] Freed of its punitive function, the San Francisco de Paula Hospital became the capital city's primary women's hospital, housing the majority of Havana's female medical patients (with the exception of syphilitic prostitutes) well into the twentieth century.[44]

The institution created to replace the San Francisco de Paula Hospital—Havana's Real Casa de San Juan Nepomuceno de Recogidas—was officially inaugurated in 1746.[45] Typically referred to as the Casa de Recogidas, the institution was also variously referred to as: the Real Casa de Recogidas, the Casa de Reclusión de San Juan de Nepomuceno de Recogidas, the Cárcel de Mujeres, the Cárcel de las Recogidas, the Cárcel y Casa de Recogidas, the Casa de Baños, or simply las Recogidas.[46] This range of official and

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[43] Lara Putnam has discussed the ironic outcome of this mixing of women within Costa Rican correctional facilities stating that the state penal apparatus—including the Casa de Reclusión and the Hospital de Profilaxis Venérea—reinforced delinquent women's social networks by continually bringing them into contact with one another. Lara Putnam, *The Company They Kept: Migrants and the Politics of Gender in Caribbean Costa Rica, 1870-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 96.

[44] Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, *La Habana: Apuntes históricos*, tomo III (Havana: Editora del Consejo Nacional de Cultura, 1964), 140-141. The San Francisco de Paula Hospital apparently continued to house a limited number of female delinquents during the early to mid-nineteenth century. It in interesting to note that in the only two criminal files located involving the remittance of a female criminal to the San Francisco de Paula Hospital rather than the Casa de Recogidas, the arrested women were both Chinese. While this is by no means sufficient data to conclude that Chinese inmates were segregated from other female criminals, it is nonetheless an interesting and suggestive discovery. See, ANC/ME, leg. 2972, no. L (1838:294), "Contra china Isabel Alber ebria y escandalosa," and ANC/ME, leg. 2600, no. Ah (1856: 43), "Natividad Ramírez por escandalosa."

[45] Rolando Alvarez Estévez, *La "reeducación" de la mujer cubana en la colonia: La Casa de Recogidas* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1976), 7.

[46] Nancy Van Deusen defines a *Casa de Recogidas* as an institution of religious retreat, asylum, or involuntary imprisonment. According to Van Deusen the term

unofficial titles reflected the institution's shifting purpose over the course of its 150-year history. The Casa de Recogidas was the brainchild of Cuba's Captain General, Juan Antonio Tineo. The principal objectives of the institution were to separate "incorrigible women" from the general prison population of the Royal Prison and to separate morally corrupt women (prostitutes, adulteresses, murderesses, thieves, and alcoholics) from the physically ill women housed at the San Francisco de Paula Hospital. In this way, Tineo hoped to prevent the kinds of unseemly encounters and influences such contact might foster.[47] Not originally cast as a penal institution (though it quickly acquired that status), the Casa de Recogidas was initially envisioned as a place of protection for women at risk of falling into a life of vice, including "poor maidens at risk of moral decline who are deposited [here] to avoid impending marriage, divorcees, and scandalous, incorrigible delinquents."[48] Protection also meant isolation, however, and women housed at the Casa de Recogidas were only permitted to leave the premises with court approval.[49]

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recogida had multiple usages and meanings during the colonial period. In its noun form, the term referred to a woman who retired to a particular house, on a voluntary or involuntary basis, and as an adjective it was synonymous with virtue, self-containment, enclosure, and morality. Nancy Van Deusen, *Between the Sacred and the Worldly: The Institutional and Cultural Practice of Recogimiento in Colonial Lima* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 268-270.

[47] Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, *La Habana: Apuntes históricos*, tomo III (Havana: Editora del Consejo Nacional de Cultura, 1964), 128. Apparently, composite data accounting for the exact number of women housed in the Casa de Recogidas each month was not compiled until the 1880s. Rolando Alvarez Estévez claims that sixty women were housed at the Casa de Recogidas in 1804, although he does not cite the source of this information. See Rolando Alvarez Estévez, *La "reeducación" de la mujer cubana en la colonia: La Casa de Recogidas* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1976), 25.

[48] Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, *La Habana: Apuntes históricos*, tomo III (Havana: Editora del Consejo Nacional de Cultura, 1964), 128. The original Spanish

Following several relocations, by 1805 the Casa de Recogidas and its interns were finally installed in a large but poorly maintained building on Compostela Street (now the site of the National Archives of Cuba).[50] Conditions within the facility were miserable. During heavy rains, many women chose to sleep in the open patio for fear that the

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reads: "doncellas pobres y expuestas a relajación [,] depositadas con destino a matrimonio [,] divorciadas y . . . delincuentes escandalosas e incorrigibles."

[49] Ibid. Many women interned at the Casa de Recogidas requested "indultos" or "rebaja de condena." See, for example, ANC/GSC, leg. 344, no. 12431 (1853), "Sobre escándalos de la mujer pública Da. Antonia de Armas, y D. Gaspar Amoretti," ANC/GSC, leg. 1366, no. 53294 (policia, 1853-1854), "Expediente formado sobre excesos de la meretriz Da. Luisa Bonetti."ANC/ME, leg. 4384, no. 7 (1875), "Francisca Domínguez, Casa de Recogidas, pidiendo indulto, ANC/ME, leg. 4389, no. Bb (1875), "Gregoria Miranda, Casa de Recogidas, pidiendo indulto," ANC/ME, leg. 4393, no. R (1874:160), "Exp. prom. por Teresa Pérez de Corcho y Micaela Monteagudo, pidieno rebaja de condena," ANC/ME, leg. 4413, no. A (1862:246), "María de los Angeles Arencibia, Casa de Recogidas, pidiendo traslado o indulto," ANC/ME, leg. 4374, no. Al (Habana, 1871), "Expediente promovido por Elena Barbieri, presa en la Cárcel de Recogidas, pidiendo su libertad," ANC/ME, leg. 4008, no. BI (1873), "Juana Ramos," ANC/ME, leg. 4389, no. BH (1876), "Petra Perez y Manresa."

[50] Rolando Alvarez Estévez, *La "reeducación" de la mujer cubana en la colonia: La Casa de Recogidas* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1976), 27. The Casa de Recogidas' was administered by the Archbishopric of Havana and functioned mostly by way of personal donations until 1775 when Governor Marqués de la Torre ordered all ticket sales from the newly constructed Teatro Principal relinquished to the Casa de Recogidas for general maintenance purposes. For a general discussion of administrative issues relating to the Casa de Recogidas, see Rolando Alvarez Estévez, *La "reeducación" de la mujer cubana en la colonia: La Casa de Recogidas* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1976), 12, 15, and Manuel Fernández Santalices, *Las calles de La Habana intramuros: Arte, historia y tradiciones en las calles y plazas de La Habana vieja* (Miami: Saeta Ediciones, 1989), 81. For archival documents related to the Cada de Recogidas' financial administration, see ANC/GSC, leg. 712, no. 23499 (Casa de Recogidas, 1856), "Documentos acerca de los derechos que el Obispado y el Ayuntamiento de esta ciudad creen tener sobre la Casa de Recogidas, conocida también por la Casa de Baños (Habana),"and ANC/GSC, leg. 728, no. 243787 (Casa de Recogidas, 1856), "El Tribunal Superior Territorial de Cuentas aprueba las cuentas de 1854 de la Administración de la Casa de San Juan Nepomuceno de Recogidas a cargo del Pbro. Dn. Cayetano Martin Nieto."

building would collapse on them during the night.[51] Facility administrators deemed this situation unacceptable not because they feared that frequent exposure to the elements would compromise the women's health, but rather because it prevented them from enforcing the proper separation between recogidas of different races. Much like the San Francisco de Paula Hospital, the Casa de Recogidas housed women from a variety of social and economic backgrounds, religious affiliations, and even criminal statuses. In practice, this meant that nuns and *beatas* (lay pious women) seeking spiritual solace, as well as women awaiting annulment or divorce, often lived alongside incarcerated female prostitutes, thieves, and slaves.[52] Criminal cases dating from the mid- to late-nineteenth century reveal that the Casa de Recogidas was in fact used to incarcerate females convicted of a range of crimes including public intoxication,[53] disorderly conduct,[54]

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[51] Rolando Alvarez Estévez, *La "reeducación" de la mujer cubana en la colonia: La Casa de Recogidas* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1976), 29.

[52] In contrast to other Latin American scholars who classify recogimientos into two distinct categories of voluntary protective institutions and involuntary punitive institutions (see, for example, Josefina Muriel de la Torre, *Los recogimientos de mujeres: respuesta a una problemática social novohispana* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1995), 45), Van Deusen posits that recogimientos were in fact multifunctional. Van Deusen also explores the tension and confusion wrought by the resulting intermingling of women from disparate backgrounds. See Nancy Van Deusen, *Between the Sacred and the Worldly: The Institutional and Cultural Practice of Recogimiento in Colonial Lima* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 8-9, and Nancy Van Deusen, "Defining the Sacred and the Worldly: *Beatas* and *Recogidas* in Late-Seventeenth-Century Lima," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* (Fall 1997): 446-447.

[53] ANC/ME, leg. 4377, no. CB (1874), "Olaya Hernández Piloto," ANC/ME, leg. 2972, no. L (1838:294), "Contra china Isabel Alber ebria y escandalosa,"ANC/ME, leg. 3483, no. Bg (1848:92), "Expediente sobre las recluses en la Casa de Recogidas Doña María del Castillo, Doña Bárbara Viera y Doña Dolores Aguilar," ANC/ME, leg. 2822, no. V (1838:204), "Cuaderno de los autos seguidos contra Dolores Benítez y María del Pino Rosa, por ebrias y escandalosas, " ANC/ME, leg. 2934, no. D (1838: 219), "Cuaderno de los autos seguidos contra Da. María del Castillo por embriaguez y otros

homicide,[55] infanticide,[56] mental illness,[57] and even posing as a man in order to marry another woman.[58] According to historian Rolando Alvarez Estévez, the problems sparked by the commingling of women from various backgrounds at the facility became even more pronounced after 1860 when the Captain General ordered the transfer of dozens of female prisoners from Havana's Royal Prison to the Casa de Recogidas.[59] Originally justified as a temporary situation to alleviate prison overcrowding, the measure prompted

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excesos," ANC/ME, leg. 2600, no. U (1856: 262), "Dionisia Urrutia por ebria," and ANC/ME, leg. 2859, no. N (1864:17), "Contra parda Manuela Ocaña, por ebria y escandalosa."

[54] ANC/ME, leg. 4384, no. J (1865), "Parda libre, Tomasa Garcia, mala conducta, 7 meses Casa de Recogidas" and ANC/ME, leg. 2600, no. Ai (1856:43), "Doña Manuela Castro y Doña Josefa Villareal escandalosas," and ANC/ME, leg. 2600, no. Ah (1856:43), "Natividad Ramírez por escandalosa."

[55] ANC/ME, leg. 4384, no. Bt (1865:126), "Morena, Teófila Castaño, homicidio del Negro Estevan Alfonso, Casa de Recogidas"and ANC/ME, leg. 4395, no. Br (1860:172), "Canuta Triana, morena, Casa de Recogidas, homicidio."

[56] ANC/ME, leg. 4389, no. BH (1876), "Petra Perez y Manresa."

[57] Manuel Fernández Santalices claims that until 1829 women suffering from mental illness were segregated to a specific area of the Casa de Recogidas and that following that date they were removed to the Hospital de San Lázaro or Casa de Dementes. For example, in an 1848 criminal case involving three women arrested for public intoxication, one of the detainees, Doña Dolores Aguilar, was found legally insane and sentenced to the Casa de Dementes, while the two other women were remitted to the Casa de Recogidas. See ANC/ME, leg. 3483, no. Bg (1848: 92), "Expediente sobre las recluses en la Casa de Recogidas Doña María del Castillo, Doña Bárbara Viera y Doña Dolores Aguilar." Manuel Fernández Santalices, *Las calles de La Habana intramuros: Arte, historia y tradiciones en las calles y plazas de La Habana vieja* (Miami: Saeta Ediciones, 1989), 81.

[58] ANC/ME, leg. 3483, no. Bl (1832: 92), "Expediente sobre la expatriación de Doña Eriqueta Fabeas, sentenciada a las Recogidas por ocultar su sexo y haberse casado bajo el de hombre."

[59] See, for example, ANC/ME, leg. 4374, no. Al (Habana, 1871), "Expediente promovido por Elena Barbieri, presa en la Cárcel de Recogidas, pidiendo su libertad."

a swift response from facility administrators. The Chaplain of the Casa de Recogidas immediately wrote the Superior Civil Governor citing the occurrence of multiple brawls between the *reclusas* (prisoners) and the recogidas. Other problems apparently arose when, following the construction of a special visitation room for the reclusas, their guests proved a socially and morally inappropriate presence within the facility.[60] Citing the unsettling effect of these events, the Chaplain pleaded that the prisoners be removed from the Casa in order to restore peace and reestablish the facility's original purpose.[61] Despite the multiple tensions caused by the convergence of women of dissimilar backgrounds, however, the Casa de Recogidas remained the primary female correctional facility in Havana until the end of Spanish rule in 1898 and the subsequent construction of the Presidio de Mujeres in Guanabacoa.[62]

During the first half of the nineteenth century, colonial administrative policies relating to the discipline of prostitutes in Havana were shaped by a set of broad

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[60] ANC/GSC, leg. 1383, no. 53874-V (Casa de Recogidas, 1861), "Expediente promovido para el establecimiento en la Casa de Recogidas de una sala de visitas para los que vayan a visitar a las mujeres presas trasladadas provisionalmente a aquel asilo." See also Rolando Alvarez Estévez, *La "reeducación" de la mujer cubana en la colonia: La Casa de Recogidas* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1976), 69.

[61] ANC/GSC, leg. 420, no. 16830 (Casa de Recogidas, 1868), "Expediente promovido por el Administrador de la Casa de Recogidas, sobre haberse ocupado una gran parte del establecimiento por las mujeres reclusas de la Real Cárcel." See also Rolando Alvarez Estévez, *La "reeducación" de la mujer cubana en la colonia: La Casa de Recogidas* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1976), 70.

[62] According to Rolando Alvarez Estévez, seventy-one of the women incarcerated at the Casa de Recogidas in 1896 were serving time for criminal offenses and fourteen of those women were being held as political prisoners for their participation in the wars of independence. Rolando Alvarez Estévez, *La "reeducación" de la mujer cubana en la colonia: La Casa de Recogidas* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1976), 69, 74, 79.

definitions of female delinquency as primarily an issue relating to public order. To be sure, the considerable cost of establishing and maintaining a disciplinary complex based on differentiated categories of female misbehavior discouraged colonial officials from drawing discursive lines of demarcation between female thieves, vagrants, and prostitutes. By the second half of the century, however, rapid population increases created new social and spatial tensions within the capital city. Local residents, who resented the presence of "public women" within their neighborhoods, demanded that colonial officials segregate prostitutes from honorable society. These local pressures coincided with the development of international scientific thought linking prostitutes not only to issues of public order, but also to physical and moral contagion. By the late 1860s, therefore, colonial officials in Havana began to fix prostitution as a discrete social category requiring a distinct disciplinary complex designed to facilitate state control over prostitues lives, labors, and bodies.

Public Women in the Two Havanas

Prostitution was officially prohibited in Cuba until 1867, though the exact methods by which colonial authorities intended to enforce this prohibition remain unclear. The 1842 *Edict of Governance and Police for the Island of Cuba* (*Bando de gobernación y policia de la Isla de Cuba)* was the only contemporary legislation to mention prostitution and that law merely stated: "Houses of prostitution are prohibited and will be prosecuted according to the law."[63] The imprecision of this legislation stems in part from the fact that

[63] Geronimo Valdés, *Bando de gobernación y policia de la Isla de Cuba* (Havana: Imprenta del Gobierno por S.M., 1842), 7. The original Spanish reads: "Son prohibidas las casas de prostitución, y serán perseguidas con arreglo á las leyes."

while prostitution was officially prohibited, the term "prostitute" was not yet defined as a specific juridical or disciplinary category. Like female delinquents more generally, prostitutes were typically referred to as "public women" during most of the early and mid-nineteenth century. Police documents relating to prostitution in Havana, in fact, displayed the general heading "Mujeres Públicas" until 1867.[64] It is no coincidence that the eventual switch in memo headings from "Mujeres Públicas" to "Meretrices" in that year directly coincided with the first initiatives to establish regulatory measures to control prostitution within the capital city.

Due in part to this broad understanding of prostitution as just one of a range of delinquent female behaviors, there appears to have been no unilateral response to prostitution in the capital city. Official reactions to complaints filed against prostitutes included arrest, fines, expulsion from the neighborhood, city, or country, or often no response at all. Generally, any attempts to uphold the official position on Cuban prostitution were handled on a limited, ad-hoc basis with local police officers responding to specific complaints filed by elite citizens against particular brothels or "mujeres públicas" residing in the most centralized commercial and residential areas of the city. In fact, all but one of the criminal cases involving prostitutes during the period 1843-1853 resulted from grievances filed against women residing within intramural areas. Furthermore, the one case involving a complaint filed against a group of prostitutes

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[64] Yale University Library, Miscellaneous Manuscripts Collection (hereafter YUL/MMC), group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 10.

residing in an extramural neighborhood only received police attention when those women were found to have relocated to a house on Aguacate Street within the city walls.[65]

The majority of complaints filed during the 1840s reveal a preoccupation with particularly disorderly or scandalous prostitutes whose actions and behaviors infringed upon the lives of local elite—namely those women accused of public intoxication, disturbing the peace, or using foul language. For example, on 9 January 1843, don Antonio Araola, don Ignacio María de San Ramón, and don Ramon de Alvarado, filed a complaint against a *mujer mundana* (literally common woman but also a euphemism for prostitute) named Juana Waterlot living at #38 Luz street. The petitioners complained that Waterlot was a drunkard who would often scream obscenities and make obscene gestures to passersby. Fearing the influence these behaviors might have on their "virtuous daughters" (hijas de estado honesto), the petitioners requested that Waterlot be ordered to move from the neighborhood. Just two weeks later, it was reported that Waterlot had voluntarily moved outside the city wall, and with the petitioners duly satisfied the case was closed.[66]

The relative paucity of criminal cases or official complaints filed during this era may reflect a tendency for local citizens to first attempt to deal with unruly prostitutes themselves before appealing to local authorities for assistance. On 26 April 1849, don Pedro Arturo filed a complaint against several prostitutes living near his home on

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[65] ANC/GSC, leg. 1110, no. 40923 (queja, 1843), "Expediente en que D. Antonio Araola se queja de la escandalosa conducta de Da. Juana Waterlot y pidiendo el desalojo de la casa que habita."

[66] ANC/GSC, leg. 1110, no. 40923 (queja, 1843), "Expediente en que D. Antonio Araola se queja de la escandalosa conducta de Da. Juana Waterlot y pidiendo en desalojo de la casa que habita."

Villegas Street, stating: "due to my position as an ecclesiastic, [and] my ministry as a preacher and confessor, I require more tranquility, silence, and abstraction than others."[67] Don Arturo claimed that the women ignored his repeated pleas that they conduct themselves with greater decorum so as not to offened his parishioners who "cannot help but be disturbed by the disagreeable, and as I have indicated, scandalous occurrences they are forced to witness when they come to see me."[68] Exasperated with the situation and furthermore convinced that "persons of this lifestyle and conduct have no business living in an honorable and peaceful neighborhood," he requested that the local Police Commissioner intercede.[69] Within days, the Commissioner intervened on don Arturo's behalf, ordering that the four prostitutes cited in the case—Matilde Alfonso, Ursula Ayala, Josefa Perdomo, and Josefa Antonia de Santana—move outside the city walls. Eviction seemed a quick solution to the issue; however, few of the women were eager to relinquish their centrally located homes and thus resisted the Governor's order. While Santana apparently moved to Matanzas, Josefa Perdomo sent a letter of protest to the Governor claiming that the allegations leveled against her were actually in reference to another "Josefa" living at the same address. Even more perturbing to authorities, however, was the fact that Ayala and Alfonso had only feigned compliance with the

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[67] The original Spanish reads: "por razón de mi estado de eclesiástico, mi ministerio de predicador y confesor, necesito más que otros de tranquilidad, silencio y abstracción."

[68] The original Spanish reads: "muchas veces no han podido menos de molestarse por las ocurrencias desagradables y como he dicho escandalosas que en los momentos de visitarme han presenciado de las dichas casas."

[69] The original Spanish reads: "personas de semejante vida y proceder no convienen por ningun concepto emnedio de un vecindario honrado y pacífico."

Governor's order. Despite requesting residence passes for the barrio Colón just outside the city wall, both women were reportedly still living within the city and, aided by fellow prostitutes, were evading police officers by moving surreptiously between various local brothels. In response to these evasive maneuvers, the Governor re-ordered that all three women (including Perdomo) be forcibly evicted from the city. On 21 May it was reported that the women had indeed been relocated outside the city wall.[70]

Prostitutes' repeated resistance to relocation orders was the most vexing difficulty posed by the total prohibition of prostitution, and by the early 1850s, city police officials expressed increasing frustration with the 1842 legislation. Not only was it an exasperatingly general and vague piece of legislation, but it had also proven nearly impossible to enforce. Prostitutes continuously resisted eviction and citizens living outside the city wall apparently resented that their neighborhoods were now designated as relocation sites for unruly prostitutes. Reflecting on this complication, Police Commissioner Antonio de la Encina stated that "the population living outside the city walls has the same right as those individuals living within the city walls to request that the superior Governor remove these women from their neighborhoods."[71] In May 1851 Commissioner Encina therefore proposed that the only logical response to the failures of

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[70] ANC/GSC, leg. 1113, no. 41198 (queja, 1849), "Expediente formado sobre la queja dada por el Presbitero D. Pedro Arturo de unas mujeres públicas que vivían junto a su casa."

[71] The original Spanish reads: "la población de estramuros es de igual condición a la de esta ciudad para pedir y obtener del superior Gobierno una medida que alejase de sus moradas a estas mugeres desgraciadas."

total prohibition was to relocate prostitutes living "in principle streets and areas" to an isolated area within the city.[72]

Havana's Early Tolerance Zone

Tolerance seemed a logical and relatively peaceful solution to a situation that authorities found increasingly untenable. In many ways the shift from prohibition to tolerance was an attempt to establish a truce between colonial authorities and prostitutes. Under tolerance, prostitutes were granted a reprieve from police encroachment into their daily lives—provided they agreed to relocate and maintain a low profile. From their perspective, city police officers were granted a reprieve from the unrealistic expectation that they would arrest every prostitute in the capital city. Tolerance also gave authorities the appearance of being proactive without requiring them to overturn the implied moral stance against prostitution contained within the 1842 *Edict of Governance and Police*. Punishing the publicly scandalous behaviors of prostitutes could easily be justified as not a moral issue, but rather a civic issue relating to public order. Thirdly, colonial authorities viewed the shift from prohibition to tolerance as a resignation to the perceived inevitability of prostitution. The belief was that prostitution could never be eliminated because it stemmed from an unavoidable male desire for illicit sex and was bolstered by the existence of deviant women willing to satisfy those desires. If prostitution was inevitable, therefore, the only recourse was to relegate it to areas far removed from honorable society. Geographically circumscribed and coded for deviance, these tolerance zones would, in turn, promote easier and more thorough surveillance. They would also

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[72] The original Spanish reads: "en las calles y puntos principales de la Ciudad."

reduce the potential for confusion between honorable and sexually deviant women within the city. Finally, as tolerance was not a full-fledged regulatory effort, it did not require the mobilization of any additional financial, administrative, or institutional support. Colonial authorities could continue to rely on the limited disciplinary complex already in place, namely, local law enforcement officials and the Casa de Recogidas. Shifting from prohibition to tolerance thus seemed an easy answer to Havana's mid-nineteenth-century prostitution problem. Tolerance did not, however, prove the perfect solution colonial authorities had originally hoped. Rather, as we will see, tolerance presented an entirely new set of problems.

The proposed site for Havana's first unofficial tolerance zone centered primarily in an area immediately adjacent to the easternmost section of the city wall extending between the San Francisco de Paula Hospital and the La Punta port.[73] **[Figure 1.2]** It was not coincidental that this particular area of the city was designated for this purpose. Spatially isolated, socially undesirable, and both physically and discursively dark, these fringe areas were a logical location for Havana's first tolerance zone. In addition to housing the city's socially marginalized populations, this area conveniently lay in close proximity to the Casa de Recogidas, the Hospital San Francisco de Paula, and police headquarters.

Local citizens eager to see their neighborhoods free of prostitution eagerly applauded the new tolerance zone and clambered to be the first to reap the benefits of Commissioner Encina's plan. On 31 June 1851, the Bishop of Havana wrote the

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[73] ANC/GSC, leg. 1353, no. 52885 (1851-1853), "Expediente sobre las mujeres públicas."

Governor of Havana pleading that his neighborhood be one of the first to be evacuated, stating: "I request, Your Excellency, that you designate my neighborhood [Santo Cristo] as the first in which your just orders are put into practice so that I may avoid further subjection to these daily scandals, which are so hard to avoid."[74] The Bishop's request was honored and on 6 July local police forces were ordered to evacuate that area of all prostitutes.[75]

Certainly, there are no records that document cases of women who peacefully relocated to the tolerance zone. According to contemporary police documents, however, the eviction of local prostitutes was no easy task, as prostitutes developed a number of ways to resist and evade officials. Aside from the general inconveniences posed by moving from their homes, relocating may well have raised serious economic concerns for prostitutes. Namely, they may have feared that relegation to the edges of the city would compromise their access to clientele. Other, more personal, issues may also have prompted resistance. Relocation to an area now officially zoned for prostitution required a public and at least semi-permanent acknowledgment of an often secret and temporary occupation. Residence in the tolerance zone would thus undermine any permeability, anonymity, or sense of choice on the part of the women. Of course, this restriction of options was precisely the intent of colonial officials. The ability to locate prostitutes—

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[74] The original Spanish reads: "ruego a V.E. se sirva dar las ordenes oportunas para que uno de los primeros puntos donde se ponga en práctica tan acertada disposición, sea el barrio de mi residencia [Calle Bernaza] para evitarme así el sentimiento de presenciar cada dia escándalos que no me es fácil evitar."

[75] ANC/GSC, leg. 1353, no. 52885 (1851-1853), "Expediente sobre las mujeres públicas."

both in the sense of identifying them and fixing them in space—was a crucial step toward the larger goal of policing their actions.

One of the most common evasive maneuvers utilized by prostitutes unwilling to relocate to the indicated zone was to leave their homes temporarily with the intention of returning. On 8 November 1851, the Chief of Police lamented this common occurrence, stating, "a new group [of prostitutes] has moved into the same house on Bernaza Street that you ordered evacuated."[76] Don Antonio Gervasio de Mendoza also bemoaned this practice on 15 June 1852, stating that having finally achieved the eviction of various "nasty characters" (mujeres de mala vida) living near his home on Compostela, "within a few days others arrived here."[77] Even prostitutes who did obey police orders to relocate did not always move to the indicated tolerance zone. Evicted from her home in the barrio Santa Teresa in July 1851, Dolores Sardiñas requested that she be allowed to move to the barrio Espíritu Santo to live with her brother, a blacksmith at the Royal Arsenal. Finding the brother to be financially stable and "of an honorable reputation" (reputado como honrado), officials approved Sardiña's request to live in her brother's home.[78] Other prostitutes simply chose to leave the country altogether, as was the case in July 1851

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[76] ANC/GSC, leg. 1353, no. 52885 (1851-1853), "Expediente sobre las mujeres públicas." The original Spanish reads: "se han establecido algunas de estas nuevamente en la calle de Bernaza de la que con especialidad le mandaron quitar por V.E. las que en ella existían."

[77] ANC/GSC, leg. 341, no. 12227 (1852), "Espediente [sic] contra Da. Perfecta Quirós, muger [sic] pública por escandalosa." The original Spanish reads: "mujeres de mala vida"…"de pocos días a esta parte han vuelto otras."

[78] ANC/GSC, leg. 1353, no. 52885 (1851-1853), "Expediente sobre las mujeres públicas."

when, after being evicted from her home on Villegas Street, Antonia de Armas moved to New Orleans.[79]

Prostitutes unwilling or unable to live with family, leave the country, or spend their days evading police authorities devised other means to ensure their ability to remain in their homes. Though it did not guarantee success, a particularly intrepid prostitute might choose to plead directly with officials. On 6 June 1851, doña Susana Jones responded to a notice that she move from her home at #24 Aguiar by appearing before police officials to defend her personal honor. Maintaining that she lived quietly and respectfully, Jones requested that authorities desist in disturbing her and retract the order that she relocate. The President of Havana's Superior Commission of Urban Police responded to Jones' petition stating: "according to an investigation conducted by the District Chief, this woman's neighbors and the local police officer consider her a public woman who lives quietly but nonetheless admits anyone and everyone into her house."[80] Proving that authorities were often resistant to overturn standing eviction orders, even in cases where a prostitute had been unjustly accused of scandalous behavior, Jones was finally forced to move.[81]

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[79] ANC/GSC, leg. 1353, no. 52885 (1851-1853), "Expediente sobre las mujeres públicas."

[80] The original Spanish reads: "segun aberiguación [sic] hecha por el Gefe [sic] del Distrito a que pertenece es una muger [sic] que sin escándalo en el vecindario está clasificada por los vecinos como Pública y por el Celador del Barrio, y aunque para su manejo guarda cierto recato, se dá [sic] entrada en su casa al que se le presenta."

[81] ANC/GSC, leg. 1353, no. 52885 (1851-1853), "Expediente sobre las mujeres públicas."

One of the major weaknesses of tolerance policy was that it rested primarily on the ability of law enforcement officials to identity prostitutes accurately. In light of the myriad evasive maneuvers employed by prostitutes to avoid precisely this kind of exposure, authorities relied heavily on complaints from local residents. Testimony from neighbors was often the only evidence used to determine a woman's reputation. However, while police officers might utilize a complaint to forcibly evict a reputed prostitute, that same woman could also call on local citizens to defend her honor. Prostitutes frequently used this tactic to avoid forced relocation. In June 1852, a complaint filed by three local elite citizens living on Obrapía Street—Dr. Antonio Gervasio de Mendoza, don Rafael Diaz, and doña Micaela Barrutia—led to the arrest and subsequent eviction of several prostitutes living nearby. Two of the women, Petrona Valladares and Perfecta Quirós, immediately relocated; however, a third woman, Teresa Banquet, informed authorities that she was a "quiet woman who detested disturbances and commotions" and requested an opportunity to plead her case to the Governor. Banquet was granted the opportunity to defend her honor, and on 12 July she presented authorities with the signed testimonies of five prominent neighbors.[82] Don Fernando Ybañez, don Jayme Deltor, don Juan Ferrer, don Victor Santurio, and don Guillermo Fiol—all of whom were local businessmen—testified that "doña Teresa Banquet has always lived quietly at #167 Compostela without ever causing the scandals and disorders

[82] The original Spanish reads: "muger [sic] tranquila y enemiga de alborotes y desórdenes."

so typical of women of her class."[83] The strategy was effective. On 31 July 1852, Banquet was permitted to continue living at #167 Compostela so long as she continued to behave appropriately.[84]

Just one year after issuing orders to relocate Havana's prostitutes to the new tolerance zone, Police Commissioner Encina candidly reflected on the fairly inconsequential nature of the new plan. Remarking that Article 13 of the 1842 *Edict of Governance and Police* "has never been fully operationlized," he conceded that the prostitute's methods for contesting and resisting police procedure threatened to undermine the current process as well, stating

> these women help one another return to central areas of the city, and no law enforcement official can do anything about this occurrence because, despite living in the most indecent brothels, [these women] counter grievances filed against them by presenting two or three people willing to attest to their irreproachable conduct.[85]

Unwilling to declare total defeat, however, Commissioner Encina defended the value of creating a tolerance zone arguing that while prostitution was "a necessary evil" (un mal necesaria) assigning prostitutes a highly circumscribed area to live provided authorities

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[83] The original Spanish reads: "Da. Teresa Banquet vivió siempre muy tranquila en la casa de la calle de Compostela no 167 sin cometer jamás escándalos ni desórdenes como otras mugeres [sic] de su clase."

[84] ANC/GSC, leg. 341, no. 12227 (1852), "Espediente [sic] contra Da. Perfecta Quirós, muger [sic] pública por escandalosa."

[85] ANC/GSC, leg. 341, no. 12227 (1852), "Espediente [sic] contra Da. Perfecta Quirós, muger [sic] pública por escandalosa." The original Spanish reads: [a]lentadas unas por otras estas mugeres, volvieron a ocupar mucha parte del centro de la población, a lo cual no podía oponerse ningún empleado de Policia porque llegaba su oradea [sic] al estremo de producir quejas suponiendose honradas y de buena vida aquellas mismas que se habían visto en los más indecentes lupanares y por que no les faltaban dos o tres personas que las favoreciesen y se prestasen a ampararlas suponiendolas de buenas costumbres y de conducta intachable.

with a greater means for controlling their activities and behaviors and protected local citizens from the spectacle of the "licentious life" (vida licenciosa).[86]

The Wall Comes Tumbling Down

Municipal authorities first began petitioning the Spanish Crown to tear down Havana's city wall in 1841 but the crown did not concede until 11 June 1853. In a public speech given on that day, the mayor of Havana, Conde Cañongo, applauded the historical event that would "reunite the two populations so long divided by walls that not even a century ago served to protect the city but have since become useless in light of the city's current growth and and prosperity."[87] Prompted by the rapid expansion of Havana's extramural population, the call to begin dismantling the city wall, in turn, sparked a movement to profoundly re-imagine the capital city.[88] With this (albeit highly permeable) physical partition now disappearing, new spatial relationships and lines of demarcation between areas of the city would have to be established. One of the most important steps toward re-imagining Havana was to divide the city into smaller areas in order to advance police efforts to thoroughly patrol the city and better ensure public order. Just one year after the

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[86] ANC/GSC, leg. 341, no. 12227 (1852), "Espediente [sic] contra Da. Perfecta Quirós, muger [sic] pública por escandalosa."

[87] Original source quoted in Manuel Fernández Santalices, *Las calles de La Habana intramuros: Arte, historia y tradiciones en las calles y plazas de La Habana vieja* (Miami: Saeta Ediciones, 1989), 97. The original Spanish reads: "reunir las dos poblaciones que tenían divididas esas murallas: murallas que no hace un siglo se esforzaba la ciudad por concluir para su seguridad, y que por su crecimiento y prosperidad actuales, han llegado en tan breve plazo a ser inútiles."

[88] Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, *Las calles de La Habana, bases para su denominanción. Restitución de nombres antiguos, tradicionales y populares* (Havana: Municipio de la Habana, 1936), 18.

city wall was dismantled, therefore, Havana was rearranged into six administrative districts and thirty-seven neighborhoods, only ten of which lay within the original walled city.[89]

As new legislation redefined existing spatial relationships within the city, so too were many social aspects of the capital city reimagined. The government's aim was to update legislation to reflect administrative policies and social relationships that had been undergoing a transformation process over the course of two decades. Perhaps reflecting a sense that Havana's new modernizing status was likely to present new and unforeseen situations for authorities, the revised wording of some colonial legislation became more open-ended and vague. This ambiguity undoubtedly allowed authorities increased flexibility to deal with any unforeseen issues encountered in the administration of a modernizing city.[90]

When the order was given to begin dismantling the city wall in 1853, colonial officials had already resigned themselves to the impossibility of enforcing the total prohibition of prostitution in the capital city. Their new emphasis was on relocating,

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[89] The six new administrative districts were named: Catedral, Espiritu Santo, Salud, Factoría, Horcon, and Regla. For a complete list of all thirty-seven neighborhoods, including their individual geographic boundaries, see *Ordenanzas municipales de la ciudad de La Habana* (Havana: Imprenta del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1855), 7-15.

[90] For an example of this trend, consider that while phrasing relating to the geographic confinement of *cabildos de nación* to the edges of the city wall had to be removed, updated laws only became more vague. The 1855 *Ordenanzas municipales* stated that ethnically defined religious festivities were to be limited to a geographically circumscribed area defined by colonial authorities but neglected to specify the location of that area. For more information concerning colonial policy toward *cabildos de nación* during the mid-nineteenth century, see articles 65 and 66 of the *Ordenanzas municipales de la ciudad de La Habana* (Havana: Imprenta del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1855), 24.

disciplining, and controlling publicly scandalous women. With the physical symbol of order/honor within the city now vanishing, the need to expand definitions of female incorrigibility and indicate appropriate disciplinary repercussions for such behaviors became more urgent. The 1842 *Edict of Governance and Police* was redrafted in 1854 to reflect colonial officials' new emphasis on disciplining scandalous female behaviors more broadly, rather than focus primarily on the prohibition of prostitution. In fact the new legislation did not explicitly mention prostitution at all. Rather, the only article dealing with a related topic merely stated that: "women of scandalous conduct are subject to between ten and fifteen days of imprisonment, and, depending on the circumstances of the case, repeat offenses may result in expulsion from the neighborhood or from this city."[91] Thus, the 1854 bando was simultaneously more and less specific than its predecessor. More specific details were provided regarding appropriate legal measures for disciplining scandalous women, but that category could now apply to a range of deviant behaviors, including public intoxication, verbal assault, robbery, or public nudity.[92] Broadening this category allowed colonial officials to expand the category of female behaviors that could be punished under the new law. Certainly, there was room within this broad category to include prostitutes. However, city law enforcement officials

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[91] ANC/GSC, leg. 1368, no. 53381 (bando, 1854), "Sobre la revisión del Bando de Buen Gobierno y Policía." The original Spanish reads: "La mujer que diere escándalo con sus costumbres sufrirá la reclusión de diez a quince días y si reincidiere, será espulsada del vecindario o de la ciudad, segun las circunstancias del caso."

[92] The issue of public nudity, especially in public bathing areas, was explicitly addressed in an article dedicated to "Public Morality" published within the updated municipal ordinances published the following year (1855). *Ordenanzas municipales de la ciudad de La Habana* (Havana: Imprenta del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1855), 17.

would now only have to concern themselves with prostitutes who attempted to work and live outside the tolerance zone or who caused public scandals.

Disregarding Tolerance

Over the next decade, as Havana grew and changed form, new problems regarding the tolerance of prostitution emerged. Despite continous efforts to push prostitutes into the designated tolerance zone, authorities continued to receive complaints from local citizens angered by the presence of prostitutes in honorable neighborhoods well into the 1860s. Law enforcement officials continued to view these cases of public scandal within the most central areas of the city as their priority. More or less ignored prior to the dismantling of the city wall, however, extramural neighborhoods were no longer physically separated from the city center and would now need to be monitored. Patrolling extramural areas proved a difficult task, however, as they were often dimly lit, inaccessible, and insufficiently staffed with law enforcement officials. On 10 January 1863, for example, officers responded to a report concerning a local prostitute, Mercedes Arango, who was found publicly intoxicated at the corner of Manrique and San José streets in the barrio Guadalupe outside the city wall. Arriving at the scene, officers were alarmed to find that the area lacked both a permanent police officer and streetlamps. Arango was arrested and sentenced to fifteen days at the Casa de Recogidas. Soon thereafter, a police officer and a street lamp were positioned nearby as a means to confer

light and order both physically and symbolically on a previously dark and disorderly area.[93]

While all of the newly created extramural neighborhoods would now have to be patrolled, officers were especially concerned with those neighborhoods and streets directly adjacent to the city wall. Interdepartmental police memos dating from the 1850s and 1860s were filled with references to the presence of prostitutes and brothels in these extramural areas. Of special concern was a two-block section of the street popularly known as Santa Barbara lying adjacent to the city's Villanueva train station. Once considering areas like Santa Barbara beyond the realm of their responsibility or official interest, local officers now reported regularly their alarm at the repeated infractions (muchas y repetidas faltas e infracciones), scandalous disorder (escandaloso desorden), and lack of morality and decency (falta de moralidad y decencia) of public women living in "such a central area of the city" (un lugar tan céntrico y principal de la población). Police officers thus began leveling fines and executing arrests in order to curtail these public disturbances.[94] In October 1853, Havana's Chief of Police reported that in order to prevent "any scandal or disorder that may affect morality," twenty-nine fines had been imposed on public women living on Santa Bárbara, and three women had been remitted

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[93] ANC/GSC, leg. 1389, no. 54213 (policia, 1863), "Expediente relativo a la aprehensión y remisión a la Casa de Recogidas de la parda libre Mercedes Arango."

[94] See, for example, police reports dated 29 January 1853 and 14 February 1853 in ANC/GSC, leg. 1353, no. 52885 (1851-1853), "Expediente sobre las mujeres públicas."

to the Casa de Recogidas.[95] Other areas lying beyond the boundaries of the original walled city now also fell under the radar of local law enforcement officials.

Additional problems with tolerance policy originated from the inconvenient location and insufficient size of the designated tolerance zone. Of particular concern was the fact that the originally proposed zone overlapped with honorable areas of the city. For example, to the chagrin of authorities and many local residents, Havana's Alameda de Roncali—a fashionable bayside promenade where "many families gather in the evening so as to breathe the fresh air and enjoy the view of the bay"—passed through the area zoned for prostitution.[96] **[Figure 1.3]** The Chief of Police furthermore lamented the inferior size of the originally proposed zone—especially in light of the city's expanding population more generally—and determined that "it will be necessary to designate another area to send prostitutes, as this [one] is insufficient."[97] Specifically, he proposed that the tolerance zone should incorporate extramural areas, including the entire lengths of the Calzada de

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[95] ANC/GSC, leg. 1353, no. 52885 (1851-1853), "Expediente sobre las mujeres públicas." The original Spanish reads: "todo escándalo y desorden que pueda afectar la moralidad,"

[96] ANC/GSC, leg. 1353, no. 52885 (1851-1853), "Expediente sobre las mujeres públicas." The Alameda Roncali (or Paseo de Roncali) was an extension of the Alameda de Paula. Eventually, both promenades were supplanted by Havana's famed Prado promenade. See Manuel Fernández Santalices, *Las calles de La Habana intramuros: Arte, historia y tradiciones en las calles y plazas de La Habana vieja* (Miami: Saeta Ediciones, 1989), 73-74, 117-119, and Francisco González del Valle, *La Habana en 1841: Obra póstuma ordenada y revisada por Raquel Catála* (Havana: Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana, 1952), 121-122. The original Spanish reads: "muchas familias acuden por la tarde y noche a respirar los aires frescos y gozar de la vista de la bahía."

[97] ANC/GSC, leg. 1353, no. 52885 (1851-1853), "Expediente sobre las mujeres públicas." The original Spanish reads: "falta señalar a las escandalosas otro punto que el recinto de la muralla que no es suficiente."

Belascoain and Calzada de San Lázaro, and a sixteen-block area lying between Prado, Trocadero, and the Calzada de Lázaro "conveniently located near the city prison."[98] Duly convinced of its insufficient size, Havana's Political Governor approved the proposed expansion of the tolerance zone in early April 1853.[99] Vaguely defined and consisting of a patchwork of noncontiguous urban spaces rather than one coherent area, however, the expanded tolerance zone was the source of considerable confusion on the part of law enforcement officials. For months following the approved expansion project local officers wrote the Chief of Police requesting information on the exact boundaries of the new tolerance zone.[100] This confusion begs the question of how law enforcement officials could possibly enforce tolerance policy if they were not even sure where the tolerance zone was located.

When enumerating the array of problems encountered while attempting to enforce tolerance policy, police officers frequently lamented the many overt and covert forms of resistance employed by local prostitutes. In order to accomplish the primary goal of tolerance policy—to relocate Havana's prostitutes to a marginal area within the city—law enforcement officials would first need to identify the womens' current places of residence. To locate prostitutes within the city, officers depended heavily on information provided by angry residents filing complaints against prostitutes living in their

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[98] ANC/GSC, leg. 1353, no. 52885 (1851-1853), "Expediente sobre las mujeres públicas." The original Spanish reads: "tiene el conveniente de la proximidad a la Cárcel y al Presidio."

[99] ANC/GSC, leg. 1353, no. 52885 (1851-1853), "Expediente sobre las mujeres públicas."

[100] ANC/GSC, leg. 1353, no. 52885 (1851-1853), "Expediente sobre las mujeres públicas."

neighborhoods. For example, in June 1862, officials received repeated complaints concerning the "continuous scandals" (escándalos continuos) instigated by a group of prostitutes living in an apartment on Villegas Street (between O'Reilly and Obrapía no less). Authorities evicted the women and soon thereafter received confirmation of their relocation to the tolerance zone. Few cases involving the forced relocation of prostitutes were quite so uncomplicated, however. Officers frequently complained that they were unable to enforce orders to relocate prostitutes with "due severity" because many of the women "far from scandalous are quiet and reserved."[101] The ability to remain off the radar was, in fact, the most effective means for prostitutes to evade authorities and avoid eviction. A prostitute who maintained a low profile could often avoid detection and continue living in a relatively central area of the city for an extended period of time. Contrastingly, publicly scandalous prostitutes frequently elicited reactions from local residents and regularly tangled with law enforcement officials.

Law enforcement officials also frequently complained that prostitutes devised elaborate methods of duping authorities in order to avoid relocation and continue living in central areas of the city. Police officers were especially disconcerted with the number of prostitutes who had "resorted to subterfuge by pretending to be dressmakers when they are not."[102] Though perhaps reflecting the permeable nature of prostitution as a form of labor, law enforcement officials were convinced that prostitutes represented themselves

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[101] ANC/GSC, leg. 1353, no. 52885 (1851-1853), "Expediente sobre las mujeres públicas." The original Spanish reads: "la conveniente severidad" because many of the women "lejos de ser escandalosas son recogidas."

[102] ANC/GSC, leg. 1353, no. 52885 (1851-1853), "Expediente sobre las mujeres públicas." The original Spanish reads: "acudido subterfugio de figurar una ocupación de modistas que no tienen."

as dressmakes for no other reason than to evade authorities. On the morning of 15 July 1853, a police officer patrolling Obrapía arrested a twenty-six-year-old German prostitute, Luisa Bonetti, on charges of public intoxication. While reviewing her prior arrest record, authorities discovered that following repeated arrests for public scandal and intoxication, Bonetti had been ordered to move out of the city center. Rather than relocate, however, Bonetti began to place advertisements in the newspaper as a dressmaker while continuing to prostitute herself. Deeming this proof of her intent to deceive authorities, Bonetti was declared "detrimental to society and public morality" and sentenced to two months internment at the Casa de Recogidas.[103]

Yet another complication involving the prostitutes was that even when police officers evicted prostitutes from central areas within the city, the women often returned to the same address within a matter of days or weeks. Even more perplexing to authorities was that prostitutes formed extensive information-sharing networks whereby news regarding available housing—such as a home soon to be empty due to eviction—was passed from one prostitute to another. Thus, when a prostitute relocated, another one frequently moved in to the same address to take her place. Reflecting on this pattern of behavior, one frustrated officer complained that no sooner had he evicted a group of prostitutes from a centrally-located brothel than "others are secretly brought in to take their place."[104] These information-sharing networks were not only a highly effective way

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[103] ANC/GSC, leg. 1366, no. 53294 (policia, 1853-1854), "Expediente formado sobre excesos de la meretriz Da. Luisa Bonetti." The original Spanish reads: "perjudical a la sociedad y a la moral pública"

[104] ANC/GSC, leg. 1353, no. 52885 (1851-1853), "Expediente sobre las mujeres públicas." The original Spanish reads: "a la sombra de estas se han ido introduciendo otras."

for prostitutes to quickly locate housing in the city, but they were also extremely difficult for authorities to locate or shut down. These networks may also explain how prostitutes were still finding ways to establish brothels within central areas. Local police officers complained that streets lying outside the tolerance zone—namely, Santa Bárbara, Aguacate, and Compostela—had become "infested with prostitutes" (infestado de prostitutas).[105] In addition to the various methods that prostitutes developed to help one another evade detection by law enforcement officers, other local citizens likewise found ways to help women evade authorities while simulatenously securing for themselves "an incredibly exhorbitant profit."[106] Local law enforcement officials were exceptionally frustrated by the presence of individuals in the capital city who sublet apartments registered in their own name to prostitutes. These real estate speculators (especuladores) were the bane of police officers' existence and were frequently accused of contributing to the "[general] demoralization [of society] and the growth of prostitution" within the city. One official even suggested that they be exiled to the Isle of Pines for their defiance of the tenets of tolerance.[107]

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[105] ANC/GSC, leg. 1353, no. 52885 (1851-1853), "Expediente sobre las mujeres públicas."

[106] See, for example, police document dated 20 July 1863, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 21, and ANC/GSC, leg. 1353, no. 52885 (1851-1853), "Expediente sobre las mujeres públicas." The original Spanish reads: "una ganancia increíblemente exhorbitante."

[107] The Isle of Pines (now known as Isla Juventud) is a small island off Cuba's southern coast. ANC/GSC, leg. 1353, no. 52885 (1851-1853), "Expediente sobre las mujeres públicas." The original Spanish reads: "desmoralización y al aumento de la prostitución."

Hoping to combat these methods of evasion and resistance, police officials attempted to deny residence passes to prostitutes who requested approval to establish brothels in areas lying outside the boundaries of the tolerance zone. This policy was, however, ineffectual, as few prostitutes utilized established channels for securing housing within the city anyway. Prostitutes were much more likely to move quietly into an apartment being evacuated by fellow prostitutes than to request official approval to move into a residence. There is, in fact, only one case, from May 1863, in which a prostitute requested a residence pass to establish a brothel in Lamparilla Street in the barrio San Felipe. As the proposed location for the brothel lay outside the tolerance zone, her request was denied.[108]

Finally, law enforcement officials bemoaned the frequency with which prostitutes not only continued to live in central areas of the city but also advertised their presence with bright lights and open doors or windows. In February 1862, law enforcement officials received a complaint filed by several residents living on Aguacate Street who complained of the "scandals that damage public morality" perpetrated by prostitutes living nearby.[109] To be sure, the petitioners were primarily concerned with the presence of prostitutes in their honorable neighborhood. Only slightly less disconcerting, however, was the fact that the women brazenly hung bright lights at their doorway and then proceeded to stand directly underneath them to increase their visibility to potential clients. The women in question were ordered to relocate, remain behind closed doors, and

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[108] YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 16.

[109] The original Spanish reads: "escándalos con perjuicio de la moral pública."

remove the lights. In order to prevent passersby from catching a glimpse into brothels, prostitutes were ordered to hang fixed blinds in their windows and to keep them closed at all times.[110] Officials were exhorted to fine any woman found in violation of this requirement.[111]

Tolerance thus proved a difficult enterprise for law enforcement officials in Havana. Problems relating to the size and location of the tolerance zone, women's resistance to relocation efforts, and interference from local landlords, all contributed to the difficulties of enforcing tolerance policies. Authorities did experiment with methods of combating prostitutes' evasive maneuvers. In April 1860, officials proposed a new measure to track women's free and unstructured movement within the city by compiling a district-by-district master list of the names and addresses of all known prostitutes.[112] However, this monumental undertaking was not completed for nearly a decade and, as we will see in Chapter II, only underscored the extent to which tolerance policies failed to segregate prostitutes geographically at the margins of the city. The central weakness of tolerance was that it was neither a law nor a coherent plan. Tolerance policy was instead a patchwork of ad-hoc police reactions to the most scandalous and visible manifestations of prostitution. Outlined within erratically circulated interdepartmental police memos and only inconsistently enforced by local law enforcement officials, Havana's tolerance policy was nothing short of chaotic. The relatively informal and ill-defined nature of

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[110] Police document dated 4 April 1860, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 6.

[111] Police document dated 10 July 1863, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 17.

[112] Police document dated 17 April 1860, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 7.

tolerance promoted widespread confusion and negligence on the part of local police officers. As we saw above, many officers were not even sure where the tolerance zone was located. Officers were frequently chastised for their laxity in enforcing the tenets of tolerance policy. In an October 1862 memo directed to the Commissioner of Havana's Third District, the Chief of Police reflected on this apparent disregard for the enforcement of tolerance policy stating that

> the frequent scandals perpetrated by these women within brothels and in public streets [that continue] in spite of the Government's repeated order to extinguish them indicate to me that even if local police officers do not opently tolerate [these scandals] they nonetheless approach their duty with lamentable carelessness. Consequently, you are hereby ordered to convene all the officers in your district and inform them of my disgust with their carelessness in handling such important matters and warn them that if they do not use a firm hand to punish these scenes occurring within their neighborhoods that so gravely harm public morality, I will be forced to make the necessary investigations into this negligence.[113]

Despite this stern reprimand, police officers and prostitutes continued to disregard, undermine, and exploit the weaknesses and contradictions of tolerance policy over the next decade.

Conclusion

On the evening of 8 August 1863 a resounding boom sounded over the city of Havana. Just as it had for over a century, the cannon high atop Havana's Fortaleza de la Cabaña

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[113] Police document dated 27 October 1862. YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 15. The original Spanish reads: [l]os escándalos que frecuentemente se observan en las casas de prostitución y en las calles públicas cometidos por las mugeres de esa clase no obstante las reiteradas disposiciones del Gobierno para estinguirlos me prueban patentemente que si por parte de los Celadores no hay tolerancia hay por lo menos un lamentable descuido. En su consecuencia reunirá V. los de ese distrito y les hará saber el disgusto con que miro su abandono en material tan interesante previniendoles que si no reprimen en sus barrios con mano fuerte las escenas . . . que se resiente en harto grado la moral pública . . .me veré en el caso de hacer las indagaciones necesarias por su negligencia.

fired over the bay announcing that the city's nine fortified doors were to be closed for the night and its inhabitants secured within high, stone walls until the following morning. Part of a long-standing daily ritual rooted in the need to protect the city from foreign invasion from the sea, this particular *cañonazo* officially proclaimed the beginning of a new era for Cuba's capital city. Earlier that same morning Havana's Director of Public Works had emerged from the home of the Political Governor with orders in hand to begin dismantling the remaining stretch of the ten-meter-high wall running along the city's westernmost boundary. With most of the waterfront portion of the city wall long demolished to provide for Havana's expanding port system, this lingering inland section was all that separated two increasingly interconnected urban worlds—the Havana within the city wall (intramuros) and the Havana that lay beyond (extramuros). For a city whose daily rhythms had long been set to the sound of cannon fire, it seems appropriate that colonial authorities should designate that familiar event to inaugurate Havana's passage from a colonial fortress to a modern metropolis.[114]

Few events had the same symbolic and material impact on the social, economic, and political life of colonial Havana as the demolition of the city wall. Though not completed until the early years of the Republic, this project signaled a new dawn in the capital city when walls were no longer needed to protect residents from foreign invasion. The Governor's order to begin dismantling the final section of the wall was a celebration of modernization, progress, dynamism, and urban expansion. Havana's population had grown to 190,332 individuals by 1862 (an increase of 46%), and the city was now ready

[114] The Secretary of the Ayuntamiento announced the inauguration of the demolition of the inland portion of the city wall in the *Gaceta de La Habana.* See *Gaceta de La Habana* 187 (8 August 1863): 1.

to both physically and symbolically burst its colonial seams.[115] Areas occupied by the city wall would, over time, be filled with new residences, parks, and public markets.[116] This gradual claiming of colonial spaces for modern urban projects was an important signifier of Havana's progress. At the same time, however, the slow dismantling of the city wall over the course of a decade had also provoked all of the attendant anxieties of a city perched on the edge of change. In the same way that old definitions of urban geographies were shifting, so too were the social relationships defined by that geography. With no physical barriers defining the city from what lay beyond, those safely ensconced within the city walls felt their sense of exclusivity and seclusion (unfounded as it might truly have been) crumbling both literally and symbolically. Thus, it is not surprising that at the very moment Havana seemed most ready to step into a new dawn, anxieties about the changing nature of urban geography and life lead to an intensified push to control the movement of one segment of Havana's population that had become increasingly the focus of elite anxieties over the previous two decades—Havana's "public women." Enforcing tolerance proved no easy task. A loosely defined policy rather than a law, tolerance was difficult to enforce and easily disregarded by both law enforcement officials and prostitutes. Over the next few years, colonial authorities began to realize that they would need a law specific to prostitution. This realization—combined with other

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[115] Cuba, Centro de Estadística, *Noticias estadísticas de la Isla de Cuba en 1862* (Havana: Imprenta del Gobierno, 1864).

[116] In 1868, for example, municipal authorities designated the empty space left by the removal of the wall along Monserrate between Animas and Trocadero streets as the site of one of Havana's most famous public markets, the Mercado de Colón. See Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, *Las calles de La Habana, bases para su denominanción. Restitución de nombres antiguos, tradicionales y populares* (Havana: Municipio de la Habana, 1936), 101.

internal and external political, economic, and social factors—paved the way for colonial authorities to embrace regulation.

Figure 1.1: San Francisco de Paula Hospital (from Jorge Le-Roy y Cassá, *Historia del Hospital San Francisco de Paula* (Havana: n.p., 1958)).

Figure 1.2: Map of Havana (1857), showing street names and the walls of the old city (Collection: New York Public Library).

CHAPTER TWO

Soldiers, Syphilis, and Social Ulcers: Colonial Conflict and Disciplining the Cuban Social Body, 1863-1875

> Prostitution is not now, nor shall it be, permitted by the Government, as it is prohibited by current legislation. Special circumstances have, however, made necessary a tacit *tolerance* [of prostitution], which is quite distinct from *authorizing* the continuation of a social evil in the face of public reclamations and complaints against it.
>
> Superior Civil Governor of Havana (1865)[1]

> United with the feelings of duty that enable us to complete our lamentable task, is another, more powerful, feeling of compassion, which motivates the physician to stand at the headboard of the ill, draw back the dressing that covers the infected ulcer, and confront head-on the terror of disease in order to cure or at least alleviate the pain it causes.
>
> Dr. Federico de la Cueva y Zayas (1867)[2]

On 27 April 1865, several local citizens living on Compostela Street in Havana's elite First District filed a grievance with the office of the Political Governor complaining that a

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[1] ANC/GSC, leg. 1393, no. 54370 (policia, 1865), "Expediente promovido por el Dr. D. Vicente Hernández apelando de una providencia del Sr. Gobernador Político a desalojar una casa de su propiedad por vivirla mujeres públicas." The orginal Spanish reads: "La prostitución…ni está permitida ni puede estarlo por el Gobierno puesto que la prohiben terminantemente las leyes. Que circunstancias especiales hayan hecho forzoso una *tolerancia* tácita, es mui [sic] distinto a reconocer y *autorizar* la continuación de un mal, cuando hay reclamaciones y quejas contra él."

[2] Federico de la Cueva y Zayas, "Disertación," leída y sostenida en la Real Universidad de La Habana, en la juevina de febrero 7, 1867, bajo la moderantía del Dr. Luís Ma. Cowley (sobre la prostitución reglamentada)," *Anales de la Academia de Ciencias* 3 (1867): 440. The original Spanish reads: "Al sentimiento del deber que nos da fuerzas para cumplir nuestra penosa tarea, se une este otro sentimiento tan poderoso como aquel, él de la compasión, que llevando al médico á la cabecera del enfermo le hace levantar el apósito que cubre una úlcera infecta y arrostrar el temor del contagio para tratar de curarla ó cuando menos de aliviarla."

group of "lost women" (mugeres [sic] perdidas) living on their street engaged in frequent scandals (frecuentes escándalos). Reinforcing the same space-honor constructions seen repeatedly in Chapter 1, the disgruntled petitioners ordered government officials to defend public morality by evicting the scandalous women from their honorable neighborhood, stating

> If public morality…is the primary currency of all good government…you must order that these women relocate to a less centralized and busy area of the city where their bad example will be less damaging to proper society. It seems indecorous that in a civilized and Christian society this revolting brothel should exist in the referenced city block, which lies in close proximity to a church and to the homes of many decent families.[3]

The following week, the Political Governor responded to the citizens' grievance by ordering the immediate expulsion of the women in question. The issue did not end there, however, as the owner of the house located at #73 Compostela, don Vicente Hernández, appealed the Governor's decision. In a lengthy letter dated 13 May 1865, don Vicente pleaded with the Political Governor to repeal his order to expel the prostitutes. Eager to clarify his motivations at the outset, don Hernández stated that "this exponent, Your Excellency, comes to you not to defend prostitution, which exists and the government tolerates."[4] Rather, his motivation to contest the decision, he unapologetically declared,

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[3] ANC/GSC, leg. 1393, no. 54370 (policia, 1865), "Expediente promovido por el Dr. D. Vicente Hernández apelando de una providencia del Sr. Gobernador Político a desalojar una casa de su propiedad por vivirla mujeres públicas." The original Spanish reads: "Si la moral pública…es la primera divisa de todo buen gobierno…no podrá menos de disponer que dichas mugeres se trasladen sin demora a un punto de la ciudad menos central y concurrido donde su mal ejemplo no sea tan perjurioso a las buenas costumbres. No parece en efecto digno de una sociedad culta y cristiana que exista ese asqueroso lupanar en la cuadra citada, que no solo se halla muy inmediata a un templo sino en una cuadra donde habitan personas de la mayor desencia."

[4] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "[e]l exponente, Excmo. Sor., no viene ante V.E. a defender la prostitución, ella existe i [sic] el gobierno la tolera."

was purely economic in nature. Don Vicente complained that because the house had been the site of a disreputable establishment for over two decades—and was popularly known as such—he feared that he would never find new tenants whom his neighbors would consider sufficiently respectable (decente) to reside therein.

Perhaps realizing that his own personal economic needs were unlikely to motivate the Political Governor to repeal his decision, don Vicente reminded the Political Governor that there was no official state legislation concerning the presence of prostitutes in central areas of the capital city, but only a set of loosely-defined and unevenly enforced policies. He stated that "furthermore, Your Excellency, Havana lacks a prostitution regulation [and] these women do not have a designated neighborhood, [thus] they swarm the streets and reside directly beside or near homes [throughout the city]."[5] With more than a touch of irony, don Hernández cited his own case—involving the long-term presence of a popular brothel within a centrally located neighborhood—as proof that tolerance policy was ineffectual. He further contended that the presence of these prostitutes in central areas was a daily reality accepted by most local citizens with the exception of those (such as his new disgruntled neighbors) merely determined to make a fuss. Finally, don Vicente asserted that if the original intention of tolerance policy was to evacuate *scandalous* prostitutes from central areas, his tenants were clearly exempt from such measures, as they were respectful individuals who "never cause scandals, nor

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[5] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "[p]or otra parte, Ecxmo Sor., la Habana carece de reglamento de prostitución, esas mujeres no tienen un barrio designado, pululan por todas las calles i [sic] no hai [sic] casa que no las tenga por vecinas o en sus inmediaciones."

disturb the public peace."[6] He even challenged authorities to produce documented evidence that his tenants had in fact engaged in scandalous or unruly behaviors. Without such evidence, he claimed, officials could not legally evict the women. Having thus exposed and exploited the inherent ambiguities of tolerance policy, don Vicente questioned: "On what basis, Your Excellency, do you order that these women relocate? Without a designated neighborhood [to move to], these women will simply become the neighbors of other families of similar position, honor, and virtue to those who now petition."[7]

By 1863, Havana looked like a very different city than it had just two decades earlier. The city wall had been torn down and new neighborhoods and administrative districts had been established to provide for the capital city's booming urban population. On the prostitution front, however, colonial officials in Havana faced many of the same problems they had faced during the previous decade. Prostitutes were still challenging tolerance policy and colonial officials were still at a loss to make tolerance work. Geography continued to play a significant role in defining the parameters of both state prostitution policy as well as popular responses to those policies. The question of who lived where—literally the question of physical address—was as important to a prostitute wanting to ensure access to clientele, as it was to local elites wanting to ensure the dignity of their neighborhood.

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[6] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "nunca han dado escándalos, ni han turbado la tranquilidad pública."

[7] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "¿Con que fundamento Ecxmo. Sor. se manda mudar a esas mujeres? ¿Y dónde se les manda vivir? No habiendo barrio designado, irán a ser vecinas de familias que nada tendrán que envidiar en posición, honradez i [sic] virtud a las que han jestionado [sic]."

As it became increasingly obvious over the course of the 1860s that tolerance policy was not producing the desired results, various segments of society began to diagnose the underlying problem at the heart of this failure. Citizens blamed colonial authorities who, in turn, blamed local law enforcement officials. These ongoing conflicts between local citizens, state authorities, and local law enforcement officials shaped the development of state prostitution policy throughout the period under examination. Adopting a full regulationist system not only required a significant financial investment made more onerous by the astronomical costs of impending war, but also required a clear ethical stance on the issue of prostitution that colonial officials were loath to make in Cuba. Though officials in Madrid would endorse the full regulation of prostitution in the metropole, colonial officials in Cuba clung tenaciously to ineffectual tolerance policies into the early 1870s. Enforcing tolerance policy through the eviction of publicly scandalous women from central areas was, after all, primarily an issue of maintaining public order that required no moral justification from state officials and few additional expenses.

The ambiguous terminology and ill-defined policies of tolerance in mid-nineteenth-century Cuba reflect Spanish authorities' conflicted attitudes toward the issue of prostitution regulation in their colony. In particular, the colonial state's emphasis on relocating publicly scandalous women left considerable room for the subjective assessment of individual behaviors. This ambiguity, I argue, was not merely the result of some broader misunderstanding of the scope and impact of prostitution on the capital city, but rather it served an important purpose. For state officials, inserting the word scandalous into discussions of public women in Havana allowed them to frame

prostitution as an issue of public order and not as a broader ethical, moral, or even legal issue.

Returning to the case involving the prostitutes residing at #73 Compostela, we find that the Superior Civil Governor ultimately endorsed the Political Governor's eviction order.[8] Yet, this case illustrates how various groups and individuals likewise exploited the ambiguities of tolerance policy to secure their own objectives. Local elites evoked the terminology of public scandal in their filed complaints in order to reinforce existing socio-spatial relationships that linked geographic location with conceptualizations of honor and decency. In order to counter this formulation—and thus ensure his ability to continue renting his morally tainted property—don Hernández needed to normalize the presence of prostitutes within central areas and challenge the accusation that his tenants were scandalous by demanding that authorities provide verifiable proof of their behavior. Although the scandalous women's own voices are not presented within this particular complaint, we will see that they often did chime into these debates by using established legal channels to contest accusations of public scandal leveled against them by local elites or, even more commonly, by simply refusing to relocate.

By the late 1860s, the outbreak of Cuba's first war of independence (1868-1878) forced colonial officials to clarify the true intentions of tolerance policy. Was their primary motivation to isolate only scandalous prostitutes to marginalized areas of the city, or to isolate *all* prostitutes? Colonial officials would also have to consider the

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[8] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "alejar…las casas de prostitución de los barrios donde resida un vecindario decente."

implications of including the term "scandalous" within state policy on prostitution. Did the term relate solely to issues of public order, or did it carry a moral implication that not only justified elite complaints against prostitutes living within their honorable neighborhoods, but also required further state intervention into prostitutes' lives and labors? Tolerance policy—and consequently police responses to the presence of prostitutes in central areas—was highly inconsistent on this issue, and thus opened the door to the kind of debate presented in the above case. Furthermore, colonial authorities would soon consider the physical effects that contact with prostitutes could have on peninsular troops passing through the capital city on their way to the battlefield. As we will see in this chapter, colonial authorities' efforts to exert some measure of control over prostitutes in the capital city continued to challenge their patience and ingenuity. For their part, colonial officials maintained that the success of tolerance policy hinged primarily on the diligent enforcement of eviction orders by law enforcement officials. At the same time, however, the sticky issue of prostitute noncompliance continued to plague authorities at all levels of government. With these oppositional forces at work, tolerance policy continued to unravel throughout the 1860s and would eventually snap by the mid-1870s when colonial officials were forced to recognize that they had clearly underestimated prostitutes' canny ability to subvert state policies that hindered their ability to secure an income.

Confusions, Collusions, and Other Complications

Between 1863 and 1867, Havana's Prefecture of Police continued to devote a large portion of its time addressing complaints filed by local citizens against unruly prostitutes

living in their neighborhoods. As we saw in the case above, the vast majority of these complaints were filed by wealthy elites living in the most central areas of the capital city—primarily neighborhoods within the First and Second Districts. The issues relating to the enforcement of tolerance policy had changed little since the 1850s, as police officers were still left with little recourse when dealing with noncompliant prostitutes who refused to adhere to its two primary tenets—geographic marginalization from central areas of the city and the maintenance of a low public profile. Armed only with an eviction notice, police officers were often met with open resistance or were simply ignored by prostitutes unwilling to change their addresses or alter their behaviors.

Law enforcement officials in Havana clung to the belief that prostitutes could be successfully relocated out of central areas. For this reason, relocation and eviction were still the primary mechanisms used to respond to prostitutes living in central areas of the city. On 12 October 1863, doña Isabel Bistori wrote police chief Cazariego to complain about several prostitutes living in the immediate vicinity of her upscale dress shop located at #60 Compostela. These women's behaviors not only "offend[ed] the decorum and decency of the neighborhood," but also harmed her business. Lamenting that her business was "patronized by proper ladies" who now refused to patronize her shop "because they wished to avoid both their own and their daughters' exposure to improper language and the sight of women engaged in dishonorable behaviors," Bistori complained that if the situation continued, these prostitutes would cause her "total ruin" (total ruina).[9]

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[9] The original Spanish reads: "ofenden con sus actos el decoro y desencia de los demás vecinos" and "siendo su establecimiento puramente dedicado a vestidos de Señoras" and "por el solo motivo de no verse espuestas, con sus hijas que generalmente las acompañan, a oir palabras impropias y a ver mujeres en hábito deshonesto."

In response to Bistori's grievance, police chief Cazariego ordered that the women in question be evicted. After giving the eviction order, however, Cazariego conceded that "experience has demonstrated that as soon as we respond to one local citizen's complaint and order the prostitutes in question to move…other [prostitutes] quickly arrive to take their place."[10]

As both contemporary police memos and case files from the office of the Governor Superior Civil reveal, eviction orders were extremely difficult to enforce. Just because a prostitute was ordered to relocate did not mean that she would actually comply. On 1 September 1865, for example, doña Teresa Valdes and doña Ysabel Deronceroy filed a complaint against their neighbor María de los Angeles Flores, whom they claimed was a known prostitute and madam who ran a gaming house out of her apartment and received "frequent visits from worldly women."[11] However, two weeks after the Superior Civil Governor declared her continued residency "incompatible with neighborhood tranquility," María had still not relocated to another part of the city, and there is no record that she ever did.[12]

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[10] ANC/GSC, leg. 1038, no. 36073 (queja, 1863), "Expediente promovido por Da. Isabel Bistori y varios vecinos quejándose del perjuicio que experimentan por tener en la cuadra que habitan mujeres públicas." The original Spanish reads: "[l]a experiencia tiene demostrado que tan luego como por reclamación de algún vecino se manda mudar una casa de meretrices…acuden [otras] con iguales pretenciones."

[11] The original Spanish reads: "visitas frecuentes de mugeres mundanas."

[12] ANC/GSC, leg. 1392, no. 54343 (policia, 1865), "Expediente promovido por la instancia presentada por la parda libre Angela Flores en apelación de una providencia de desalojo." An interesting sidenote to this story is that officials investigating the case of María de las Angeles Flores discovered that doña Ysabel Deronceroy had also tangled with law enforcement officials on a few separate occasions. According to her criminal record, Deronceroy had been expelled from Matanzas for "public scandal" and had been arrested for "jugarse al prohibido del monte." This tidbit on Deronceroy prompts the

Relocation and eviction proved a difficult aspect of tolerance policy to enforce, as did the policy that prostitutes maintain a low profile within the city. Police memos from the period are filled with repeated calls to police officers from police chief Cazariego urging them to take whatever measures necessary to ensure that prostitutes "strictly observe proper seclusion and orderly conduct by *not presenting themselves in public* and not congregating in front of their houses."[13] Cazariego further urged his officers to "keep close watch on local brothels in order to prevent scandals, to prevent prostitutes from standing in open windows, and to prevent passersby from disrupting the flow of sidewalk traffic by stopping to peer into brothel windows and investigate the scandals occurring therein."[14] In June 1864, in order to diminish the visibility of prostitutes within the capital city, Cazariego ordered that prostitutes close their doors at eleven o'clock each night and their windows at midnight.[15] Cazariego even attempted to

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question of whether or not professional competition motivated Deronceroy to file her grievance against María de las Angeles Flores. The original Spanish reads: "incompatible con la tranquilidad del vecindario,"

[13] Police document dated 8 November 1863, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 91. The original Spanish reads: "observen estrictamente el recogimiento y orden que esta prevenido, *no presentandose al público*, y a fin de que tampoco se forman corrillos en las inmediaciones de sus casas."

[14] Police document dated 29 December 1863, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 26. The original Spanish reads: "vigilar con eficacia las casas de prostitución para impedir escándalos, que no le permita a las mugeres públicas estar a las puertas ni ventanas, ni se tolera por ningún concepto que los transuentes se detengan en las rejas a investigar las habitaciones de aquellas promoviendo desordenes é interceptando el paso al público."

[15] Police document dated 4 June 1864, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 33 and Police document dated 11 June 1864, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 34.

reduce the visibility and mobility of prostitutes during national religious holidays, by ordering that prostitutes keep their windows and doors firmly closed throughout Holy Week and only be permitted to walk the streets if they agreed to dress "with due modesty" (con todo recato).[16] The dozens of repeated complaints filed in the months following Cazariego's orders citing brothels with open doors and windows, bright signage and colored lights, and prostitutes standing in open doorways testifies to the fact that these efforts had little if any affect on prostitutes' behaviors.

Despite substantial evidence that the system was highly flawed, colonial officials made remarkably few reforms to existing tolerance policies during this period. The emphasis was less on reform than on maintaining the status quo and increasing the enforcement of existing policies. According to interdepartmental memos from Havana's Prefecture of Police, only four addendums were made to tolerance policy between 1863 and 1867: 1) prostitutes and madams who failed to observe strict guidelines concerning public visibility, especially during religious holidays, were subject to fines;[17] 2) madams were prevented from allowing minors to reside or work within their brothels;[18] 3) local police officials were prevented from providing *pases de domicilio* (residence passes) to

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[16] Police document dated 11 April 1867, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 40.

[17] Police document dated 11 April 1867, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 40, and Police document dated 16 April 1866, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 37.

[18] Police document dated 27 February 1864, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 29.

madams requesting permission to establish new brothels in central areas of the city;[19] and 4) police officials were charged with fining any client found residing permanently or temporarily within a local brothel.[20] The major problem underlying each of the addendums was that their proper enforcement was contingent upon consistent surveillance by local police officers, an impossible feat in light of the range and volume of their law enforcement responsibilities within the city. Furthermore, as we will see below, police officials were not particularly concerned with carrying out this kind of constant surveillance—be it due to a general indifference or confusion about their role, complicity with local madams or landlords, an inability to balance their numerous duties, or some combination of all these factors.

In addition to the problem of ensuring the proper surveillance necessary to enforce tolerance policy, the associated legal procedures proved easily corruptible at best and completely futile at worst. In order to prevent madams from establishing brothels in central areas of the city, authorities' determined they would simply deny any madam's request for a pase de domicilio in those areas. As we saw in Chapter 1, however, madams rarely if ever followed established legal procedures to secure permission to establish a brothel within the city. Instead, madams were much more likely to operate a brothel out of their own homes without permission, to rent space from complicit landlords (such as

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[19] Police document dated 6 May 1864, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 32.

[20] This addendum to Cuba's tolerance policy was apparently prompted by an incident involving the discovery of a male Asian client found residing within a brothel located within Havana's barrio Angel. The man was initially arrested by the on-duty officer for the neighborhood, but was eventually released and ordered to pay a fine. The Police document dated 17 October 1867, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 45.

don Hernández) who would list their own names on rental agreements, or to take over brothels from madams who relocated to other areas of the city. All of these methods for subverting the system rendered the pase de domicilio useless as a method for controlling the location of brothels within the city.

Tolerance policy also relied heavily on grievances filed by local citizens to expose prostitutes residing in unauthorized locations within the city. Law enforcement officials were primarily concerned with disciplining the most publicly scandalous prostitutes and brothels within the capital city, and the filed grievance was the primary method by which local officials became aware of these women's presence. One problem with this process was that it required the participation of local citizens' willing, or sufficiently displeased, enough to file a complaint with local officials. Yet another problem was that officials soon discovered that filed grievances were an unreliable source of information, as they served not only as a method for exposing the presence of prostitutes in central areas, but also as a tool for neighbors to resolve their own personal disputes. Local citizens frequently pursued personal vendettas against female neighbors by filing grievances against them as scandalous public women in hopes of securing their expulsion from the neighborhood.

This manipulation of established legal procedures in order to level a personal attack against an unwanted neighbor prompted one especially heated case in 1864. According to police documents outlining the details of the case, don Francisco Suárez and don Valenciano López filed a grievance against their neighbor, María de Jesús Guzmán, labeling her a "public whore" (puta pública) and a "scandalous tramp" (ramera escandalosa). Responding to the complaint, the Political Governor called for María's

immediate expulsion from the barrio La Punta. The case took an unexpected turn, however, when María's husband, don Juan de Leon, appeared before the Alcalde Mayor to protest the expulsion order leveled against his wife. Claiming that he had been in the countryside attending to business, de Leon returned to Havana to discover that his wife had been declared a scandalous prostitute and ordered to relocate. Pleading with the Alcalde Mayor, de Leon stated that "without the protection of her husband and based on no real evidence, María was ordered to move…thus tarnishing the reputation of an honorable family, only because she had been unable to defend herself."[21] De Leon further insinuated that because don Valenciano López worked for the prison, he used his personal ties to local law enforcement officials to have María expelled from the neighborhood. Although the potential political and/or personal motivations underlying the complaint are not discussed within the file (María may, in fact, have been working as a prostitute in her husband's absence), the Alcalde Mayor dropped the case. Doña María's decency had been assured by the presence of a husband willing to defend her honor publicly.[22] Other similar cases apparently occurred, and Havana's Chief of Police eventually declared that three signatures would be required for any official complaint filed against a woman accused of public scandal.[23] Of course, any local citizen intent on securing the expulsion of a female neighbor could quite easily convince three friends to

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[21] The original Spanish reads: "sin la protección y amparo del marido y sin más pruebas que esos antecedentes se le manda [a María] mudar…dejando manchado una familia entera honrada, por que no ha sabido defenderse."

[22] ANC/ME, leg. 2853, no. All (1864:7), "Contra María de Jesús Guzmán por escandalosa e insultos a Francisco Suárez y Don Valenciano López.

[23] Police document dated 5 December 1867, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 46-47.

sign his or her grievance; however, this new policy was an attempt (however ineffectual and naïve) to increase the rigor of the system or at least reduce the number of false accusations.

Despite the difficulties of enforcing tolerance policy, colonial authorities still clung to the hope that it could be salvaged as a means for controlling prostitution within the capital city. By 1866, police chief Cazariego declared insufficient the existing policy of merely handing out eviction orders and reprimanding prostitutes who publicly solicited customers or stood in open doorways. In April of that year, Cazariego granted police officers the authority to begin imposing fines on noncompliant madams and prostitutes as a last-ditch effort to make tolerance work. Now, rather than merely reprimand a madam who failed to comply with the policy that all brothel windows be covered with fixed blinds, for example, a police officer could impose a fine.[24] Not surprisingly, madams vociferously resisted such fines. On 10 September 1867, for example, doña Teresa Pelliser wrote the Political Governor of Havana protesting the 25-peso fine imposed on her by a local police officer who discovered several prostitutes standing in the open doorway of her brothel. The Political Governor upheld the fine, however, stating that "as the owner of the house, [Pelliser] was responsible for any legal infraction perpetrated by one of her tenants."[25] He further ordered that all police officers circulate throughout their

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[24] Police document dated 16 April 1866, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 37.

[25] The original Spanish reads: "como dueña de la casa es la responsible de las infracciones de sus púpilas."

jurisdictions reminding the madams residing therein that these penalties would be enforced.[26]

The results of these efforts continued to disappoint colonial authorities, and prompted police chief Cazariego to concede that he had "observed that the prostitutes residing in this District frequently defy existing orders."[27] His explanation for this occurrence, however, was now framed not solely as a problem of prostitute noncompliance, but also as an issue intimately tied to "the apathy of local law enforcement charged with enforcing [these orders]."[28] This memo marks an important final administrative shift in the battle to enforce tolerance policy in Cuba. The central problem underlying the failure was not, he now argued, a need to reform existing policies, but rather the need to ensure more diligent enforcement by local law enforcement officials. Police chief Cazariego thus shifted his focus squarely onto the problem of police laxity and the disciplining of those officials found shirking their responsibilities. From 1866 to 1867, the words negligence, abandonment of duty, and apathy appeared in almost every police memo relating to prostitution in Havana.[29] In fact, before relinquishing his duties as police chief to don Raul Rivero in March 1867,

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[26] Police document dated 11 September 1867, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 42.

[27] The original Spanish reads: "observado que las meretrices residentes en ese Distrito quebran con frecuencia las disposiciones vigentes."

[28] Police document dated 4 January 1866, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 53. The original Spanish reads: "la apatía de los empleados de policia que debían hacerlas cumplir."

[29] For example, see, police document dated 23 April 1866, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura de Policia," 38.

Cazariego offered this final assessment of the failures of tolerance policy and the prevalence of police laxity: "I am aware of the laxity with which officers approach their duty with regard to government orders, especially those pertaining to public women."[30] He maintained, however, that these abuses of colonial policy by local prostitutes could all be halted with proper enforcement.[31]

When Raul Rivero assumed his position as Havana's Chief of Police in the summer of 1867, he inherited this dysfunctional system. Echoing the exasperation expressed by his predecessor with regard to the laxity with which the city's police force approached the problem of prostitution in the capital city, he stated: "I have observed that local officers do not watch for infractions of nor do they enforce government orders, rather they permit [prostitutes] to move into prohibited areas without presenting the slightest obstacle."[32] He even went so far as to accuse local police officers of corruption and collusion, stating: "I have come to understand that local officers sometimes give their explicit consent to these infractions."[33] The following month, Rivero continued: "I am

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[30] The original Spanish reads: "Ha llamdo la atención del Sor. Gefe, el abandono con que los Celadores miran las disposiciones del Gobierno y sobre todo las relatives a mugeres públicas."

[31] Police document dated 1 March 1867, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 72.

[32] The original Spanish reads: "He observado que ni se vijila [sic] por los Celadores lo que previenen las circulares…ni se hace llevar a efecto su cumplimiento, puesto que se ha permitido que se trasladen a los parages [sic] prohividos, sin el menor obstáculo."

[33] Police document dated 20 August 1867, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 41. The original Spanish reads: "a veces segun tengo entendido, ha sucedido [todo esto] hasta con consentimiento del propio Celador."

disgusted that some of my officers ignore official orders or fail to enforce them with due rigor [and] have myself observed that despite the time that has passed, many brothel windows are still only covered with movable blinds that are almost always open and expose local neighbors to interior views."[34] Pointing a finger at local law enforcement officials, he denounced the "carelessness and apathy of these respective employees" and promised that this was an issue he intended to "correct with a firm hand."[35] True to his word, Rivero began leveling fines against police officers accused of neglecting their duties to uphold and enforce tolerance policy in Havana. By April 1869, local police officers accused of shirking their responsibilities had been ordered to pay over 196 *pesos* in fines.[36]

In keeping with his determination to seek out instances of police laxity and punish prostitute noncompliance, Rivero also revamped the existing system for fining recalcitrant madams. In an interdepartmental memo dated 5 December 1867, Rivero lamented "the frequency with which some prostitutes defy official orders and the

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[34] The original Spanish reads: "Veo con disgusto que algunos empleados de policia olvidan las disposiciones que se dictan o no desplegan todo el cello que debieran. Sin embargo de todo, por mi mismo he visto que apesar del tiempo trascurrido [sic], quedan aun muchas casas con las persianas móvibles y casi siempre abiertas, estando constantemente a la espectación pública [de] sus vecinas."

[35] Police document dated 2 October 1867, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 43-44. The original Spanish reads: "descuido y apatía de los respectivos empleados" and promised that this was an issue he intended to "corregir con mano fuerte."

[36] Police document dated 3 April 1869, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 97.

insignificant effect that fines have on modifying their behaviors."[37] The only remaining recourse in cases where madams or prostitutes failed (or simply refused) to pay fines, he argued, was to remit them to the Casa de Recogidas as "incorrigible." Though apparently unenthusiastic about this possibility—due to the increased administrative and fiscal burden of such measures—Rivero ends his memo declaring his firm resolve to take whatever action necessary to achieve the results intended by tolerance policy. The primary goal, he reaffirmed, was to "prevent the disgusting spectacles occurring, especially during certain hours, within certain streets in the capital and thus protect the good name of the government and especially of law enforcement officials who are charged with ensuring public morality."[38]

In the end, however, imposing fines on police officers or remitting noncompliant prostitutes to the Casa de Recogidas likewise proved an insufficient means of enforcing tolerance policy in Havana. By the late 1860s, colonial officials in Havana were forced to concede that tolerance had proven a resounding failure. Propelled in large part by the pressing need to ensure the physical well-being of the thousands of peninsular troops who began pouring into Havana in 1868 with the onset of the Ten Years' War, Cuba's frustrated colonial officials began to search for new approaches to the problem of how best to exert some form of state control over prostitutes living and working in the capital

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[37] The original Spanish reads: "la frecuencia con que faltan algunas meretrices a las disposiciones vigentes lo que prueba el poco efecto que en ellas producen las multas."

[38] Police document dated 5 December 1867, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 46-47. The original Spanish reads: "hacer cesar el asquerozo espectáculo que presentan, sobre todo en determinadas horas, algunas calles de esta Capital con mezcabo del buen nombre del Gobierno y especialmente de los empleados de policia que son encargados de velar por la buena moral pública."

city. Colonial authorities in Cuba would soon find themselves tapping into an international debate on the issue of prostitution regulation. Throughout Western Europe, many urbanizing nations were similarly struggling with the issue of how best to secure domestic order and public health (especially of their armed forces) in times of political, economic, and social instability.

War and Syphilis in the Tropics

In October 1868, Cuba was thrown full force into its first war of independence when separatists under the leadership of eastern planter, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, delivered the famous "Grito de Yara."[39] One of the most pressing consequences of the outbreak of the Ten Years' War (1868-1878) was a dramatically increased number of imperial troops arriving in the capital city each month. According to Joan Casanovas, Spain shipped 180,000 peninsular troops to Cuba over the course of the war.[40] Furthermore, the number of regular troops stationed in Havana increased nearly sevenfold during that period—from 14,000 in 1868 to well over 97,000 by 1877.[41] The increased number of peninsular soldiers both in the capital city and throughout the island sparked serious official concerns with protecting the physical health of imperial troops unaccustomed to Cuba's

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[39] For further discussion of the causes, events, and outcomes of the Ten Years' War, see Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 15-68; Rebecca Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985), 45-62; Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 2d. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 121-128; and

[40] Joan Casanovas, *Bread, or Bullets! Urban Labor and Spanish Colonialism in Cuba, 1850-1898* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), 106.

[41] Joan Casanovas, *Bread, or Bullets! Urban Labor and Spanish Colonialism in Cuba, 1850-1898* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), 45.

tropical climate. These concerns were justified. Casanovas contends that while only 4 percent of the troops shipped to Cuba from Spain were killed in combat, nearly half died as the result of tropical diseases.[42] Colonial officials were especially concerned with protecting imperial troops from exposure to syphilis, which, throughout much of the nineteenth century, was constructed primarily as a tropical disease afflicting the exotic, hypersexual, colonized others of "darkest Africa," hedonistic India, and the steamy Caribbean.[43]

For Europe's nineteenth century imperial powers, the issue of colonial governance was intimately tied to the question of maintaining healthy imperial armies; thus, that century witnessed the development of tropical medicine as a vital weapon in the imperial arsenal.[44] For much of the nineteenth century, tropical diseases were attributed to geographic locations rather than specific microorganisms, and the exotic island of Cuba seemed a veritable breeding ground for every kind of virulent disease imaginable, including syphilis. Not only were the tropics considered a breeding ground for syphilis, but also of many other mysterious and potentially lethal "tropical fevers" (later differentiated as malaria and yellow fever). The multiple perils of the tropical climate for troops arriving from the Spanish peninsula were thus the source of considerable concern

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[42] Joan Casanovas, *Bread, or Bullets! Urban Labor and Spanish Colonialism in Cuba, 1850-1898* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), 107.

[43] Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 34-35.

[44] For further discussion of the development of tropical medicine as it relates to the imperial projects of the nineteenth century, see Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 30-38.

for colonial officials. To combat the effects of these diseases on newly arrived imperial troops, colonial authorities mandated a two-month acclimatization period for all soldiers arriving to Cuba.[45] While this acclimatization period was deemed necessary to maintain a healthy army capable of withstanding the physical rigors of combat in a tropical climate, colonial officials anticipated that restless and bored young soldiers, far from girlfriends and wives in Spain, would inevitably seek-out the distractions offered by local prostitutes. Thus, the emphasis was placed not on preventing soldiers' access to prostitutes—the suppression of natural male sexual desires might, after all, promote far worse evils—but rather of sanitizing the women with whom these soldiers would inevitably have contact.

That the switch from enforcing tolerance to embracing regulation directly coincides with the beginning of the Ten Years' War is not coincidental. The increased presence of Spanish troops in Cuba over the course of the war initiated a corresponding shift in official concern from one of safeguarding society from exposure to the scandalous behaviors of public women (mujeres públicas) to one of safeguarding peninsular troops from the diseases associated with prostitutes (meretrices). The primary concern of colonial officials was to maintain healthy troops capable of withstanding the physical rigors of war. Furthermore, soldiers who survived combat were likely to return to their homes in Spain where they could possibly infect peninsular women with any diseases contracted in Cuba, thus affecting the health of future generations of Spanish citizens. Hospital records from the period substantiated colonial officials' fears about the

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[45] Dr. Ramón M. Alfonso, *La prostitución en Cuba y especialmente en La Habana: Memoria de la Comisión de Higiene Especial* (Havana: Imprenta P. Fernández y Ca., 1902), 50.

pervasiveness of venereal disease within the ranks of the Spanish military forces in Cuba. According to Dr. Benjamin de Céspedes' contemporary study of admittance records from Havana's four primary hospitals, the total number of patients treated for venereal disease at Havana's military hospital in 1867 (988) nearly doubled to 1,752 patients the following year—the first year of the war. Contrastingly, the total number of venereal patients admitted to Havana's three civil hospitals (Hospital Civil, Quinta del Rey, and Quinta de Garcini) during that same period increased an average of only thirteen percent.[46] Whether this disparity was actually due to a higher incidence of venereal disease within the armed forces or to the more rigorous medical surveillance imposed on imperial soldiers, this data would provide further justification for the regulatory cause in Cuba.

The onset of the Ten Years' War gave new impetus to the need to control Cuba's prostitutes. Colonial authorities now faced the social, economic, and geographic dislocation of large segments of the population coupled with a rising sense of political chaos. Furthermore, the increased number of Spanish troops passing through Havana amplified the level of official concern with controlling the spread of venereal disease. These new domestic concerns coincided with shifting international social, medical and political thought regarding the proper role of the state in controlling prostitution.

The French Connection

The "French System," as it became widely known, was developed as a response to prostitution in Paris in the early nineteenth century. Based on the exhaustive medical, anthropological, and sociological research of the French physician Alexandre Parent-

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[46] Dr. Benajamin de Céspedes, *La prostitución en la Ciudad de la Habana* (Havana: Establecimiento Tipográfico O'Reilly, 1888), 75-76.

Duchâtelet, the system centered on three primary axes—the creation of an enclosed milieu that would effectively marginalize prostitutes and thus protect honorable society from their dangerous influence; the establishment of a system of surveillance by which prostitutes could be constantly supervised and disciplined by state authorities; and the compartmentalization of prostitutes into a hierarchical set of classes that would further facilitate their supervision. Parent-Duchâtelet lauded the mandatory pelvic exam, the prostitute register, and the hygiene card as the keys to providing modern urbanizing societies with a safety value to channel excessive (extra-marital) male sexual desire away from honorable society. In the same way that a sewer system lies buried beneath the city streets, he argued, so too should prostitution be hidden from public view in order to prevent the physical and moral infection of the general population.[47] Throughout the mid- to late-nineteenth century, European nations facing the extensive social problems associated with rapid urbanization looked to the "French System" as a model for how to deal with the disconcerting problem of increasing prostitution.[48]

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[47] A.J. B. Parent-Duchâtelet, *De la prostitution dans la ville de Paris, considérée sous le rapport de l'hygiène, de la morale et de l'administration,* 3d. ed. (Paris: J.B. Baillière et fils, 1857). For further discussion of the "French system," as designed by Parent-Duchâtelet, see Alain Corbin, *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France After 1850* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990) 3-29, Mary Spongberg, *Feminizing Venereal Disease: The Body of the Prostitute in Nineteenth-Century Medical Discourse* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 36-38, Jill Harsin, *Policing Prostitution in Nineteenth Century Paris* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 96-130, and Charles Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute: Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth Century France* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 8-33.

[48] For a discussion of the influence of the "French system" in other European countries, see John C. Fout, *Forbidden History: The State, Society, and the Regulation of Sexuality in Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution in Victorian Society: Women, Class, and State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), Roger Davidson and Lesley A. Hall, eds. *Sex, Sin, and Suffering: Venereal Disease and European Society Since 1870*, (London: Routledge,

The call to implement a system for regulating prostitution in Havana coincided with similar developments in Madrid. Following several failed attempts to introduce legislation to regulate prostitution in the Spanish capital, peninsular authorities finally approved the *Reglamento a que han de sujetarse todas las mujeres públicas residentes en esta Corte* on 14 November 1865.[49] This legislation established a Special Hygiene Section composed of three branches—administrative, medical, and judicial—with all employee appointments made by the Governor. Based on Parent-Duchâtelet's model, the Spanish regulation centered around four main regulatory principals: registration, medical examination (via mandatory bi-weekly pelvic exams), identification (hygiene card), and marginalization (brothels were not permitted near religious institutions, schools, government offices, cafes, taverns, or highly trafficked areas). Ill prostitutes were forcibly remitted to Madrid's Hospital de San Juan de Diós and madams were required to pay weekly operating fees as well as fees for each individual prostitute in their employ. A special police force—known as the "morals police" (policía de costumbres)—was charged with enforcing the regulation. These officers were responsible for disciplining clandestine prostitutes, assisting medical hygienists in their bi-weekly duties, and

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2001), Aurora Rivière-Gómez, *Caídas, miserables, degeneradas: estudios sobre la prostitución en el siglo XIX* (Madrid: Horas y Horas, 1994), Laurie Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters: Prostitutes and Their Regulation in Imperial Russia* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1995), and L. Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

[49] The full text of the 14 November 1865 regulation is reprinted in Aurora Rivière Gómez, *Caídas, miserables, degeneradas: Estudios sobre la prostitución en el siglo XIX* (Madrid: Horas y Horas, 1994), 194-207.

ensuring that both prostitutes and madams conducted themselves according to general standards of order and decorum.[50]

The French system was, in fact, impractical for many European and non-European countries alike. Few countries were financially capable of replicating the massive disciplinary complex—especially the extensive police force—that Parent-Duchâtelet outlined in his study. Many state officials thus created modified versions of the system that better suited the political, economic, and social exigencies of their specific countries. As we will see below, Cuba's first official prostitution regulation (ratified in 1873) was a much more limited enterprise than the regulation instituted for Paris or even Madrid. There was no provision, for example, for a special police force charged with enforcing the regulation. In fact, Cuba's regulatory system would not fall in line with its more fully developed Spanish counterpart until 1877. Perhaps the primary reason for this disparity was economic. The creation of the massive disciplinary complex outlined by Parent-Duchâtelet was a monumentally expensive endeavor. As we saw above, tolerance required only a minimal state response in cases of public scandal, disorder, or disobedience, and the limited disciplinary framework necessary to punish any such offenders (the Casa de Recogidas) had already been in place in Cuba for centuries. The administrative and medical framework required by full regulation (a la Parent-Duchâtelet) did not, however, exist in Cuba and would have to be constructed from scratch if colonial authorities wanted to enforce regulation. Thus, in Cuba, the wheels of regulation would continue to move relatively slowly over the next few years. Medical communities could wax poetic about the moral, ethical, and public health costs of failing

[50] Ibid.

to regulate prostitution, but colonial authorities would be primarily concerned with the economic costs of regulation.

Despite international developments on the issue of prostitution regulation throughout the 1860s, the topic was still considered highly controversial by senior members of Cuba's medical community. Consequently, the first generation of medical students committed to the study of prostitution policy reform was forced to expend a fair amount of energy justifying its work to members of Cuba's medical "old guard"—represented primarily by Cuba's prestigious Academy of Sciences. Early studies of the potential promise of France's regulatory system for the Cuban situation were disseminated to the broader medical community largely through medical theses and published articles from advanced medical students at the University of Havana. Inspired by cutting-edge research emerging out of the international scientific community, students of prostitution regulation in Cuba fused medical knowledge with insights gleaned from social anthropology, and argued that the physical and medical issues plaguing the social body were intimately tied to broader sociological problems. According to this formulation, prostitution was described as an "ulcer" on society. By discursively linking a social problem (prostitution) to a medical illness (ulcer), these studies claimed a unique space for members of the medical community within the prostitution issue. If prostitution was a disease, then surely it must have a cure, and the medical community was uniquely equipped to devise and administer such a cure. Looking to the French example for inspiration, these young medical students championed the adoption of a full regulatory system as the most effective remedy for Cuba's social ulcer. Though widely circulated and heralded in Europe, these new ideas were still considered taboo by a community of

senior physicians accustomed to thinking of prostitution as solely an administrative or police issue. They would, in turn, need some convincing that the medical community had an important role to play in defining a set of responses to prostitution in Cuba.

The primary forum for the dissemination of cutting-edge medical research in Cuba during the late nineteenth century was the journal of the Academy of Sciences—the *Anales de la Academia de Ciencias, Médicas, Físicias, y Naturales de la Habana.* The first medical thesis concerning prostitution in Cuba was published in the *Anales* in February 1867.[51] Proving the wariness with which senior members of the Academy approached the topic, Dr. Luís María Cowley y Valdés Machado penned a defense of his student's work to be published alongside the content of the thesis. Cowley defended the work of his student, don Federico de la Cueva y Zayas, stating that "for some time now, this government has tried to organize prostitution, following the example of other nations who, accepting the impossibility of destroying this *social ulcer*, have instead taken it upon themselves to regulate [prostitution] in order to make it less dangerous, and to moralize it."[52] Conceding that "the subject is delicate" (el asunto es delicado), he argued that any sense of embarrassment or discomfort caused by a discussion of the topics of prostitution or venereal disease did not justify ignoring their impact on society. Cowley

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[51] Over the course of the next two decades—as national debate on the issue of prostitution regulation intensified—an increasing number of advanced medical students at the University of Havana wrote their medical theses on prostitution in Cuba. According to the digital database maintained by archivists at the Museo Carlos J. Finlay (housed within the original Academia de Ciencias), the Academia de Ciencias published 32 theses relating to prostitution before the end of the nineteenth century.

[52] The original Spanish reads: "hace algún tiempo que este Gobierno…se ocupa en organizar la prostitución, siguiendo el ejemplo dado por otros países que, comprendido la imposibilidad de destruir esta *úlcera social*, se han visto obligados á reglamentarla para hacerla ménos peligrosa, y á moralizarla." Emphasis mine.

applauded de la Cueva's efforts to broach these taboo topics, noting that "in dealing with [these difficult subjects] he recognizes that which science, decorum, and the good of society and the disgraced classes demands."[53]

Despite this laudatory introduction by his esteemed advisor, de la Cueva felt the need to further reinforce the justification for his project, and stated:

> There are questions that are repugnant to consider; the heart becomes heavy when lifting the veil covering human misery; the eyes wish to look away from spectacles demonstrating the horrible degradation of our species. Despite this repugnance, we dare to tackle those questions, to study them with openness, to examine all their components and details, assured that it is much easier to cure a disease once its causes and symptoms are known.[54]

Echoing the sentiments of his advisor, de la Cueva stressed the sense of urgency with which members of the medical community should approach the issue of prostitution. The issue could no longer be ignored, he argued, but rather it should be considered "a vital issue of immense [public] interest and capital importance."[55] Drawing his inspiration from "the esteemed example of Parent-Duchâtelet," de la Cueva thus launched into a

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[53] Luís María Cowley y Valdés Machado, "De la prostitución reglamentada (Comunicación a los Sres. Directores de los *Anales*)," *Anales de la Academia de Ciencias* 3 (1867): 439. The original Spanish reads: "al tratarlas comprende todo lo que reclaman de él la ciencia, el decoro, el bien de la sociedad y la clase desgraciada."

[54] Federico de la Cueva y Zayas, "Disertación," leída y sostenida en la Real Universidad de La Habana, en la juevina de febrero 7, 1867, bajo la moderantía del Dr. Luís Ma. Cowley (sobre la prostitución reglamentada)," *Anales de la Academia de Ciencias* 3 (1867): 440. The original Spanish reads: Cuestiones hay que repugna el tratarlas; el corazón se oprime al levantar el velo que cubre las miserias de la humanidad; la vista quiere apartarse de espectáculos que muestran la degradación de nuestra especie en toda su horible desnudez. A pesar de esa repugnancia nos atrevemos sin embargo a abordar esas cuestiones, a estudiarlas con toda franqueza, a examinarlas bajo todas sus fases y en todos sus pormenores, seguros de que una vez conocidas las causas y los síntomas de una enfermedad es mucho mas fácil conseguir su curación.

[55] The original Spanish reads: "una cuestion palpitante, de interés inmenso, de importancia capital."

detailed discussion of the causes and effects of prostitution on the world in general and Cuba in particular.[56]

The basic thesis underlying de la Cueva's work was, like many members of the international medical community at that time, that "prostitution is an evil; but a necessary evil [whose existence] protects us from even greater evils."[57] This basic premise was rooted in four central ideas emerging from international social and medical thought. First, male sexual desire was considered essentially uncontrollable, rapacious, dangerous, and tending toward the perverse (especially when stifled). Second, the suppression of male sexual desire was believed to spawn myriad serious medical and social problems. Third, the city was viewed as a particularly pernicious site of vice. Finally, regulated prostitution was considered the best response to the three previous problems. De la Cueva argued that exploring "the voluptuousness of love is as great a need for the genital apparatus as food is for the stomach."[58] This consuming biological need for regular sexual contact was ascribed primarily (if not solely) to the male sex. Furthermore, de la Cueva argued that this male necessity for frequent sexual activity was a law of nature and

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[56] The original Spanish reads: "el ejemplo de un hombre puro…Parent-Duchâtelet,"

[57] Federico de la Cueva y Zayas, "Disertación leída y sostenida en la Real Universidad de La Habana, en la juevina de febrero 7, 1867, bajo la moderantía del Dr. Luís Ma. Cowley (sobre la prostitución reglamentada)," *Anales de la Academia de Ciencias* 3 (1867): 475. The original Spanish reads: "[l]a prostitución es un mal; pero un mal necesario que preserva de otros mayores."

[58] Federico de la Cueva y Zayas, "Disertación leída y sostenida en la Real Universidad de La Habana, en la juevina de febrero 7, 1867, bajo la moderantía del Dr. Luís Ma. Cowley (sobre la prostitución reglamentada)," *Anales de la Academia de Ciencias* 3 (1867): 474. The original Spanish reads: "las voluptuosidades del amor son una necesidad tan apremiante para el aparato genital, como lo son los alimentos para el estómago."

that to "deny man this method of satisfying the imperious necessities of his *natural instincts*" was to open the door to a number of serious medical and social problems.[59]

To underscore the connection between suppressed male sexual desire and medical disorders, de la Cueva listed a number of maladies resulting from sexual deprivation, including severe sexual perversion, catalepsy (trance), priapism (persistent erection), epilepsy, and insanity.[60] At the same time, he warned that suppressing male sexual activity would promote a number of serious social diseases including (in ascending order of iniquity): masturbation, concubinage, the rape and abuse of innocent women and children, and homosexuality. By presenting a ranked list of sexually deviant behaviors resulting from repressed male sexual impulses, de la Cueva reinforced his claim that prostitution was in fact the least reprehensible and dangerous outlet for natural male desire outside the confines of marriage. To further buttress his central point, de la Cueva argued that regular sexual activity promoted a number of positive social behaviors in males, including reduced violence, impatience, and irritability, and increased feelings of friendship, benevolence, and generosity. In other words, regular sexual activity promoted the social behaviors associated with ideal male citizenship, a happy and healthy labor force, and a well-functioning society.

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[59] Federico de la Cueva y Zayas, "Disertación leída y sostenida en la Real Universidad de La Habana, en la juevina de febrero 7, 1867, bajo la moderantía del Dr. Luís Ma. Cowley (sobre la prostitución reglamentada)," *Anales de la Academia de Ciencias* 3 (1867): 475. The original Spanish reads: "[q]uitadle al hombre este medio de satisfacer las necesidades imperiosas de sus *instintos naturales.*"

[60] Federico de la Cueva y Zayas, "Disertación leída y sostenida en la Real Universidad de La Habana, en la juevina de febrero 7, 1867, bajo la moderantía del Dr. Luís Ma. Cowley (sobre la prostitución reglamentada)," *Anales de la Academia de Ciencias* 3 (1867): 474.

The sense of urgency underlying de la Cueva's study was rooted in his belief that the social problems posed by mass immigration and booming urban populations would only become exacerbated over the coming years. De la Cueva placed special blame on the city as a site of extreme social dislocation and thus of vice and lasciviousness. He argued that within the urban environment, the traditional communal ties and social controls that serve to mediate unacceptable social behaviors break down, resulting in the range of social problems outlined in his study. He stated that "the regulation of prostitution is not as necessary within smaller towns and villages, because the inhabitants all know each other, and if someone becomes infected [with a disease] others are warned to avoid the place where that person became infected."[61] Referring specifically to Havana, de la Cueva further argued that the dire financial circumstances suffered by young male laborers arriving in the capital city from the surrounding provinces made marriage almost entirely impossible at precisely the same moment that "the basic [sexual] instincts appear most powerfully."[62] These dislocated young men were thus forced to resort to illicit sexual activity to satisfy their natural needs. De la Cueva's repeated insistence on the necessity and inevitability of prostitution suggests that he considered the notion that the institution of marriage could sufficiently contain male sexual desire a pretty fiction in any case.

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[61] The original Spanish reads: "en las pequeñas poblaciones no es tan necesaria la reglamentación [of prostitution], porque casi todas las personas se concocen, e inmediatamente que una ha sido incoculada puede correr la voz y preservarse las demás, no concurriendo a la fuente donde aquella adquirió su enfermedad."

[62] The original Spanish reads: "el instinto genésico [sic] se revela con mayor energía."

If traditional communal social ties were breaking down under immigration and urbanization, and Cuban society was at risk of contagion via any number of medical and social plagues due to these changes, then the only solution was state intervention in the form of a regulatory system. This system, based on the Parisian example, would allow colonial officials to avoid much worse social ills than prostitution. Drawing on Parent-Duchâtelet's construction of prostitution as a seminal drain that cleansed society of the diseases resulting from suppressed male desire, de la Cueva argued:

> Some believe that it is immoral to regulate prostitution. Is it [in fact] immoral to regulate [prostitution]? No, it is not immoral to direct the current of these instincts and convert the torrent of poisonous waters that spread ruin and disease across all the neighboring regions into peaceful and beneficial bilge through which we may give easy and secure exit to the filth that mars our complex society.[63]

In contrast to traditional social mores, de la Cueva believed that the regulation of prostitution would, in fact, *promote* the morality of Cuban society by reducing the incidence of the myriad medical and social diseases referenced throughout his study. De la Cueva praised Paris as the model of success on this issue, stating "in Paris statistics have shown that the regulation of prostitution has greatly diminished the incidence of syphilis."[64]

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[63] Federico de la Cueva y Zayas, "Disertación leída y sostenida en la Real Universidad de La Habana, en la juevina de febrero 7, 1867, bajo la moderantía del Dr. Luís Ma. Cowley (sobre la prostitución reglamentada)," *Anales de la Academia de Ciencias* 3 (1867): 477. The original Spanish reads: "Creen algunos que es inmoral reglamentar la prostitución…¿Inmoral su reglamentación?…No, no es inmoral dirigir la corriente de esos instintos y convertir el torrente de aguas emponzoñadas que esparcen la ruina y las enfermedades por todas las regiones comarcanas en tranquila y benéfica sentina por donde pueda darsele fácil y segura salida a las inmundicias que vician la atmósfera de nuestra compleja sociedad."

[64] Federico de la Cueva y Zayas, "Disertación leída y sostenida en la Real Universidad de La Habana, en la juevina de febrero 7, 1867, bajo la moderantía del Dr. Luís Ma. Cowley (sobre la prostitución reglamentada)," *Anales de la Academia de*

Though arguing that prostitution offered serious benefits to society, de la Cueva did not propose that it be allowed to exist free of government oversight. Instead, he argued that "if prostitution cannot be suppressed without great risk, nor should we permit it to develop unchecked. It is necessary to direct [prostitution] through proper channels so as to control its momentum."[65] Stepping out of his role as physician-scholar, de la Cueva donned his social reformer cap and offered some general suggestions on how to modify the French system for application in Cuba. Like Parent-Duchâtlet, de la Cueva outlined a plan for regulating prostitution in Havana that centered on five basic principles: registration, examination, treatment, marginalization, and rehabilitation. Under this system, all prostitutes would be forcibly registered with authorities, strictly prevented from publicly soliciting clientele, subjected to a pelvic examination every four days, remanded to a hospital in case of infection with venereal disease, and offered the opportunity to "repent their sins" (llorar sus faltas) in a state-sanctioned rehabilitation center (the Casa de Recogidas) should they decide to alter the course of their life.[66]

Ciencias 3 (1867): 477. The original Spanish reads: "[e]n Paris está plenamente probado por numerosas estadísticas que desde que se reglamentó la prostitución existen menos enfermedades sifilíticas."

[65] Federico de la Cueva y Zayas, "Disertación leída y sostenida en la Real Universidad de La Habana, en la juevina de febrero 7, 1867, bajo la moderantía del Dr. Luís Ma. Cowley (sobre la prostitución reglamentada)," *Anales de la Academia de Ciencias* 3 (1867): 477. The original Spanish reads: "si la prostitución no puede suprimirse sin correr grandes riesgos tampoco puede ni debe abandonarse a si misma. Es preciso dirigirla por canales en donde contenidos su ímpetu pueda ser manejada más facilmente."

[66] Federico de la Cueva y Zayas, "Disertación leída y sostenida en la Real Universidad de La Habana, en la juevina de febrero 7, 1867, bajo la moderantía del Dr. Luís Ma. Cowley (sobre la prostitución reglamentada)," *Anales de la Academia de Ciencias* 3 (1867): 480.

At turns, de la Cueva's vision for Cuba's regulatory system was highly progressive. He argued, for example, that "syphilis prevention methods should not only be applied to women, but also to men."[67] Other elements of his plan—such as his recommendation that madams inspect the genitalia of each male client for signs of venereal infection before allowing him to enter the brothel—were preposterous. According to de la Cueva's proposal, the primary responsibility for searching out cases of syphilis would rest with a core of highly qualified medical examiners who would conduct bi-weekly pelvic exams on all prostitutes residing within the capital city. Reflecting his belief that all men were essentially (or at least potentially) sexual predators, de la Cueva cautioned colonial officials selecting these medical practitioners to consider only "moral men who will not dispense with any formality in the execution of their duties, and will not abuse their authority in order to satisfy their avaricious passions."[68] De la Cueva's recommendation proved pragmatic, as official corruption became a major issue of concern over the course of the next decades.

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[67] Federico de la Cueva y Zayas, "Disertación leída y sostenida en la Real Universidad de La Habana, en la juevina de febrero 7, 1867, bajo la moderantía del Dr. Luís Ma. Cowley (sobre la prostitución reglamentada)," *Anales de la Academia de Ciencias* 3 (1867): 480. The original Spanish reads: "[l]os medios destinados a preservarse del contagio sifilítico deben referirse no solamente a la mujer, sino también al hombre."

[68] Federico de la Cueva y Zayas, "Disertación leída y sostenida en la Real Universidad de La Habana, en la juevina de febrero 7, 1867, bajo la moderantía del Dr. Luís Ma. Cowley (sobre la prostitución reglamentada)," *Anales de la Academia de Ciencias* 3 (1867): 480. The original Spanish reads: "hombres morales que en el desempeño de sus cometidos no dispensen ninguna formalidad, pero tampoco abusen de la autoridad que se les concede para satisfacer sus mezquinas pasiones."

In the final analysis, de la Cueva's study centered primarily on concerns with working-class male sexual behaviors and was rooted in a set of broader fears concerning the effects of mass immigration and urbanization on society. The fear was that young men separated from their rural families would arrive in the capital city only to become perverted by the lust and lasciviousness that the urban environment and tropical climate promoted. In turn, these young men could potentially pervert innocent women and children, as well as other men. Without regulated prostitution as an outlet for natural male lust, all of Cuban society was at risk. The answer, according to de la Cueva, was not merely to discuss these problems or highlight their impact on society, but to take definitive, legislative action to prevent their spread. Thus, he ends his thesis expressing the hope that the importance of his study would reach "beyond the narrow limits of the university classroom and echo in the generous heart of some patrician who will use his influence to enforce the regulation [of prostitution] in a city harboring the seeds of its own ruin."[69]

By the 1860s, many European countries considered the developments taking place in France a promising potential solution to their own domestic prostitution woes. The international medical community became one of the primary champions of Parent-Duchâtelet's regulatory mission and enthusiastically promoted his ideas in their home countries. Encouraged by these international developments, and motivated by pressing

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[69] Federico de la Cueva y Zayas, "Disertación leída y sostenida en la Real Universidad de La Habana, en la juevina de febrero 7, 1867, bajo la moderantía del Dr. Luís Ma. Cowley (sobre la prostitución reglamentada)," *Anales de la Academia de Ciencias* 3 (1867): 480-481. The original Spanish reads: "fuera de los estrechos límites de las aulas universitarias á encontrar un eco en el corazón generoso de algún patricio que emplease su influencia en hacer que se adoptase la reglamentación, tan necesario en una ciudad que cuenta en su seno tantos principios de disolución."

domestic concerns, colonial authorities in Cuba slowly began shifting gears over the course of the late-1860s and early-1870s toward developing a full regulatory system. With the outbreak of the Ten Years' War and the arrival of increasing numbers of Spanish troops to the island, colonial authorities in Cuba were forced to confront their indifference and pursue real change in the form of regulationist policy. The regulatory system developed in Cuba was not a mere facsimile of European models, however, but rather was shaped by the experiences, prerogatives, conflicts, and actions of various groups and individuals living and working in Havana during the mid-nineteenth century.

Curing Cuba's Social Ulcer

In both European and non-European nations, the individual who emerges as the interlocutor between domestic needs and new international medical thought was the state-sanctioned Medical Hygienist, whose exposure to cutting-edge medical and social research (such as that of Parent-Duchâtelet) granted him an especially significant role within the regulatory mission well into the twentieth century. The man selected to oversee Cuba's initial foray into the world of prostitution regulation was the noted Havana physician and Professor of Medicine, don Fernando Escobar. In September of 1868, the Political Governor of Havana nominated Escobar to serve as interim director of the newly-formed Sanitation Service (Servicio Sanitario) and charged him with distributing sanitation cards to all prostitutes in Havana, conducting their bi-weekly pelvic examinations, and collecting a one-peso fee from the city's madams to cover administrative costs. **[Figure 2.1]** The initial contract extended to Escobar was to last four years (until 1872), and his appointment was intended as a temporary solution to the

need to begin regulating prostitution within the capital city.[70] The Political Governor's nomination of Escobar as Medical Hygienist was then submitted for the approval of the Superior Civil Governor. Declaring his firm support for the initiatives to begin to "regulate prostitutes in the capital…in order to avoid the evils that they produce," the Superior Civil Governor approved Escobar's nomination on 19 October 1868, but added one fairly significant addendum to the Political Governor's initial plan.[71] The Superior Civil Governor charged local police officials with circulating throughout their respective jurisdictions once a month to demand that each prostitute show a current sanitation card.[72] This addendum to the initial plan laid the groundwork for a new system that relied equally on medical personnel and law enforcement officials to enforce colonial regulatory policy.

In the summer of 1869, a slightly more complete set of prostitution policies was circulated to local police officers under the title "Rules to be Observed by the Sanitation Service" ("Reglas que deben observar el Servicio Sanitario")[73] Consisting of only ten articles, the document outlined the principle aspects of Dr. Escobar's plan of action as interim director and chief medical hygienist of the new Sanitation Service. This plan

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[70] Police document dated 26 September 1868, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 50-51.

[71] The original Spanish reads: "reglamentar las meretrices en esta Capital… para evitar los males que estas producen,"

[72] Police document dated 19 October 1868, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 48-49.

[73] Undated police document, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 72. The documents immediately preceding and following these "Reglas" are dated 3 April 1869 and 13 July 1869; thus, we might safely assume that this particular document was drafted in the summer of 1869.

consisted of a few new ideas sewn together with preexisting policies, and thus suffered from many of the same oversights and omissions that had plagued the system from the outset. In addition to ordering mandatory bi-weekly pelvic examinations and imposing the sanitation card on all prostitutes residing within the capital city, Escobar ordered that prostitutes found infected with syphilis were to be remanded to a local hospital for treatment. Additionally, any prostitute wishing to relocate to another brothel was required to request permission from a local police officer. The primary problem, of course, was that Escobar failed to establish a method for enforcing these policies. Additionally, in order to examine every prostitute living in the capital city, Escobar would have to know her exact address.

The need for an updated and complete listing of every prostitute living in Havana finally prompted authorities to construct a padrón (list) of all prostitutes living in Havana. The result of this in-depth investigation ultimately substantiated their worst fears, as it provided irrefutable evidence that the myriad methods that prostitutes had devised to subvert tolerance policy had rendered it ineffectual. Ironically, the highest concentrations of prostitutes within the city overlapped precisely with areas officials had once hoped to rid of prostitution altogether. Colonial officials could thus no longer speculate on the efficacy (or potential efficacy) of tolerance policy as an administrative response to prostitution in Havana

The Proof is in the Padrón

Colonial authorities in Havana had long recognized the need to compile a comprehensive list (padrón) of all prostitutes living and working in the capital city. As we saw in Chapter

I, however, the first call to compose such a list in April 1860 went unheeded.[74] In February 1864, the city Chief of Police reissued the order and even circulated a template of the document to his officers. Local police officers were ordered to exercise "the highest levels of precision and exactitude" (la mayor precisión y exactitud) to compile a "master list of white women, another for pardas, and another for black women dedicated to prostitution in this district, as well as another separate list of [prostitutes] who live alone or with their families."[75] This order was also ignored, and the 1864 padrón never materialized. By 1869, however, both national pressures and international influences encouraged colonial authorities to seriously reconsider the need to gather more concrete data on local prostitution. In order to more fully assess the nature and volume of prostitution in Havana—as well as the efficacy of tolerance policy in controlling its impact on society—authorities would first need to explore its geographic parameters. Thus, impelled by the economic devastation and social dislocation wrought by the ongoing Ten Years' War, and encouraged by a shifting tide of international social and medical thought on the state's role in regulating prostitution, authorities finally began assembling a master list of prostitutes working in the capital city. **[Figure 2.2]**

The first (and only existing) padrón of prostitutes working in Havana was completed in July 1869, nearly a decade after it was first ordered. The precise method utilized to gather the information is unclear; thus, it would be difficult to assess the

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[74] Police document dated 17 April 1860, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 7.

[75] Police document dated 24 February 1864, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 27. The original Spanish reads: "padrón de las mugeres [sic] blancas, otro de las pardas y otro de las negras dedicadas a la prostitución que existen en ese distrito y por separado otro de las que habitando solas o con su familia."

accuracy of the list as a whole. Officers may have gone from house to house inquiring about the employment status of each occupant in order to compile the padrón. This method would have been both time-consuming and unlikely to yield reliable results, as many prostitutes (especially those living in central areas) would surely have been reluctant to reveal the nature of their work for fear of forced relocation or other police action. A more likely scenario is that officers simply relied on their own acquired knowledge concerning known or reputed prostitutes working within their respective districts. The subjective nature of such a method surely left many women unaccounted for; namely, those who engaged in prostitution clandestinely or sporadically or who migrated frequently between Havana and outlying areas. On the other hand, the method would yield precisely the kind of data colonial authorities were most eager to acquire—a list of the most public, and therefore potentially scandalous, prostitutes working in the capital city.

If the content of the 1869 padrón is somewhat dubious, its format reveals a great deal about state priorities and interests vis-à-vis prostitution at that time. Authorities recorded two basic sets of information for each prostitute included within the padrón—her race and her address. Within just a few short years, prostitutes would be classified according to a complex system tied to the imposition of registration fees and fines. In the absence of such fiscal imperatives, race served as the primary means of grouping prostitutes. Within the 1869 padrón, prostitutes were slotted into one of three broad racial categories—white, parda, or black—though it is unclear if this categorization was imposed or elective. For reasons never justified within the accompanying report, madams were not listed according to racial categories. Thus, whether due to an administrative

oversight or a purposeful omission on the part of authorities, the racial data presented in the 1869 padrón includes only prostitutes. According to the padrón, the vast majority of prostitutes working in Havana's central districts were whites (85 percent), while only 6 percent were pardas, and nine percent were blacks (see Table 3).

Table 3

Prostitutes in Havana by Racial Category and District

1869

District	Madams	Whites	Pardas	Blacks	Total Prostitutes
1st	121	189	8	15	333
2nd	64	65	10	12	151
3rd	3	10	1	0	14
Total	**188**	**264**	**19**	**27**	**498**

Source: Police document dated 19 January 1869, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 106.

Ironically, the collection of this racial data on prostitutes seems almost an afterthought, as authorities offered no specific commentary on or analysis of the results. While it would be pure conjecture to suppose that a reversal of those percentages (with black prostitutes outnumbering white prostitutes) might well have incited official concern, the relative silence on the matter of race suggests that officials were actually much more concerned with another matter; namely the location of prostitutes within the city.

Unfortunately, only a small portion of the original list indicating each prostitute's street address remains intact.[76] The final chart grouping the women according to administrative districts has survived, however, and offers great insight into the geographic parameters of public prostitution. Particularly revealing is that the chart presents data only on Havana's most centralized districts. As we saw in the previous chapter, the First and Second districts represented the economic, political, and social nexus of the capital city. For this reason they were also the primary geographic focus of elites concerned with the presence and activity of Havana's unruly masses. Following the destruction of the city wall in the early 1860s, Havana's Third District was also slowly incorporated into the city center, though it never achieved the social status or economic importance of the First or Second districts. The inclusion of the Third District within the 1869 padrón, however, indicates that colonial authorities now considered it sufficiently important to warrant study. The omission of information concerning the number of prostitutes residing in marginal districts outside the city center reveals that colonial authorities were not concerned with compiling comprehensive prostitution statistics for the metropolis as a whole. Instead, they hoped to answer one specific question: Had tolerance policy successfully relocated prostitutes to areas outside the city center?[77] The

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[76] Full street addresses are available for only nineteen (10%) of the 188 brothels included in the 1869 padrón. Significantly, that number (19) corresponds to the total number of pardas indicated on the chart. This correspondence suggests that the chart represents a comprehensive listing of addresses for the nineteen pardas working in Havana in January of 1869. It is plausible that separate charts listing the addresses of both white and black prostitutes existed at one time but were misplaced or destroyed. "Police document dated 13 July 1869, YUL/MMC, group 352, box 82, no. 1652, item 181 (1851-1869), "Havana, Prefectura Principal de Policia," 104.

[77] Of course, it is interesting to ponder what such data on the number of prostitutes living in "fringe" districts might have revealed about the volume and broader

answer to that question was undeniably disappointing. According to the 1869 padrón, a full 98 percent of prostitutes resided in Havana's First District (64 percent) and Second District (34 percent), while less than 2 percent lived in the relatively more marginal Third District (see Table 3). If the primary goal of tolerance policy had been to relegate prostitution to one marginalized and circumscribed area of the city, then the 1869 padrón provided irrefutable evidence that such measures had failed. The picture emerging from this master list was not one of prostitutes segregated to fringe areas, but rather of high concentrations of women living in the most centrally located areas of the city.

The 1869 padrón is arguably the most significant mid-nineteenth-century document on prostitution in Havana. Though hardly providing a comprehensive or accurate reflection of the volume or nature of prostitution in Havana at the time, the padrón is nonetheless the first master list of prostitutes compiled by colonial authorities in Cuba during the nineteenth century. Considered irrefutable evidence that police efforts to relocate prostitutes to areas outside the city center had failed, the 1869 padrón served as the final nail in the coffin for tolerance policy in Cuba. As we have seen repeatedly throughout this discussion, the failure of tolerance policy in mid-nineteenth-century Havana rested on the parallel axes of official negligence and prostitute noncompliance. Authorities rarely enforced tolerance in Havana, and even when they did attempt to take disciplinary actions against uncooperative prostitutes, the women repeatedly thwarted such measures. The loosely defined cluster of policies known as tolerance thus proved an impracticable and ineffectual means of exerting control over prostitutes' movement within the city. Significantly, the 1869 padrón is the final document dedicated to

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geographic parameters of prostitution in Havana. Might it have revealed that many prostitutes did, in fact, live in areas outside the city center?

prostitution within the files of Havana's Prefecture of Police (Prefectura de Policia). Despite years of lingering doubts and frustrations with the ambiguities of tolerance policy, colonial authorities now possessed hard evidence that current methods for segregating and controlling prostitutes were wholly ineffectual. Authorities would thus need to consider new methods for placing legislative and geographic boundaries on the practice of prostitution in the capital city. The eventual result of these deliberations marked a new era in the development of Cuba's regulatory system in which police officers were joined by a broader array of colonial officials charged with defining, controlling, and regulating prostitution.

Shifting Gears

The dismal information presented within the 1869 padrón motivated colonial officials to develop a full-fledged regulatory system for the capital city. The resulting legislation reflected insights gleaned from both international social and medical thought and domestic experiences from the previous two decades. The two basic components of Cuba's regulatory system as defined in 1873 were Political Governor Antonio Pérez de la Riva's *Special Public Hygiene Regulation (Reglamento Especial de Higiene Pública)*, and Havana's first hygiene facility dedicated to the treatment of prostitutes infected with venereal disease—the Quinta de Higiene.

According to its introductory article, the purpose of the 1873 regulation was to "prevent and avoid the ill effects of prostitution, diminish to the extent possible [its practice], and prevent it from manifesting itself in a scandalous manner that affects public

morality."[78] Colonial authorities thus expressed their concern not with the mere presence of prostitutes within the city, but rather with the social impact of the most public manifestations of their labors. Curbing public displays of prostitution would thus become the primary focus of the regulatory mission. Phrases such as "diminish [prostitution] to the extent possible," (disminuir esta en lo posible) however, reveal colonial authorities' essential pragmatism about the limited ability of state mechanisms to control the spread and social impact of prostitution. Convinced of the inevitability of prostitution, colonial authorities endeavored only to limit its impact on proper society. Prostitutes would thus need to be registered in order for colonial officials to examine, tax, track, and police them. The 1873 regulation was exceedingly vague on logistical issues, and the newly established Special Hygiene Section received little instruction as to how it should operationalize the central tenets of regulatory policy.

It is surprising that while the 1873 regulation was intended to regulate prostitution, only six of the legislation's forty-one articles were dedicated specifically to prostitutes. A prostitute's legal position within the regulatory system was defined primarily in terms of her relationship to a madam. Only madams and prostitutes who worked independently out of their own homes (*meretrices con domicilio fijo*) were required to pay state-imposed licensing and operation fees; therefore, there was no need for a grand classification system for prostitutes. Classification was, after all, primarily intended to facilitate the collection of these monthly fees by officials of the Special

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[78] The official copy of Antonio Pérez de la Riva's 1873 *Reglamento Especial de Higiene Pública* was not located. A reprinted version of the regulation, however, was published in Dr. Benajamin de Céspedes, *La prostitución en la Ciudad de La Habana* (Havana: Establecimeinto Tipográfico O'Reilly, 1888), 86-88. The original Spanish reads: "prevenir y evitar los malos efectos de la prostitución, disminuir esta en lo possible é impedir que se manifieste de un modo escandaloso, afectando a la moral pública."

Hygiene Section. Since the primary intention of the 1873 regulation was to curb the most public manifestations of prostitution in the capital city, prostitutes were prohibited from gathering in open doorways, publicly soliciting customers (especially in ways considered indecorous), occupying balconies in theaters, or riding through public streets in open carriages. All of these public behaviors were offenses punishable by fines, imprisonment, and—a holdover from earlier policies—expulsion from the capital city.

Clandestine prostitution was a fairly low priority at this time because it did not represent a public manifestation of prostitution. According to the regulation, clandestine prostitutes were only subject to a fine of fifteen pesos, which explains why there are no arrest records for clandestine prostitutes from this period. Anxiety about the issue of clandestinity increased, however, as concern with the spread of venereal disease (primarily syphilis) escalated in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. The furtive nature of clandestine prostitution eventually marks it as especially dangerous and prompts the explicit vilification of clandestine prostitutes within medical, social, and political treatises emerging from the international hyperregulationist school of thought.

In contrast to prostitutes, madams were subject to a number of licensing and operation fees and were thus grouped according to a complex seven-tiered classification system, each with a requisite monthly registration fee. Madams of *casas de huespedas* (brothels with permanent prostitute tenants) were divided into four sub-classes and paid fees ranging from six to twenty-four pesos, while madams of *casas de recibir* (brothels without permanent prostitute tenants) were divided into three sub-classes and paid fees ranging from six to eighteen pesos. In addition to these monthly registration fees, all madams were required to purchase annual operating licenses at a cost of six pesos each.

As the most constant authoritative presence within the city's brothels, madams were considered an important potential ally for officials of the Special Hygiene Section and thus became a de facto extension of the state. Part administrator, part law enforcement official, and part medical examiner, Havana's madams were required to wear a number of hats. In addition to maintaining accurate records of each prostitute's pelvic exam, madams were required to personally escort their syphilitic pupils to the Hospital San Franciso de Paula. Madams accused of hiding prostitutes—either by failing to include them on their registry or failing to present them for a pelvic exam—were subject to fines or even the revocation of their license in the case of a repeat offense. Madams were also responsible for maintaining proper order within their brothels, and thus were obligated to report all scandals, fights, or disturbances to local law enforcement officials.

The 1873 regulation also established a limited administrative and medical staff—collectively referred to as the Special Hygiene Section—to handle all tasks relating to the new regulatory system. The administrative staff of the Special Hygiene Section consisted of only five employees—two general administrators, two collection agents (recaudores) charged with collecting monthly registration fees from madams, and one scribe. All employee salaries were paid from revenues generated through the fees and fines charged to local madams. These revenues, as well as any expenses, were to be recorded on a daily basis, but in lieu of more specific instructions, employees were merely admonished to "observe the laws of good accounting" (observar las reglas de una buena contabilidad). The 1873 regulation required the administrative staff of the Special Hygiene Section to maintain a number of other registries, including a comprehensive listing of all registered madams and prostitutes, a list of all prostitutes under treatment at the San Francisco de

Paula Hospital, and a list of prostitutes detained at the Casa de Recogidas. As we will see in the next chapter, however, staff members were fairly lax in their efforts to maintain these records, and this negligence later caused serious administrative and financial issues for the Special Hygiene Section.

The medical staff of the Special Hygiene Section was even more skeletal and loosely defined than its administrative staff. The 1873 regulation created positions for four medical hygienists; yet, the legislation gave no indication of how these physicians were to be selected or what their qualifications should be, and only required that they possess "special knowledge of the service" (conocimientos especiales del ramo). These four physicians were required to conduct the mandatory bi-weekly pelvic exams (one with a speculum) on all registered prostitutes within the city and to carefully note the results of each exam in a medical registry. Any prostitute found infected with venereal disease or any other contagious disease was to be sent immediately to the San Francisco de Paula Hospital for treatment. The Director of the San Francisco de Paula Hospital became a de-facto member of the Special Hygiene Section staff and was required to compose a daily report detailing the movement of prostitutes in and out of the facility. Medical personnel affiliated with the regulatory system were, however, also highly negligent in their record-keeping duties and were repeatedly chastised (though often to no avail) by the Political Governor.

The 1873 *Special Public Hygiene Regulation* is a reflection of the state of both international and domestic debates on the issue of prostitution, public health, and public morality in the mid-nineteenth century. The focus was on curtailing the most public manifestations of prostitution, curbing the effects of venereal disease on society

(especially the military forces), and establishing some form of administrative oversight into the daily operation of brothels in the capital city. The full regulation of prostitution in Cuba was ultimately a highly conflictual and incongruous venture. The basic goal of regulation was to reduce the visibility and impact of prostitution within the capital city; yet the very act of regulation required colonial officials to create a written record of the location and scope of prostitution—in the form of comprehensive registries—in order to tax and police prostitutes and madams. Ironically, therefore, the regulatory system actually made the scope of prostitution and its physical location definable, quantifiable, and ultimately *more* visible. Furthermore, unlike state officials in Madrid, colonial authorities in Havana made no provision for a special police force to enforce regulation policy, but rather continued to rely on beleaguered municipal law enforcement officials to exert the will of the state on madams and prostitutes. As the political, economic, and social climate of Cuba changed over the course of the nineteenth century, colonial authorities reformulated the central tenets of prostitution regulation to respond to shifting needs and to accommodate new ideas about the relationship between colonial authority, local citizenry, and prostitution.

Havana's Hygiene Hospital

By the summer of 1873 colonial authorities realized the need for a hospital to send prostitutes infected with venereal disease. The Hospital San Francisco de Paula, which had previously served this purpose, was no longer considered a suitable institution by authorities because of its limited size and fairly centralized location within the capital city. Furthermore, prostitutes were deemed a potential moral and physical threat to ill

women housed within Havana's civil hospitals. The approximately 15,540 documented cases of male venereal disease in Havana between 1868 and 1875 continued to be treated at the capital's three civil hospitals or at the military hospital, the Hospital de San Ambrosio.[79] After 1873, however, prostitutes found infected with venereal diseases were forcibly remanded to Havana's first social hygiene hospital—the Hospital San Antonio or Quinta de Higiene.[80] **[Figure 2.3]**

In order to ease the economic burden associated with the construction of an entirely new hospital for the purpose of housing ill prostitutes, officials scoured the city

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[79] This composite figure was calculated according to annual statistics provided by Dr. Ramón M. Alfonso in his published 1902 medical report concerning prostitution in Cuba. The sum provided here (15,540) represents the total number of venereal cases treated at the capital's civil and military hospitals combined and does not account for repeat visits made by the same individual. Also, it should be noted that the number of cases of venereal disease treated in 1868 (the year marking the start of the Ten Years' War) is almost double that of 1866. Unfortunately, no data is provided for 1867. See Ramón M. Alfonso, *La prostitución en Cuba y especialmente in La Habana: Memoria de la Comisión de Higiene Especial de la Isla de Cuba* (Havana: Imp. P. Fernández y Ca., 1902), 47-48.

[80] The secondary literature relating to hygiene hospitals remains fairly sparse, and the majority of authors focus their discussion around issues of internal operations and regulations. See, for example, Alain Corbin, *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France after 1850* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 86-100 and Donna Guy, *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires: Prostitution, Family, and Nation in Argentina* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 84-85. Several authors have, however, explored issues relating to women's daily lives within hygiene hospitals especially in reference to the ways in which instances of prostitute non-compliance shaped internal administrative dynamics. See, for example, Eileen J. Suárez Findlay, *Imposing Decency: The Politics of Sexuality and Race in Puerto Rico, 1870-1920* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 93, 189-192, Lara Putnam, *The Company They Kept: Migrants and the Politics of Gender in Caribbean Costa Rica, 1870-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 96-97, Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 214-232 and Katherine Elaine Bliss, *Compromised Positions: Prostitution, Public Health, and Gender Politics in Revolutionary Mexico* (University Park, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 56-57, 102, 121.

in search of an existing building that could serve the purpose. In June of 1863, Havana's Political Governor, Pérez de la Riva, finally located a suitable site—an expansive building that had previously served as a Depósito Judicial de Esclavos—to house the hygiene hospital. The building was deemed an appropriate location for the hospital primarily because it was located far from the city center in Havana's distant *barrio* Cerro (Fifth District) **[Figure 2.4]**. This marginal location allowed colonial officials to uphold their commitment to isolate prostitutes, and especially physically ill prostitutes, at the edges of the capital city. The building was also deemed appropriate because it met the basic requirements for a medical facility as established by Cuba's Academy of Sciences. Drawing on European models of ideal hospitals for cities such as Paris, London, and Madrid, members of the Academy determined that proper Cuban hospitals should provide proper ventilation (especially in light of the island's humid tropical climate), sufficient light, and a limited number of beds (200 max) so as to prevent overcrowding.[81] They also argued that one-story hospital buildings experienced a reduced incidence of on-site death or fatality (mortandad) compared to two-story hospital buildings due to better ventilation, and the inability of suicidal patients to fling themselves from upper stories. The site chosen by Pérez de la Riva for the Quinta de Higiene—a one-story building with rooms opening onto a central courtyard—met these criteria.[82]

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[81] The ideal number of beds to be contained within each of Havana's hospital facilities (200) was actually first established by colonial authorities in 1861. See *Reglamento General de Beneficencia de la Isla de Cuba* (Havana: Imprenta del Gobierno y Capitanía General por S.M., 1861), 20.

[82] See Ambrosio González del Valle y Cañizo discussion of the Academy of Sciences early recommendation on ideal hospital facilities in *Higiene pública: estudio sobre el emplazamiento y construcción de hospitales en la Habana* (n.p., 1907).

Despite meeting the basic qualifications of the Academy of Sciences for a proper hospital site, the building chosen by Pérez de la Riva was apparently in extremely poor physical condition. In his 1888 study of prostitution in Havana, Dr. Benjamin de Céspedes commented that "it is surely with a sense of irony that they named [this facility] the 'Hygiene Hospital,' because situated in a veritable river basin on Cerro Road and with the appearance of a dilapidated quarter it could just as easily have been named the 'Anti-Hygienic Hospital.'"[83] Although there are few remaining archival documents relating to the Hygiene Hospital for the period before 1898,[84] one source claims that the Spanish government allocated a mere $4,853 pesos for initial repairs to the building. Massive refurbishment efforts were not undertaken until the 1880s (see Chapter 3).[85]

The few existing documents regarding the earliest years of the Hygiene Hospital's existence also paint a picture of administrative chaos within the facility, which may help

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[83] Dr. Benjamin de Céspedes, *La prostitución en la Ciudad de la Habana* (Havana: Establecimiento Tipográfico O'Reilly, 1888), 74. The original Spanish reads: "por irrisión sin duda, se le denominó 'Hospital de Higiene' porque situado en una verdadera hoya de la calzada del Cerro y con aspecto de cuartón destartalado, pudieran haberle puesto lo mismo el nombre de 'Hospital [A]nti-[H]igiénico.'"

[84] According to the 1902 report of the Comisión de Higiene Especial, before relinquishing power over Cuba to the United States, authorities of Cuba's Civil Government destroyed the contents of the archive of the Hygiene Section, thereby destroying many key documents that would have shed considerable light on the administrative and practical issues facing the Hygiene Section during the years of Spanish occupation of the island. See Ramón M. Alfonso, *La prostitución en Cuba y especialmente in La Habana: Memoria de la Comisión de Higiene Especial de la Isla de Cuba* (Havana: Imp. P. Fernández y Ca., 1902), 112-113. This indeed appears to be the case, as Havana's principal archives contained surprisingly few records pertaining to the Hygiene Section for the years 1873-1898.

[85] Benjamin de Céspedes, *La prostitución en la ciudad de La Habana* (Havana: Tipografía O'Reilly, 1888), 286.

explain the paucity of hospital documents for the period. Reflecting the uncertain nature of the hospital's administration during this early period, the anonymous author of one inter-departmental Special Hygiene Section memo stated simply that he was "aware that such a public hygiene hospital existed but knew nothing of its staff members, how or by whom they were appointed, nor how the facility was administered"[86] Apparently, Governor Pérez de la Riva never explicitly assigned jurisdiction over the Hygiene Hospital to a particular governmental entity. The question of jurisdiction over the facility came to a head in April 1874 when municipal authorities, under the auspices of the Department of Charity, claimed that according to the 1861 *General Regulation of Charity for the Island of Cuba,* all public charitable institutions with the exception of the Casa de Dementes fell within their administrative purview.[87] Municipal authorities thus requested that the Hygiene Hospital be placed under their jurisdiction in order to "bring it into harmony with other similar institutions such as the maternity hospitals, foundling homes, asylums for the poor, and other types of hospitals."[88] The matter was finally settled, albeit uneasily, in January 1875 when the Governor General granted provincial authorities ultimate jurisdiction over, and responsibility for, the administration of the Hygiene

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[86] ANC/GG, leg. 206, no. 11582 (hospitales, 1874), "Expediente promovido por el Negociado de Beneficiencia para que pasen al mismo el Hospital de Higiene establecido en esta ciudad y todos los antecedentes que se relacionan con este ramo [Habana]." The original Spanish reads: "sabe que existe un hospital de higiene pública e ignoran quienes sean los facultativos, en que forma y por quién han sido nombrados, y cuando más corresponda a su Gobierno y administración."

[87] See Chapter 1, Article 2 of the *Reglamento General de Beneficencia de la Isla de Cuba* (Havana: Imprenta del Gobierno y Capitanía General por S.M., 1861), 5.

[88] The original Spanish reads: "armonizarlo con sus similares las Casas de Maternidad, espósitos [sic] y Beneficiencia, asilos de pobres y hospitales de todo género."

Hospital.[89] Debates over hospital jurisdiction would continue to plague colonial officials as the expense of operating the facility increased and as understandings of the facility's primary mission shifted over time.

Aside from issues of jurisdiction, there were also problems relating to the hospital staff. In the initial three years following the establishment of the Hygiene Hospital (1873-1876), six different physicians served as hospital director. Three of the six appointees quit within months, or even weeks, of assuming the position, and one appointed director, don Narciso Reig, never even showed up to assume the position.[90] Contemporary hospital records offer no indication of why these men quit so suddenly, but the administrative chaos, low levels of state support, and extreme budgetary issues that plagued the facility in its earliest years seem likely explanations. The facility's limited budget allowed for only a minimal staff, consisting of a director, a pharmacist,[91] and a night watchman.[92]

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[89] ANC/GG, leg. 232, no. 12635 (hospitales, 1874-77), "Expediente respecto al Hospital de Higiene para las meretrices a los medicos higienistas que las reconocen y a los arbitrios con que se costean estas atenciones."

[90] See ANC/ME, leg. 3827, no. V (1875:202), "Expediente sobre el nombramiento de D. Narciso Reig de Médico Director del Hospital de Higiene," ANC/JSS, leg. 10, no. 111 (Hospital de Higiene, 1877), "Comunicación admitiendo la renuncia del Director del Hospital de Higiene Pública Dr. José Beato y Dols y nombramiento del Dr. José Nestor Maceo Chamorro," and ANC/JSS, leg. 10, no. 76 (Hospital de Higiene, 1876), "Comunicación nombrando Director del Hospital de Higiene Pública al Dr. José Nestor Maceo Chamorro."

[91] ANC/GG, leg. 206, no. 11591 (hospitales, 1874), "Expediente promovido por el Exmo. Ayuntamiento de esta Capital para crear una plaza de practicante de farmacia con destino al hospital de Higiene Pública y dos plaza de Médicos higienistas esternos para el reconocimiento público de meretrices [Habana]."

[92] ANC/GG, leg. 206, no. 11613 (hospitales, 1875), "Expediente promovido para la creación de una plaza de vigilante nocturno para el Hospital de Higiene casa Quinta de San Antonio [Habana]."

Hospital records make no mention of a nursing, administrative, cooking, or custodial staff for the facility, and thus it is unclear if any such service staff existed in the initial years of the hospital's existence. It is unclear how, in fact, such a limited hospital staff was able to deal with the 548 women remitted to the Hygiene Hospital between 1874 and 1876.[93]

The need to locate a hospital director who was not only qualified to handle the particular needs of the women residing within the Hygiene Hospital, but who would also last more than a few months, became a major concern for colonial authorities. The solution to this problem finally emerged in the form of a promising—if inexperienced—young medical student from Havana's Facultad de Medicina named Claudio Delgado y Amestoy (1843-1916). Initially considered too green to assume the responsibility of overseeing the facility's operations, Delgado's first application to serve as director was denied. Instead, a senior physician from the Women's Hospital (Hospital de Mujeres) in Bayamo, Dr. Manuel Elosua, possessing "special knowledge of, [and] extensive practical experience treating, the illnesses found in the asylum," was hired for the job.[94] Apparently, however, Elosua quickly abandoned his position (again for unexplained reasons) and the man appointed to replace him, Dr. Narciso Reig never even showed up to assume the position. In the end, Delgado received the position of Director of Havana's

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[93] This composite figure was calculated according to annual statistics provided by Dr. Ramón M. Alfonso in his published 1902 medical report concerning prostitution in Cuba. The sum provided here (548) represents the total number of venereal cases treated at the Hygiene Hospital and does not account for repeat visits made by the same individual. Ramón M. Alfonso, *La prostitución en Cuba y especialmente in La Habana: Memoria de la Comisión de Higiene Especial de la Isla de Cuba* (Havana: Imp. P. Fernández y Ca., 1902), 49.

[94] ANC/GG, leg. 232, no. 12635 (hospitales, 1874-77), "Expediente respecto al Hospital de Higiene para las meretrices a los médicos higienistas que las reconocen y a los arbitrios con que se costean estas atenciones." The original Spanish reads: "conocimientos especiales [y] una práctica dilatada en la curación de las dolencias del espresado asilo."

Hygiene Hospital by default—a fact that hardly represented a vote of confidence by authorities.[95] Despite their early reticence, Special Hygiene Section officials appointed Delgado as director of the Quinta de Higiene on 25 September 1875 at the tender age of thirty-two.[96] On that day Delgado inherited a dilapidated building with a capacity for fifty patients and an operating budget of only $1,200 *pesos.*[97]

There was no cure for syphilis during the nineteenth century, as the discovery of the spirochete responsible for the disease, *Troponema pallidum,* and subsequent development of the drug Salvarsan (606) did not occur until 1906.[98] Throughout the nineteenth century, therefore, physicians relied on a number of highly painful and largely ineffectual methods—such as salivation (exposure to extremely high doses of mercury) and escharotics (applying corrosive or acidic substances to the site of the chancre)—to

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[95] ANC/GG, leg. 232, no. 12635 (hospitales, 1874-77), "Expediente respecto al Hospital de Higiene para las meretrices a los médicos higienistas que las reconocen y a los arbitrios con que se costean estas atenciones."

[96] ANC/ME, leg. 3827, no. V (1875:202), "Expediente sobre el nombramiento de D. Narciso Reig de Médico Director del Hospital de Higiene."

[97] Ortelio Martínez-Fortun y Foyo, *Dr. Claudio Delgado y su aportación al estudio de la fiebre amarilla* (Havana: Consejo Científico, Ministerio de Salud Pública, 1967), 15. For the sake of comparison, consider that Matanzas' Hospital San Nicolás reported an income of $24, 563 *pesos* for the 1874-1875 fiscal year. Though not an entirely fair comparison—as the Matanzas facility was not limited to the treatment of syphilitic prostitutes—the disparity in the annual incomes of these two contemporaneous institutions devoted to the treatment of venereal disease further highlights the bleak financial situation of Havana's Hygiene Hospital. See ANC/ME, leg. 4392, no. N (1874-1875), "Hospital S. Nicolás."

[98] Mary Spongberg, *Feminizing Venereal Disease: The Body of the Prostitute in Nineteenth-Century Medical Discourse* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 100.

treat women infected with venereal disease.[99] These treatments were excruciatingly painful, highly ineffectual, and often lethal. With only these limited and ineffectual means at their disposal, the Quinta de Higiene could not serve a truly rehabilitative purpose (physical or otherwise). Instead, the facility served to isolate physically ill prostitutes far from the sphere of honorable Cuban society. That the Quinta de Higiene was intended more for incarceration than rehabilitation is suggested by the fact that budgetary provisions were made for a hospital night watchman (security guard) but not a single nurse. The facility's limited budget is also indicative of the fairly low priority that the institution carried for colonial authorities in general. As we will see in the next chapter, this low estimation of the hospital's importance vis-à-vis Cuba's regulatory system would change over the course of the next decades as colonial authorities became increasingly concerned with promoting the physical, spiritual, and social rehabilitation of prostitutes. By the late nineteenth century, Havana's Hygiene Hospital hardly resembled the dilapidated institution that Delgado inherited in 1875.

Conclusion

The regulatory system defined by Governor Pérez de la Riva in 1873 represents Cuba's initial response to the inadequacies of tolerance policy. Shaped by both international forces and local exigencies, this "rough draft" regulatory system would go through many

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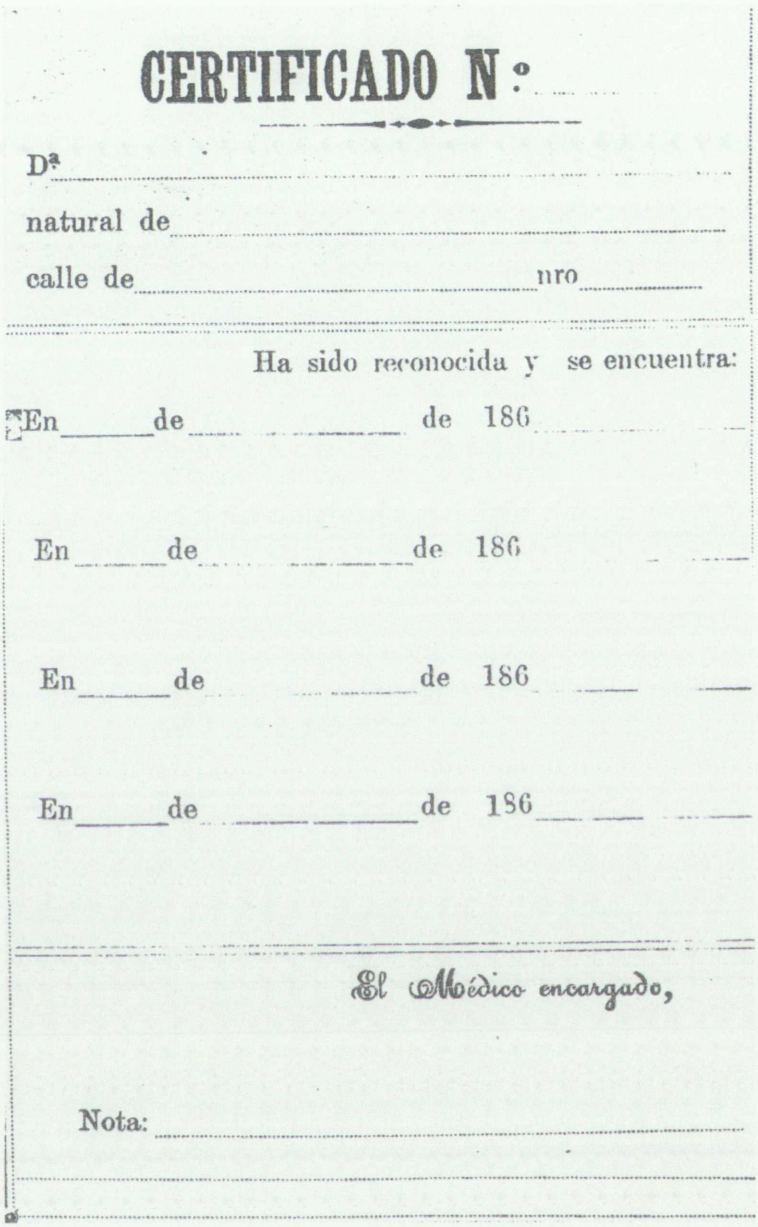
[99] For further discussion of the various methods utilized by nineteenth-century physicians to "treat" syphilis, see Mary Spongberg, *Feminizing Venereal Disease: The Body of the Prostitute in Nineteenth-Century Medical Discourse* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 70-71, 91, 100; Judity R. Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 50-53; and Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

revisions over the course of the next decades. Colonial authorities would need to accommodate new ideas and understandings of the role of the state in regulating prostitution (and society more broadly), and respond to Cuba's changing economic, political, and social situation. Additionally, the details of the system would have to be adjusted over time to respond to the various methods of subversion devised by groups and individuals affected by the system. Over time, prostitutes, elite citizens, and even some local authorities would devise clever methods for exploiting the weaknesses of the regulatory system to meet their own needs The system first established by colonial authorities in 1873 would, therefore, need to be revisited and revised as the rules of the game changed over the course of the next decades.



CERTIFICADO N.º

Dª

natural de

calle de nro

Ha sido reconocida y se encuentra:

En de de 186

En de de 186

En de de 186

En de de 186

El Médico encargado,

Nota:

Figure 2.1: Sanitation card utilized by Havana's "Servicio Sanitario" during the 1860s with space for the prostitute's name, place of birth, and address, the dates of her pelvic examinations, and the examiner's signature (from Yale University, Miscellaneous Manuscripts Collection).

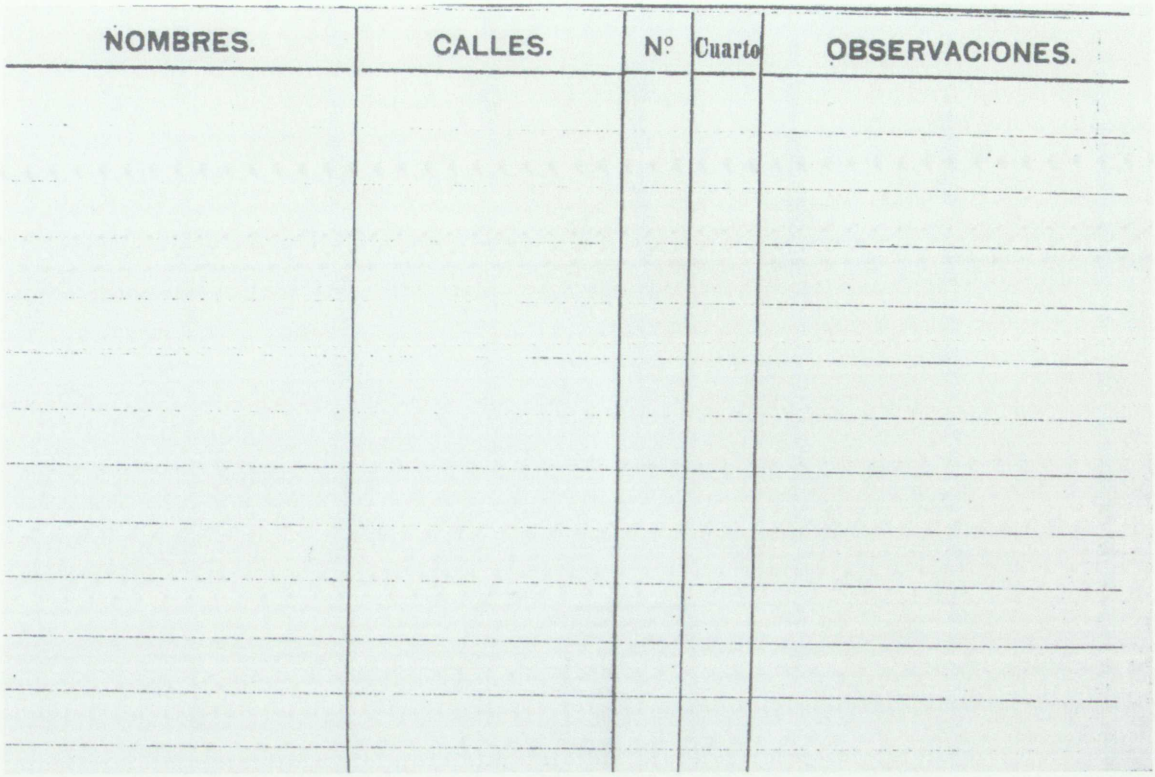


Figure 2.2: Form utilized by Havana's hygiene officials to gather information for the 1869 prostitute master list (padrón) (from Yale University, Miscellaneous Manuscripts Collection).

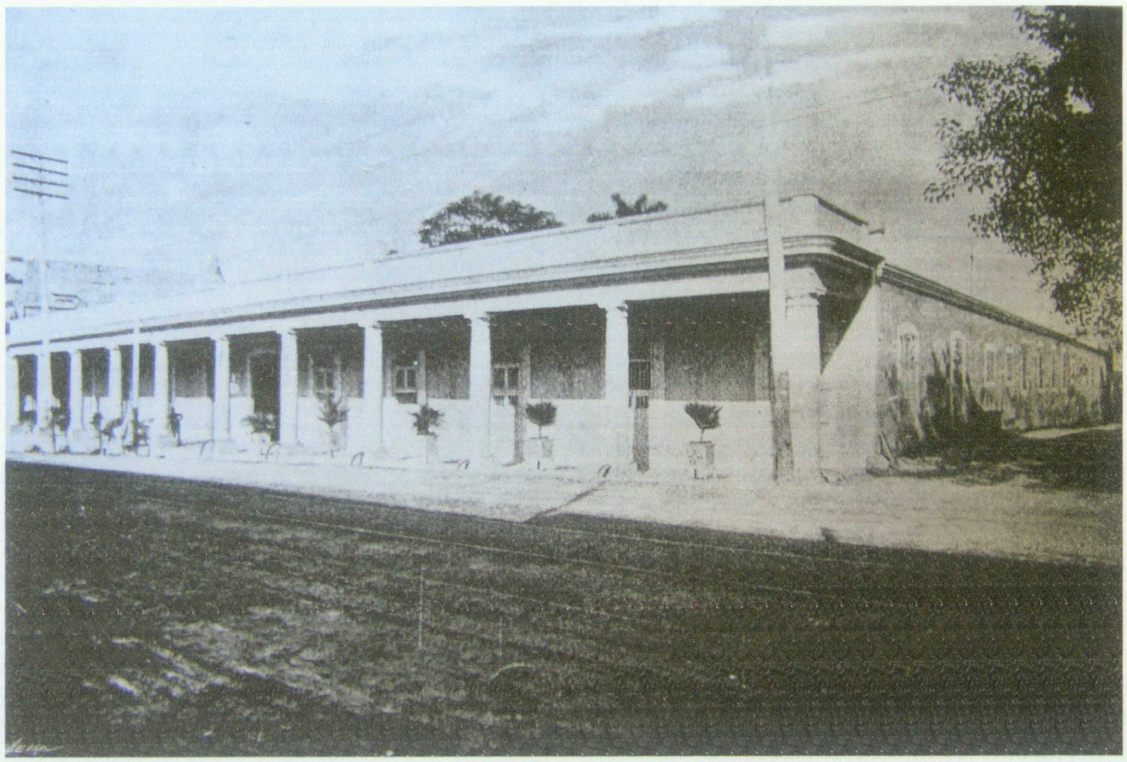


Figure 2.3: Exterior of Havana's Hygiene Hospital, ca. 1900 (from Dr. Ramón M. Alfonso, *La prostitución en Cuba y especialmente en La Habana: Memoria de la Comisión de Higiene Especial* (Havana: Imprenta P. Fernández y Ca., 1902).

CHAPTER THREE

Negotiating the Labyrinth: State Regulation, Prostitute Resistance, and the Limits of Social Control in Cuba, 1875-1886

> Your Honor, we are being charged twenty-five pesos per month, a quota which does not even correspond to first-class brothels, despite the fact that Chapter XXII, Article V of the current General Hygiene Regulation states that the monthly quota for third-class casas de recibir is eight pesos per month.
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> Candelaria Ruiz, Dolores Taronel, Felisia Roig, María Marcos, Amalia Lorente, Micaela Martínez, Josefa Mella, and Ana Madruga (1885)[1]

In November 1881, María Antonia Sánchez filed charges against her madam, doña Concepción Escobar, for beating her, throwing her out of her brothel, and holding her clothing as payment. When questioned about the incident, doña Escobar accused María Antonia of being an alcoholic who refused to reimburse her after smashing a ten-peso bottle of cognac against a wall during a drunken tirade. Regarding the various contusions found on María Antonia's body—for which she had apparently sought treatment at the San Francisco de Paula Hospital—doña Escobar claimed they were inflicted by María Antonia's abusive lover, don Francisco Calderón. The four other prostitutes working for doña Escobar—Elvira Pérez, Josefa Castro, Pilar Domínguez, and Encarnación Pérez y

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[1] ANC/GG, leg. 222, no. 12304 (queja, 1885), "Expediente y cuaderno de notas promovido por instancia de D. José Vigo y Piñeiro, en queja contra el establecimiento de casas de meretrices." The original Spanish reads: "Al estremo Exmo. Sor de cobrarnos hoy veinte y cinco pesos mensuales, cuota que no corresponde ni aun a las casas de primera categoría, puesto que en el capítulo quinto Articulo veinte y dos del *Reglamento General de Higiene* vigente, la tarifa señala a las casas de recibir de tercera categoria la cuota mensual de ocho pesos mensuales."

Miranda—confirmed doña Escobar's testimony. The Municipal Judge presiding over the case declared that María Antonia should first be examined in order to determine "if the wounds inflicted on María Antonia Sánchez's face and chest prevent her from practicing her trade as a prostitute."[2] The attending physician determined that María Antonia's wounds would not impede her ability to continue working as a prostitute, and that she would only require six to eight days of medical treatment. Despite the fact that four witnesses (albeit prostitutes in the defendant's employ) had corroborated doña Escobar's testimony, the presiding judge ordered her to pay María Antonia 1000 *pesetas* in damages. With the sentence established, the case appeared ready for closure; yet, in an unexpected turn of events, all of the parties involved disappeared. Following María Antonia's release from the hospital—where her stay had been extended in order to treat her for excessive trembling "due to the abuse of alcoholic beverages"—she had apparently vanished from the capital city.[3] Authorities eager to close the case finally located doña Concepción Escobar (now using the name Carmen Escobar) in late March 1881, and due to the fact that the principal plaintiff was nowhere to be found, doña Escobar received a full acquittal.[4]

The period between 1875 and 1886 was a crucial era in the history of prostitution regulation in Cuba, an era when the central tenets and institutions of Cuba's regulatory system assumed the basic form they would maintain into the early 1890s. While this

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[2] The original Spanish reads: ""si las lesiones inferidas en la cara y pecho a María Antonia Sánchez la impiden dedicarse a su tráfico de meretriz."

[3] The original Spanish reads: "debido al abuso de las bebidas alcohólicas."

[4] ANC/ME, leg. 1583, no. Z (1881—XI, 204), "Expediente criminal seguido contra Da. Concepción Escobar…lesiones a María Antonia Sánchez."

should have been a triumphant period in which the promised panacea of Havana's prostitution woes came to fruition and the fears and frustrations of the previous two decades faded into distant memory, contemporary agents of the regulatory system quickly discovered that the effects of the much-anticipated regulatory system were far from overwhelming. The transition from an ad-hoc and relatively limited response to prostitution to a full-fledged regulatory system was a massive undertaking that required the formation of an expanded institutional framework and the designation of a range of supportive personnel. While the institutional components of the system indeed proved expensive and difficult to administer, even more frustrating was their limited ability to extend the reach of agents of the regulatory system into the labyrinthine world of Havana's tolerance zone. As in the criminal case involving María Antonia and doña Escobar cited above, prostitutes continuously subverted the supervisory and disciplinary intentions of the regulatory system by refusing to be contained, located, or fixed in space, by choosing to handle inter-communal disputes on their own rather than call on the intervention of state authorities, or simply by changing their names.

The preponderance of institutional documents relating to prostitution regulation for this period reveals the continued focus of colonial administrators on prostitution as a fiscal, jurisdictional, and administrative issue whose broader social and economic impact could easily be illustrated by a mathematical graph, chart, or balance sheet. By contrast, the various filed grievances, criminal cases, and published criticisms of regulatory officials produced during this period reveal an imperfect system fraught with multiple fissures and shaped by the antagonisms and struggles over power, meaning, and influence of various segments of colonial society. In the same way that government officials, local

citizens, and prostitutes constantly negotiated the geographic boundaries of Havana's first tolerance zone in the 1850s and 1860s, so too were the legal and ideological boundaries of the newly established regulatory system continuously drawn, shifted, and redrawn. This constant tug-of-war shaped the institutions designed to reform and regulate prostitution, which, in turn, affected the material conditions of prostitutes' lives and the nature of prostitution regulation in the late nineteenth century.

Working the System

With the ink still drying on Governor Pérez de la Riva's celebrated prostitution regulation, by November 1875 an array of problems—ranging from personnel issues to fiscal insolvency—were already plaguing Havana's newly created Hygiene Section. The first chief officer of the Hygiene Section was found living in a brothel and subsequently fired.[5] Jurisdiction issues relating to the Hygiene Section also became, and remained, a heated topic of debate among colonial authorities. The spark for this debate was first ignited in September 1875 with the dissolution of Cuba's Political Government and subsequent creation of the General Government. More than a mere shift in official institutional titles, this consequential event involved a sweeping redistribution of administrative responsibilities within Cuba's governmental mechanism. Provincial authorities emerged as the great beneficiaries of this bureaucratic reform project, as their sphere of power expanded significantly at this time, especially vis-à-vis municipal authorities. Though still in its infancy the Hygiene Section was not exempt from the

[5] ANC/GG, leg. 232, no. 12635 (hospitales, 1874-77), "Expediente respecto al Hospital de Higiene para las meretrices a los médicos higienistas que las reconocen y a los arbitrios con que se costean estas atenciones."

centralization effort, and in what would prove a hotly contested ruling, ultimate administrative and financial responsibility for the section was granted to the Alcaldía Corregimiento. Municipal officials—having long considered themselves the de-facto authorities on all issues of prostitution regulation (and with no reason to believe otherwise)—were astonished to find their jurisdictive field restricted to issues of "public order." Unable to follow the logic of this resolution, municipal authorities vociferously argued that prostitution regulation was fundamentally an issue of public order and thus fell squarely within their jurisdictional and administrative purview. In the end, however, the Corregimiento's greater financial capabilities were offered as the primary justification for the new measure. Debate over jurisdictional boundaries between provincial and municipal authorities (and the definitions of prostitution implied therein) would become one of the principal quagmires of Cuba's regulatory system, a quagmire that would be only partially resolved by future legislation.[6]

Though jurisdictional issues became an especially heated arena of debate among colonial authorities, problems occurring on the ground level of the newly established regulatory system were equally troubling. Beleaguered municipal physicians now charged with administering the bi-weekly mandated pelvic exams in addition to their regular duties—which included providing free assistance to the poor, forensic services, and going on rounds at the Depósitos de Asiáticos—quickly began to petition the

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[6] The Governor General rejected two separate requests (dated 1 February 1875 and 26 July 1875) on the part of municipal authorities to transfer authority of the Special Hygiene Section from the Corregimiento to the Ayuntamiento. See ANC/GG, leg. 232, no. 12635 (hospitales, 1874-77), "Expediente respecto al Hospital de Higiene para las meretrices a los médicos higienistas que las reconocen y a los arbitrios con que se costean estas atenciones."

Governor General to create a core of physicians dedicated solely to the examination of prostitutes. Complaining that their new job caused them considerable "difficulties and annoyances" (disgustos y contrariedades), the municipal doctors cited numerous complications resulting from the women's noncompliance and their keen ability to exploit the numerous vulnerabilities of the examination process in order to evade the pelvic exam. One particularly vexing situation encountered by municipal physicians on their rounds involved prostitutes who simply refused to submit to the examination. The situation became so disordered that one physician—having "exhausted all methods of persuasion and repression"—resorted to revoking the licenses of several resistant women.[7] In order to ensure that they would not simply resort to clandestine prostitution, the doctor was subsequently required to place the women under police surveillance. This measure was considered untenable, due to the lack of sufficient police officers in the city, and a poor use of those officers who should be attending to "other services that are of greater importance to public order and security."[8]

Moreover, physicians had no means of verifying that the women presented for examination by a madam were in fact the same women listed in her registry. The municipal physician simply arrived at a brothel and required that the number of women listed on the register be the same as the number presented for the pelvic exam. Lamenting that "we already know how many changes and substitutions of pupils can result from this

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[7] The original Spanish reads: "agotado todos los medios de persuación y repreción [sic]."

[8] ANC/GG, leg. 206, no. 6 (reglamento, 1875), "Documento proponiendo modificación de algunos articulos del Reglamento de Higiene Pública." The original Spanish reads: "otros servicios que son de preferente atención para el órden y seguridad pública."

method of examination," the Jefe de Higiene lamented that this evasive maneuver partially explained why medical personnel frequently encountered prostitutes in the advanced stages of venereal infection.[9] Similarly, after having served only two months as an interim Medical Hygienist, Dr. José Rafael Montalvo y Corvarrubia complained that it was not uncommon to arrive at a brothel on the day of the examination to find it totally empty or to find that the women had meticulously and vigorously scoured their vaginal areas with astringent solutions, thus flushing away any signs of infection. As if these evasive maneuvers were not sufficiently troubling for municipal physicians, Dr. Montalvo y Corvarrubia claimed he was subject to persistent pressure from the women to grant exemptions from the pelvic exam, pressure, he claimed, that left him in constant fear for his personal security. Finally, most municipal physicians agreed that the prescribed system failed to address the issue of clandestine prostitutes who consistently evaded any form of pelvic exam whatsoever and thus represented the true threat to public health.[10]

In addition to the various problems caused by the mandatory pelvic exams, in July 1876 it was discovered that the Hygiene Section had accumulated a ten- thousand-peso deficit. The considerable size of the debt was especially perplexing to officials considering that the expenses of the Hygiene Section had not risen noticeably nor had the

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[9] ANC/GG, leg. 212, no. 11896 (1878) "Expediente sobre derogación del Art. 4o del Reglamento de Higiene pública en la parte que determina que en las cartillas de las meretrices se coloque el retrato fotografiado de estas y sobre reformas económicas y administrativas del ramo." The original Spanish reads: "ya se comprende a cuantas cambios o sustituciones de púpilas puede dar lugar este mode de reconocer."

[10] José Rafael Montalvo y Corvarrubia, "Dificultades para el reconocimiento de las meretrices. Discurso sobre este asunto con los Sres. Machado, Govantes, Rodríguez, A.G. del Valle y Mestie," *Anales del la Academia de Ciencias* 13 (1876): 225-228.

number of women being treated at the Hygiene Hospital increased drastically. The enormous deficit was ultimately blamed on the lack of clear guidelines regarding the classification of houses of prostitution and the laxity of municipal police officers charged with the collection of the corresponding monthly licensing fees. The issue of fiscal insolvency, perhaps more than any of the other issues facing the Hygiene Section, triggered the push for a new prostitution regulation in the hopes that the "the deficit will diminish and eventually disappear."[11]

Back to the Drawing Board

Soon after learning of the Hygiene Section's considerable debt, the Governor General commissioned Dr. Claudio Delgado to compose a new prostitution regulation "in harmony with scientific progress and public necessities."[12] **[Figure 3.1]** Despite the fact that Delgado had been replaced as director of the Hygiene Hospital at the time,[13] he dutifully completed the task in September 1876 and submitted a draft of the document to the Special Hygiene Commission (an advisory board appointed by the Governor General

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[11] ANC/GG, leg. 232, no. 12635 (hospitales, 1874-77), "Expediente respecto al Hospital de Higiene para las meretrices a los médicos higienistas que las reconocen y a los arbitrios con que se costean estas atenciones." The original Spanish reads: "el déficit irá desminuyendo hasta extinguirse."

[12] The original Spanish reads: "en armonía con los progresos de las ciencas y las necesidades públicas."

[13] Dr. Claudio Delgado's first term as Director of the Hygiene Hospital ended in April 1876 when, as the victim of "lowly political intrigue," he was replaced by Military Physician, Dr. Rafael Fleites. When Dr. Fleites died in March 1886, however, Delgado resumed his position as Director of the Hygiene Hospital. See Ortelio Martínez-Fortun y Foyo, *Dr. Claudio Delgado y su aportación al studio de la fiebre amarilla* (Havana: Consejo Científico, Ministerio de Salud Pública, 1967), 18.

and composed of members of the Academy of Sciences) for review.[14] The document caused an immediate sensation for its innovative methods for addressing existing deficiencies within Cuba's regulatory system.[15] The members of the Special Hygiene Commission praised Delgado's proposed reforms and called for its quick approval, stating,

> One can clearly see that the author possesses a deep understanding of the abuses engendered by the defective implementation of prostitution regulation, as well as the ways in which previous legislation left the door wide open to noncompliance. Señor Delgado's regulation seeks to impede abuses and facilitate perfect compliance from all government functionaries, preventing even the most minor infractions.[16]

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[14] Tomás Mateo Govantes y Gómez, "Profilaxis de la sífilis (Informe referente a una memoria sobre el estado actual del la prostitución en la Habana y al reglamento que la acompaña)," *Anales de la Academia de Ciencias* 13 (1876): 224-225.

[15] The "Memoria sobre la Higiene Especial de la Prostitución en la Habana, su estado actual y reformas que exige el mismo" accompanying Dr. Delgado's proposed regulation of 1876—which was not located within the holdings of the Academy of Sciences, the National Archive of Cuba, or the José Martí National Library in Havana—has apparently been missing for some time. In his annual Hygiene Section report published in 1902, the Secretary of the Special Hygiene Commission, Dr. Ramon María Alfonso, also indicated that he had been unable to locate the document during his research. See Ramon María Alfonso, *La prostitución en Cuba y especialmente en la Habana: Memoria de la Comisión de Higiene Especial* (Havana: P. Fernández, 1902), 191. Unfortunately, it may have been included amongst the many Hygiene Section archival documents destroyed upon the defeat of the Spanish government in Cuba. Though it is impossible to know what information the "memoria" might have provided, contemporary anecdotal reflections on the document indicate that Dr. Delgado used it as a platform to elaborate on the prostitution problem in Havana.

[16] Junta Superior de Sanidad, *Dictamen de la Junta Superior de Sanidad acerca de la memoria presentada por D. Claudio Delgado y Amnestoy sobre Higiene de la Prostitución en La Habana* (Havana: Howson & Heinen, 1887). The original Spanish reads: "[b]ien se vé…que su autor conoce a fondo los abusos a que ha dado lugar la defectuosa instalación de la prostitución reglamentada, y las puertas que han dejado abiertas para evadir el cumplimiento de la ley los reglamentos anteriores. Impedir el abuso y facilitar el exacto cumplimiento de su deber a todos los funcionarios, previendo hasta los casos más contingentes y casuales, es el objeto del Reglamento del Sr. Delgado."

With the endorsement of the Special Hygiene Commission, the Governor General approved the proposed regulation on 17 July 1877. The new *General Regulation of Public Hygiene* upheld many of the central tenets of Pérez de la Riva's 1873 legislation—such as restrictions about prostitutes appearing in public and ill women being sent to the Hygiene Hospital—but it also addressed some of the new issues of jurisdiction, prostitute noncompliance, and fiscal accountability facing authorities. Overall, the new regulation represented an attempt to replace what was still a relatively unstructured, ad hoc, and frequently chaotic set of responses to prostitution with an ordered system.

Regulating Chaos

Delgado's vision for the new regulatory system was fundamentally shaped by his concern with creating an administratively efficient and economically self-sustaining means for regulating prostitution in the capital city. Creating this kind of closed administrative and economic circuit required instituting a more rigorous registration process to promote greater control over prostitutes' lives, while also allowing for the imposition of a new set of monthly and annual licensing fees to cover the Hygiene Section's considerable operating costs. To these ends, Delgado formulated a comprehensive multi-tiered classification structure for the capital city's brothels, whereby registered madams were grouped into one of eight possible categories and required to pay a corresponding fee. Though the regulation did not elaborate a specific method for determining a brothel's position within the categorization scheme—class assignment may well have mirrored social divisions already existing within the prostitution community—Delgado clearly intended to maximize revenues. A higher position on the classification structure required

a madam to remit a higher monthly registration fee, and vice versa. The responsibilities implied by this new system cut both ways, however, and Delgado realized that economic solvency for the Hygiene Section depended not only on incomes yielded from registration fees but also (and perhaps primarily) on authorities' ability to extract those fees in a timely and orderly manner. In crafting his regulation, therefore, Delgado went to considerable lengths to detail the expectations of conduct not only for those individuals subject to the regulatory system—such as prostitutes and madams—but also for those charged with its enforcement, including administrators, medical personnel, and officers of the new Hygiene Police.

As the key subjects of the entire regulatory system, prostitutes appropriately figured as the primary focus of the 1877 regulation. Registered prostitutes were now divided into two primary classes: *dependientes*, who worked in the city's registered brothels, and *independientes,* who were, in a sense, self-employed prostitutes working outside the brothel system. Keenly aware of the problem—and promise—of controlling the incidence of clandestine prostitution within the city, Delgado's new regulation allowed for the forced registration of any female over the age of fifteen years found engaging in "licentious acts" (actos manifiestos de libertinaje) more than once. In order to provide increased measures for tracking the movement of prostitutes throughout the capital city, the new regulation also required that a prostitute wishing to transfer to another house of prostitution or establish her own brothel first obtain the corresponding license from Hygiene Section officials. The most radical element of Delgado's revisionist plan for Cuba's regulatory system, however, would also prove the most controversial. Following the example set by Spain and other European countries at the time—and

effectively overturning the previous policy that exempted individual prostitutes from paying licensing fees—the 1877 regulation imposed the *cartilla sanitaria* on all registered prostitutes. Featuring a photograph or drawing of the registered prostitute to whom they belonged, in order to prevent the women from trading or falsifying the documents, the cartillas were to be carried at all times and renewed every three months. The cartilla ultimately served a dual purpose: to promote public security and health—as they could be requested by either a physician or a potential client as proof of a woman's health status—and, at a cost of two pesos each, they would surely help reduce the size of the Hygiene Section's growing debt.[17] Though primarily concerned with defining prostitutes' obligations within the new regulatory system, Delgado did grant the women a few limited rights: namely, the right to change residence without fear of retaliation from a jilted madam and the right to retire from prostitution without penalty. Difficult to protect in the case of the former, and contingent upon a period of observation to ensure that the woman in question did not become a clandestine prostitute in the latter, these rights were by no means absolute or unqualified.

Delgado's emphasis on the registration and licensing of prostitutes necessarily extended to the other central subject of the regulatory system—madams. Under the 1877 regulation, madams continued to be divided into the same initial categories proposed by the 1873 regulation (*amas de casas de huéspedas* and *amas de casas de recibir*) yet categorization now entailed obligations. Registration fees ranging in cost from 3 to 35 pesos were now to be paid on a monthly basis, and annual licenses to operate brothels (at

[17] ANC/GG, leg. 232, no. 12635 (hospitales, 1874-77), "Expediente respecto al Hospital de Higiene para las meretrices a los medicos higienistas que las reconocen y a los arbitrios con que se costean estas atenciones."

a cost equal to the corresponding registration fee) were contingent upon both the location and design of the house. Densely populated areas were considered inappropriate locations to establish brothels—as their "bad example would be too obvious and contagious"—and brothels were required to have windows with fixed blinds and only one door opening onto the street.[18]

Recognizing the precarious nature of a madam's relationship to the state—and certainly eager to define the parameters of that relationship—Delgado nonetheless viewed madams as a potentially powerful ally in the regulation effort. Therefore, the 1877 regulation placed much of the responsibility for policing prostitutes and maintaining order in the hands of madams. Madams of *casas de huéspedas* were now strictly forbidden to accept any woman into their brothels who did not possess the *cartilla sanitaria*. They were further required to enforce their pupils' complicity with the pelvic examination, to maintain an accurate record of each pupil's examination result, and to personally conduct any ill pupils to the Hygiene Hospital. Madams of *casas de recibir*—a much more flexible situation and thus difficult to regulate—were not allowed to maintain any permanent tenants and were required to note any woman who came to their house more than once. Furthermore, all madams were required to report any scandals or disturbances occurring within their brothels. The criminal case between María Antonia Sánchez and doña Concepción Escobar cited at the outset of this chapter suggests, however, that madams may have chosen to impose their own forms of discipline (such as

[18] *Reglamento general de Higiene Pública para esta Isla* (Havana: Imp. de Gobierno y Capitanía General por S.M., 1877). The original Spanish reads "mal ejemplo sería demasiado patente y contagioso."

confiscating personal property) in order to penalize disorderly or noncompliant pupils rather than call on the intervention of governmental officials.

The relative rigor with which Delgado approached the regulation of prostitutes and madams was matched by his concern with administrative issues. In contrast to Pérez de la Riva's 1873 regulation, which was decidedly vague on issues of administrative duties, Delgado's regulation showcased his belief that the smooth functioning of a coherent regulatory system required an efficient and accountable staff. According to Delgado's design, the Hygiene Section's staff would now consist of three main branches—administrative, medical, and law enforcement—each charged with a specific role within the system. Based on a system of checks and balances, the new administrative procedure governing these three branches of the Hygiene Section required all agents to maintain and circulate detailed records concerning their particular function within the regulatory system. By requiring increased interdepartmental communication and accountability, Delgado hoped to promote more accurate record keeping and reduce the occurrence of employee corruption. Further responding to existing concerns with the latter issue, Delgado specifically stated that any agent of the Hygiene Section accused of negligence or fraud was subject to fines, temporary suspension of employment, demotion, or, in the case of a crime such as embezzlement, prosecution in the national court system. The administrative staff of the newly revamped Hygiene Section was to be headed by a Chief Officer primarily responsible for managing the various agents of the Hygiene Section and maintaining an accurate record of all registered brothels. Administrative subofficials were charged with maintaining and organizing the overwhelming number of other registries required under the new regulation—including a detailed daily budget, the

daily financial records for the Hygiene Hospital, and a register of all imposed fines—that were intended as a corrective to the lax record-keeping that had plagued the Hygiene Section from its inception. The medical staff of the Hygiene Section consisted of a Chief Hygienist, who would also serve as director of the Hygiene Hospital, and six Medical Hygienists replaced the original core of municipal physicians who had conducted the bi-weekly pelvic exams. Responding to the earlier complaints filed by municipal doctors concerning prostitute noncompliance and sabotage, the Chief Hygienist was required to establish a rotating weekly schedule for the pelvic exams that would require the prostitutes to be available for the medical exam every afternoon between 1 and 3 o'clock. Delgado hoped that the unpredictable and variable nature of the new exam schedule would minimize potential abuses of the examination process by denying prostitutes the time to disguise any signs of infection. For their part, the six Medical Hygienists were to conduct the bi-weekly pelvic exams of all registered prostitutes (once with a speculum) and record the examination results in a general medical register as well as each individual prostitute's sanitation card. All negative exam results were to be reported immediately to the Chief of the Hygiene Section and the infected prostitute was to be remitted to the Hygiene Hospital for treatment.[19]

The new regulation also created a special Hygiene Police force, comprised of four Hygiene Officers required to wear badges indicating their special status, and who would be under the direct orders of the Chief of the Hygiene Section. These officers were required to gather all of the incoming fees from the madams and prostitutes, patrol for

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[19] *Reglamento general de Higiene Pública para esta Isla* (Havana: Imp. de Gobierno y Capitanía General por S.M., 1877).

clandestine prostitutes, and serve as police escorts for Medical Hygienists making their rounds in the tolerance zone. Heralded as a necessary security presence for medical personnel, the underpaid and undersupervised officers of the Hygiene Police were also considered a potentially corrupting and corruptible force and thus were not permitted to enter the brothel's examination area, but rather were required to stand guard in the parlor. Any anxiety surrounding the officers' susceptibility to corruption did not, however, prevent section officials from granting them considerable disciplinary powers. Officers of the Hygiene Police (like all Hygiene Section officials) were authorized to determine penalties for violations of the prostitution regulation, which ranged in severity based on the seriousness of the infraction. For example, a prostitute found riding in an uncovered carriage could be fined five pesos or ordered to spend one night in jail, while a woman operating an unlicensed brothel could be sent to jail for up to one month. The category "pena máxima" was established for repeat offenses and could result in up to three months of imprisonment or, in the case of a regulatory infraction perpetrated by a madam, forced closure of a brothel.[20]

Ultimately, Delgado's 1877 regulation was an attempt to reinforce the most salient aspects of the regulatory system established by Pérez de la Riva in 1873 while simultaneously responding to its deficiencies. Drawing on three years of accumulated knowledge concerning the functioning of the existing system, Delgado determined that his primary goal should be to expand the regulatory mechanism's administrative

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[20] The fact that even the most severe infringement of the 1877 regulation would only be punished with three months of imprisonment may explain why prostitutes rarely appear in the archival records of the "Fondo Carceles y Presidios," which only includes files for individuals serving sentences of at least six months.

framework and thus extend the reach of Hygiene Section officials into prostitutes' daily lives. The resulting *General Regulation of Public Hygiene* was, like all legislation, forged in a specific historical moment, based on a discrete amount of information, and thus perhaps destined to have an uneven impact. For every successful policy or procedure enacted under the new regulation there was at least one that failed miserably. Thus while colonial officials reaped considerable fiscal benefits under the revamped system, they were also forced to contend with the multiple layers of antagonisms that emerged within this new system. Agents of the regulatory system, prostitutes, and local citizens continuously challenged, contested, subverted and otherwise undermined the new regulatory system in ways Delgado never anticipated, in order to secure their own individual goals. These interactions, in turn, shaped both the nature and the impact of the regulatory system in tangible ways.

New Answers to Old Questions

Both local citizens and prostitutes generally endorsed the basic social philosophy undergirding the new prostitution regulation and thus rarely contested the regulatory system as a whole. For their part, local citizens applauded the state's desire to standardize a set of official responses to the presence of prostitution in Havana as a means for containing and limiting its impact on the city and its inhabitants. Prostitutes and madams also embraced many elements of the new system, frequently harnessing the language of the 1877 regulation in order to add legitimacy to complaints filed with colonial officials or in order to defend their own actions. The new regulation was generally regarded as a binding contract between state officials and the broader

population, and the sense of security provided by the resulting regulatory system cut both ways. While local citizens could now hold colonial officials to their public pledge to curtail the expansion of prostitution into their neighborhoods, registered prostitutes could now protest any treatment or policy that contradicted the rights conferred by their codified class-based identities. One of the primary benefits of the 1877 regulation, therefore, was that it provided a referent for prostitutes and other citizens concerned with inconsistencies in the operation of the regulatory system.

Over the next few years several attempts were made to raise the women's monthly licensing fees, but both madams and local citizens resisted fervently. In response to one such attempt in May of 1885, the conservative Havana newspaper *El Clamor Público* published a brief article titled "Immoralities" that discouraged officials of the Hygiene Section from approving one such proposed fee increase. The article's author, Rafael Villa, argued that this measure would only cause an increase in the number of clandestine prostitutes in the capital city because "the women openly resist the imposition of any fees they deem unnecessary or overly exploitative."[21] Though the timing of his article's publication may have been merely coincidental, his remark that increased fees were sure to spark a reaction from Havana's madams was quite apt, considering that Hygiene Section officials had encountered exactly that kind of outcry from madams only one month earlier. On 7 April 1885, eight madams operating third-class *casas de recibir* located throughout the capital city sent a collective letter to Hygiene Section officials

[21] This article was included in the file ANC/ME, leg. 2592, no. E (1885:22), "Corrupción de la menor Ana Franco." The original Spanish reads: "si el imponerla no reconoce por causa necesidades imperiosas a juicio de los contribuyentes, estos se resisten a su exacción."

reporting that their monthly licensing fees had been unlawfully increased from eight to twenty-five pesos. Furthermore, they claimed that these exorbitant and unlawful fees were not even being imposed uniformly, as several other third-class *casas de recibir* were only paying fifteen pesos per month. In their closing remarks, the women pleaded with Hygiene Officials to uphold the tenets of the 1877 legislation and charge the women for the fees indicated therein.[22] While prostitutes may not have embraced all aspects of the regulatory system, the above case demonstrates that they demanded that it at least be enforced fairly and consistently.

Though the revamped process for conducting the bi-weekly pelvic exams continued to be the source of considerable grumbling on the part of Medical Hygienists, authorities soon discovered that the examination process carried at least one unexpected benefit. Medical Hygienists' regular presence in the tolerance zone not only allowed them to inspect prostitutes for venereal disease, but it also gave them the opportunity to monitor for the occurrence of crimes like "corruption of minors" within the brothels. On his weekly rounds, Dr. Anastasio Saaverio and the accompanying Hygiene Officer discovered a young girl named Ceferina Casanova y Medina inside a brothel on Aguacate Street. Suspecting a crime of "corruption of a minor," Dr. Saaverio conducted the girl to authorities who immediately ordered that the prostitutes working at the brothel be questioned as to whether or not "someone has corrupted the minor Casanova in order to

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[22] The eight madams signed the petition and also included the addresses where their respective houses were located. While two of the brothels were located on the same street, the others were scattered over a sixty-square-block area within the city, suggesting that their relationship may have been rooted in their shared classification rather geographic proximity.

satisfy the needs of someone else."[23] The two women living at the brothel, Josefa "Pepa" Luna, a 23-year-old prostitute from Havana, and Juana Gato y Gassó, a 30-year-old prostitute from Santa Cruz de Tenerife, were thus arrested and sent to the Vivac (jail) to await interrogation.[24] Medical Hygienists were ordered to conduct a thorough pelvic exam on Ceferina "to verify if she has engaged in carnal acts" (para acreditar si ha ejercido actos carnales). When the doctors conducted the medical exam, they reported that the girl's hymen had been broken, which her mother, Eugenia Casanova, testified was the result of a surgery she had as a small child. Noting nothing further out of the ordinary, the doctors determined that "the young Ceferina Casanova has not engaged in coitus, though she may well have engaged in other dishonest acts."[25] Presented with only inconclusive evidence, authorities were obligated to release Josefa Luna and Juana Gato y Gassó from the Vivac and allow them to return home.[26] Dismissed as a case of

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[23] The original Spanish reads: "alguna persona haya corrompido a la menor Casanova para satisfacer los deseos de otro."

[24] Both women testified that they had no prior arrests or convictions, and while this appears to be true in Luna's case, Gato was not being altogether honest about her past. According to an "hoja histórico penal" assembled in 1889 for Juana Gato (a.k.a Juana Valdes Gato, Florinda Valdes, or Juana Gasso) it appears that she had, in fact, been arrested on sixteen separate occasions between 1876 and 1889 for crimes ranging from clandestine prostitution to robbery. See ANC/ME, leg. 4053:AR (1889), "Juana Gato; Casa de Recogidas." A quick crosscheck of the information provided in the "hoja histórica penal" with records for the Casa de Recogidas confirms that on 4 September 1886 a woman named Florinda Valdes (one of Juana Gato's many pseudonyms) was released after serving a two-month sentence for robbery. See ANC/ME, leg. 4103, no. Dc, "Relación de los presos y presas que han salido de esta Cárcel y Casa de Recogidas respectivamente en el mes de Setiembre de 1886."

[25] The original Spanish reads: "la jóven Ceferina Casanova no ha ejercido el cóito si bien puede haberse prestado a egercer [sic] cualquiera otra clase de actos deshonestos."

[26] ANC/ME, leg. 2724, no. Ae (1887:30), "Causa criminal en averiguación del delito de la corrupción de la menor Ceferina Casanova y Medina."

"corruption of a minor," this story nonetheless eventually took a surprising turn. Exactly five years later a seventeen-year-old prostitute named Ceferina Medina Casanova—who testified she was the daughter of Eugenia Casanova and was described as an illiterate single woman without children—was sentenced to forty days in prison at the Casa de Recogidas for robbery.[27] Regulatory officials' reach into prostitutes' lives was clearly limited substantively, jurisdictionally, and, in Ceferina's case, temporally. Whether or not Ceferina was "corrupted" as a minor, authorities could not prevent her from becoming a prostitute as an adult; yet, the mere potential to intervene in such cases was nonetheless considered a great benefit to society.[28]

The greatest triumph of Delgado's regulatory mission was, however, financially based. Aside from providing additional support for Medical Inspectors on their weekly rounds, the new force of Hygiene Officers proved an expeditious means for resolving the Hygiene Section's daunting fiscal issues. By April of 1879 the Civil Governor proclaimed that the $10,951 peso deficit of September 1877 (when the Hygiene Section was transferred to the Civil Government) had been so reduced under the new regulatory system that the Hygiene Section now boasted a $3,504 peso surplus. Due to the

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[27] ANC/ME, leg. 4026:AP (1892), "Ceferina Medina Casanova, conocida por Serafina Sánchez; Casa de Recogidas."

[28] While the courts were involved in relatively few cases of "corruption of minors" involving young girls allegedly working in brothels during the period covered here, the number of such cases would increased into the final years of the nineteenth century. See, for example, ANC/ME, leg. 2592, no. E (1885:22), "Corrupción de la menor Ana Franco;"ANC/ME, leg. 2955, no. AH (1887) and ANC/ME, leg. 2882, no. J (1887), "Rapto de Da. Eduvigis Velasco y corrupción de menores formado para tratar de la prisión del procesado D. José Gutierrez y González;" ANC/ME, leg. 2928, no. AJ (1884-1885), "Por corrupción de la menor parda Genoveva Galves;" and ANC/ME, leg. 2728, no. I (December 1886), "Corrupción de menores."

"economic influx resulting from the active persecution of clandestine prostitution" carried out by Hygiene Officers, the Civil Governor could now report that the 81 registered brothels and 95 registered prostitutes existing in Havana in August of 1878 had, within an eight-month period, expanded to 188 registered houses and 600 registered prostitutes.[29] The financial windfall provided by the revamped regulatory system did much to assuage the sense of anxiety, disappointment, and frustration caused by the failures of Cuba's initial regulatory campaign. Colonial authorities viewed the influx of funds resulting from the crackdown on clandestine prostitution as irrefutable proof of the regulatory system's necessity and utility. The logic was circular: the strict enforcement of the regulatory system lead to a greater number of registered brothels, which, in turn, provided the increased funds to justify the strict enforcement of the regulatory system. Under these circumstances, progress was essentially defined in economic terms and Delgado's 1877 regulation was seen as the solution to the Hygiene Section's most disconcerting problem.

Scandalous Citizens, Imperfect Systems

Despite addressing many of the early issues that had plagued prostitution regulation in Cuba, the system created by the 1877 law was not without its deficiencies. Naturally, some issues confronting Hygiene Section officials in the months following the regulation's ratification were unprecedented and arose from unforeseen circumstances and situations. Hygiene Section officials quickly became concerned, for example, about

[29] The original Spanish reads: "la activa persecución de la prostitución clandestina y a las economías introducidas."

proper medical procedure in situations not addressed in the new regulation—such as cases where the results of a prostitute's pelvic exam were inconclusive or if she was found in the advanced stages of pregnancy—and with issues of legal jurisdiction, especially in cases involving the robbery of clientele occurring within local brothels. [30] Most of the problems facing Hygiene Section officials after ratification of the 1877 regulation were, however, frustratingly familiar. Serious personnel issues involving Hygiene Officers and Medical Hygienists—still considered especially susceptible to "commit immoral acts" (cometerse inmoralidades) due to poor pay and lack of proper supervision—continued to prompt widespread complaints of bribery and corruption from local citizens.[31] Other issues facing Hygiene Section officials were equally familiar and included, amongst others, prostitute noncompliance and continued jurisdictional disputes between provincial and municipal authorities.

Delgado's attempt to resolve provincial and municipal authorities' long-standing dispute concerning the administration of the Hygiene Section—by granting jurisdiction to the Corregimiento—only served to stoke the fires of the heated debate. Despite retaining jurisdiction over issues of public order and sanitation not relating to prostitution,

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[30] ANC/GG, leg. 211, no. 11775 (reglamento, 1877), "Expediente para autorizar a la Junta Superior de Sanidad expide copia autorizada a Dr. Claudio Delgado del dictamen emitido por la misma acerca del Reglamento sobre hygiene de la prostitución formulada por el Sr. Delgado." In August 1879, the Governor General approved the revocation of a madam's license in repeat cases of robbery of clientele. ANC/GG, leg. 212, no. 11896 (1878) "Expediente sobre derogación del Art. 4o del Reglamento de Higiene pública en la parte que determina que en las cartillas de las meretrices se coloque el retrato fotografiado de estas y sobre reformas económicas y administrativas del ramo."

[31] ANC/GG, leg. 216, no. 11975 (reglamento, 1880) "Expediente promovido por el Gobernador Civil de esta provincia para la aprobación de un Proyecto de Reglamento de Higiene Pública para la ciudad de la Habana."

municipal authorities continuously protested their limited authority within the regulatory system. Particularly vexing to municipal authorities was the issue of overlapping jurisdiction between municipal police officers and the new Hygiene Police in cases of public scandal involving prostitutes. Lamenting "the daily scenes offered by local prostitutes, resulting in protests and outrage from the neighborhood" municipal authorities chaffed under the ruling that their authority within the regulatory system be limited to ensuring "that prostitutes not dump pitchers of water into the street."[32] Responding to this issue in June 1886, the Municipal Mayor of Havana wrote the Civil Governor stating that the provincial Hygiene Officers

> could not possibly share the same public interest as Municipal Authorities, whose relationship and constant contact with the neighborhood necessarily grant them access to more frank, trustworthy, and intimate information about neighbors' concerns with the repression of abuses so contrary to the moral and physical well-being of their families.[33]

The ardent protest of municipal authorities was no match, however, for the provincial government's greater fiscal and administrative resources. Both the Civil Governor and the Governor General agreed that only the provincial government was sufficiently equipped to manage the Hygiene Section's large operating budget and provide for the

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[32] ANC/GG, leg. 212, no. 11835 (Sección de Higiene, 1878), "Expediente y Cuaderno de notas promovido por el Negociado para que la Sección de Higiene Pública que radica en el Corregimiento pase al Gobierno Civil de la provincia (Tres piezas)." The original Spanish reads: "las escenas que de día se ofrecen las meretrices, dando lugar a las protestas y exclamaciones del vecindario" and "de que una casa infeliz no se arroje un cantaro de agua a la calle."

[33] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "no pueden tener en la cosa pública el mismo interés que las Autoridades Municipales…cuyas relaciones y cuyo constante trato con el vecindario han de hacer necesariamente que a ellos lleguen más francas, más confiadas, más íntimas las quejas de los vecinos, que desean vehementamente la represión de abusos tan opuestos al bienestar moral y físico de sus familias."

growing needs of the Hygiene Hospital. The Governor General agreed that the Hygiene Section's purpose extended beyond mere administrative issues into the realm of public morality and hygiene, stating: "this service is so complicated, so difficult to carry out, and it is so directly tied not only to public health, but also to the morality and honor of the family."[34] In the General Governor's opinion, however, this connection to broader social issues further substantiated his opinion that only a large government agency such as the Civil Government could be entrusted with the Hygiene Section's administration. According to the Governor General's formulation, greater financial resources trumped the more intimate connection to the local populace boasted by municipal authorities as a guarantor of effective governance. Undoubtedly frustrating to municipal authorities, the Governor General's verdict nonetheless conformed to the general philosophy undergirding the regulatory system more generally.

In addition to continued jurisdictional debates between colonial authorities during the early years of the new regulatory system, authorities also had to contend with the prostitute's own resistance to specific articles of the regulation. While authorities applauded in theory the imposition of the *cartilla sanitaria* as a means for tracking prostitutes' medical histories and protecting clients from infection, in practice they found it difficult to enforce. Specifically, Hygiene Section officials encountered severe resistance to the requirement that the women affix a likeness of themselves to their

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[34] ANC/ME, leg. 3639, no. B (1886),"Gobierno General, Negociado de Sanidad: Sobre Reglamentación y Contabilidad de la hygiene de esta Isla," ANC/ME, leg. 3639, no. P (1886:60), "Expediente sobre la Reglamentación y Contabilidad de la Higiene de esta Isla," and ANC/ME, leg. 3639, no. P (1886:60), "Expediente sobre la Reglamentación y Contabilidad de la Higiene de esta Isla." The original Spanish reads: "este servicio es tan difícil, tan complicada en su desempeño, y se roza tan directamente no sólo con la salúd sino con la moral y honra de las familias."

cartilla. The Jefe de Higiene complained that many prostitutes protested the new measure by simply refusing to obtain or carry a cartilla. The exact motivation for the women's resistance is unclear, though it would certainly complicate their ability to trade or forge the documents. Forced to accept the policy's ineffectuality, the Jefe de Higiene requested that it be deleted from the 1877 regulation in order to provide for the greater good of Cuban society.[35] **[Figures 3.1 and 3.2]**

Hygiene Section officials were even more perplexed by their inability to regulate the interaction between prostitutes and madams, especially in cases of violence and scandal occurring within brothels. As we saw in the case between María Antonia Sánchez and Concepción Escobar at the outset of the chapter, despite the specific requirement that madams report all scandals and disturbances occurring between prostitutes in their employment, the women frequently resolved intercommunal disputes themselves. This tendency to exclude authorities from conflict mediation within brothels may help explain why so few cases of violence between prostitutes were ever reported. On 13 October 1882, Dolores Peña y Navarro, a 42-year-old prostitute from the Canary Islands and the "parda" Juana Rodríguez, a 25-year-old prostitute from Havana, were arrested for public assault (por encontrarlas dándose de golpes). In her testimony before the Municipal Judge, Dolores Peña stated that the two women were long-term friends and that "on the day of the incident, she had just starting playing with the parda Juana Rodríguez who was

[35] ANC/GG, leg. 212, no. 11896 (1878) "Expediente sobre derogación del Art. 4o del Reglamento de Higiene pública en la parte que determina que en las cartillas de las meretrices se coloque el retrato fotografiado de estas y sobre reformas económicas y administrativas del ramo."

standing in her doorway."[36] The women's testimony was surely intended to evade state disciplinary measures, as in light of the severity of the contusions mentioned by the doctor who attended to the two women it seems doubtful that they were just playing.[37]

The limited ability of Hygiene Section officials to regulate social interactions occurring between women working within brothels extended to the women's interactions with local citizens. As we saw in previous chapters, the residential and commercial areas adjacent to Havana's tolerance zone were spaces marked by considerable friction and conflict between prostitutes and their displeased neighbors that, in turn, generated a fairly steady stream of official complaints. One of the most frequently cited deficiencies of the 1877 regulation was that it failed to provide citizens with any new legal means to protest the presence of brothels in their neighborhoods. Individuals and groups filing complaints against local brothels therefore frequently resorted to invoking the 1854 *Edict of Good Government* (*Bando de Buen Gobierno)*, which provided for the immediate arrest or eviction of scandalous or unruly prostitutes. In July 1885, for example, don José Vigo y Piñeiro—a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the Spanish Army—referenced the 1854 legislation when requesting that various brothels on Virtudes Street be forced to move to a different area of the city. Over the course of four months, don Vigo y Piñeiro filed several reports citing the "daily scandals that the women engage in both inside and outside of their homes, often in the middle of the night," which he claimed forced the

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[36] The original Spanish reads: "que son amigas hace tiempo y que el día de la ocurrencia estando en la puerta de su casa espuso a jugar con la parda Juana Rodríguez."

[37] ANC/ME, leg. 2592, no. U (1882:23), "Reyerta entre Dolores Peña Navarro y Juana Rodríguez."

"honorable families" of the neighborhood to constantly maintain the windows and balconies of their homes securely closed.[38]

Prompted by don Vigo y Piñeiro's persistent demands for action, Hygiene Section officials conducted a thorough investigation into the prostitutes' record of conduct. After weeks of questioning other neighbors as well as local law enforcement officials—none of whom reported any scandals or disturbances involving the prostitutes in question—Hygiene Section officials declared that there was not enough evidence to shut the brothels down. Furthermore, authorities discovered that don Vigo y Piñeiro might have had personal motivations for filing his reports. Tinged with more than a hint of irony, the final report stated: "if Señor Vigo y Piñeiro is such the protector of public morality and order, he should not have rented his home located at #3 Virtudes to prostitutes for these past five years."[39] Simply filing a grievance with Hygiene Section officials did not, therefore, automatically guarantee disgruntled local citizens their desired outcome.

Undaunted by the limited number of legal avenues for expressing discontent with the presence of prostitution in their neighborhoods, local citizens eager to secure the closure of nearby brothels mobilized all possible resources at their disposal to influence, even coerce if necessary, government officials. In November 1887, don Manuel Fernández wrote the Governor General on behalf of several angry neighbors who

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[38] The original Spanish reads: "escándalos que dentro y fuera de las casas se cometen diariamente hasta en altas horas de la noche."

[39] ANC/GG, leg. 222, no. 12304 (queja, 1885), "Expediente y cuaderno de notas promovido por instancia de D. José Vigo y Piñeiro, en queja contra el establecimiento de casas de meretrices." The original Spanish reads: "si es tan guardador de la moral y del orden el Sor. Vigo y Piñeiro no debió por ningun concepto tener alquilada a meretrices por espacio de cinco años y hasta hace cinco meses la casa número 3 situada en la repetida cuadra de la calle de Virtudes."

complained that in several *accesorias* (small rooms in the lower story of a house with a door opening onto the street) located on Aguacate Street, "reigns the constant scandals and vulgar language employed by these public women, such scandal, Your Excellency, that no honest and moderately educated family can even walk down that street."[40] Frustrated by a lack of a response on the part of authorities, don Fernández resorted to publishing his complaints in a local newspaper. In one article, titled simply "To the Civil Governor," don Fernández was so bold as to instruct the Civil Governor on exactly how he should deal with the problem, stating, "In response to the present request, we would state: The complaints of these neighbors are justified and it is preferable to attend to their needs, since they dutifully pay their taxes, rather than be concerned with these *citizens* who only produce scandals and pay for a few *cartillas*."[41] In order to lend an added voice of authority to their petition, the individuals obtained the testimony of a functionary of the Hygiene Section who stated that "the petitioners complaints are fully justified, as these women belong to the lowest class of prostitutes, and their conduct not only offends public morality, but it is also repugnant to any but the most morally debased individual."[42] The functionary further testified that the situation was particularly

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[40] The original Spanish reads: "reina constantemente el escándalo y el grosero lenguaje que emplean las mujeres de la vida airada, escándalo es, Exmo. Sor., que ninguna familia honesta y medianamente educada puede transitar por dicha calle."

[41] The original Spanish reads: "Nosotros, en vista de la instancia diríamos: estos vecinos se quejan con razón y es preferible atenderlos a ellos, que todos son buenos contribuyentes, que pagan bien las cargas que se les imponen, que no a esas *ciudadanas* que solo producen escándalos y pagan algunas *cartillas*." Emphasis in the original.

[42] The original Spanish reads: "[e]s tan justa la petición que formulan los firmantes de la instancia…son estas mugeres [sic] de la más baja clase dentro de la prostitución; y por lo tanto la conducta que observan no solamente ofenda a la moral, sino es que repugna…todo ser que no este sumido en la más asquerosa abyección."

appalling because of the brothels' highly centralized location within the city. Whether due to the highly public nature of the citizens' complaints or the central location of the accesorias in question—or some combination of both—the strategy apparently worked and the offending prostitutes were promptly ordered to relocate.[43]

In the same way that local citizens employed any means necessary to secure the closure of local brothels deemed scandalous, so too did prostitutes respond to accusations of "public scandal" leveled against them by neighbors. In December 1886, a group of neighbors living on Compostela Street filed a complaint against a brothel where the prostitutes allegedly stood outside their homes in revealing nightgowns, thereby "offending the families of the petitioners as well as all of the peaceful residents of this neighborhood."[44] In October of that year, and apparently in response to the threat of her license being revoked, the madam in question, an American named Bertha Knodell, wrote a letter to the Governor General. In her letter, Knodell stated that in the eighteen years that she had been the owner of said "brothel for white immigrant prostitutes" (casa de meretrices blancas estrangeras) she had never had a single complaint from neighbors or encounter with law enforcement officials. The struggle between Knodell and her angry neighbors continued over the course of several months with each party's testimony becoming increasingly zealous. Following repeated unsuccessful attempts to secure the

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[43] ANC/GG, leg. 225, no. 12372 (quejas, 1887), "Expediente instancia de varios vecinos de la Calle de Aguacate la clausura de dos accesorias habitadas por meretrices en la referida calle (contiene el cuaderno de notas)."

[44] The original Spanish reads: "causando digusto [sic] a las familias de algunos de los promoventes y a todos los vecinos tranquilos de este barrio."

brothel's forced closure, the frustrated neighbors accused colonial officials of corruption and conspiracy, stating,

> in light of the failure to enforce that which is decreed within existing legislation, it is reasonable to state that justice is denied us, the peaceful residents of this street, while these prostitutes, who disturb us with their continuous scandals and the crimes committed in their brothels, go unpunished or even appear to be protected by authorities, contrary to that which is prescribed by morality, hygiene, and existing regulations.[45]

The battle on Compostela Street apparently continued even after Knodell died and her 25-year-old daughter, Ida Knodell de Kirtlin, took over the family business. Proving her resourcefulness in the face of public condemnation—and perhaps buoyed by her mother's reputation and influence—Knodell de Kirtlin was able to gather signatures from various neighbors and government officials willing to testify that her brothel was not a site of scandal or disorder. In the face of her persuasive retort, the case against Knodell de Kirtlin was apparently dropped.[46]

The regulatory system established by Delgado's 1877 regulation was clearly not an unmitigated success. The imperfections of the new system were the product of both legislative myopia on Delgado's part and the particular nature of the interactions, antagonisms, and struggles over power, meaning, and influence that shaped mid- to late-

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[45] The original Spanish reads: "[E]n vista de la falta de cumplimiento de lo dispuesto por los decretos aludidos, nos es lícito decir que no se nos administra justicia a nosotros los vecinos pacíficos de dicha calle mientras que las meretrices, que nos perturban con sus continuos escándalos y los crimenes cometidos en las casas de ellas, quedan impunes o pareciendo que esas casas de prostitución están amparadas por las autoridades, contra lo que prescribe la moral, la hygiene, y contra las disposiciones vigentes."

[46] ANC/GG, leg. 223, no. 12311 (quejas, 1886-88), "Expediente instancia y cuaderno de notas de varios vecinos de la Calle de Obispo no. 56 solicitando de que sean cerradas las casas de meretrices que existen en Compostela entre Obispo y O'Reilly."

provincial prostitution was thrown into high relief in the years immediately following Cuba's first war of independence. The Ten Years' War (1868-1878) represented the most profound challenge to Spanish colonial authority since the South American independence movements fifty years earlier, and its ferocity impacted every aspect of Cuban society.[47] In addition to a calamitous human toll, the conflict was especially destructive to Cuba's sugar industry in the eastern provinces. In Puerto Príncipe alone, 99 percent of the area's sugar mills were destroyed.[48] The crippling of Cuba's key industry precipitated a severe economic crisis that, in turn, spurred a massive migration that left rural areas almost completely devoid of inhabitants and plunged urban centers into an era of overpopulation and chaos.[49]

In addition to their tremendous fiscal consequences, the events of the Ten Year's War also permanently altered Cuba's administrative topography. In 1878, the year marking the end of the war, the Spanish colonial government divided Cuba's existing three administrative departments—Occidental, Central, and Oriental—into six districts, in keeping with territorial divisions in Spain. These six new provinces were Pinar del Río, La Habana, Matanzas, Santa Clara, Puerto Príncipe, and Santiago de Cuba.[50] The creation of these provinces was primarily an attempt to cast a spotlight on—and extend the reach

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[47] Louis Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 2nd ed. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 139.

[48] Oscar Zanetti and Alejandro García, *Sugar and Railroads: A Cuban History, 1837-1959* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 131.

[49] Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 99-100.

[50] Pedro José Imbernó, *Guía geográfica y administrative de la Isla de Cuba* (Havana: La Lucha, 1891), 14-15.

of colonial officials into—areas now considered potential hotbeds of political dissent. The prospect of tapping provincial resources in order to alleviate the fiscal strain of the war provided yet another motivation for the administrative restructuring effort. The recent financial windfall garnered from Havana's revamped regulatory effort understandably prompted colonial authorities to consider the prostitution question as a potentially promising source of revenue in the provinces.

Initial efforts in the early-mid 1880s to encourage Civil Governors to establish a local Hygiene Section and ratify a prostitution regulation for their respective provinces, however, proved unsuccessful.[51] During this period, authorities in Havana were dismayed to receive frequent reports citing the lax or nonexistent enforcement of provincial legislation as well as the flagrant mismanagement of local Hygiene Section funds. These reports of administrative negligence were even more vexing, considering that colonial authorities were finding themselves in ever more dire financial straits due to continued political unrest. Reeling from the Guerra Chiquita (1879-1880) and facing the inevitable end of slavery, Cuba's Ministry of Ultramar therefore ordered on 7 July 1886 that the Civil Governors of each province remit comprehensive financial and administrative records relating to the hygiene service in their respective jurisdictions beginning with the year 1881.[52] Certainly, no other province was expected to approach Havana's substantial

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[51] See *Gaceta Oficial* 193 (22 August 1878): n/p and *Gaceta Oficial* 196 (25 August 1878): n/p for information on the administrative responsibilities conferred to the Civil Governors following the creation of the six provinces.

[52] Though the Governor General's choice of the year 1881 to begin an accounting of Hygiene Section acitivity in the provinces is never explained, the decision may be based on the fact that Matanzas—the province with the second largest number of registered prostitutes and one of the country's principle ports—had approved its first

income for the period 1881-1886—totaling $202,168.82 pesos.[53] Authorities in Havana were nonetheless exasperated to discover that regulation in the provinces bore little if any similarity to the situation in the capital city. Responding to local prostitution problems that rarely resembled (in nature or in volume) those existing in Havana, provincial authorities had long operated according to their own unique guidelines intended to address local exigencies. In a country rumbling with rising levels of popular political discontent, the uneven range of responses to prostitution throughout the island was seen as yet another example of a potentially dangerous lack of uniformity in colonial governance more generally that required immediate attention.

Provincial authorities began to respond to the Governor General's call for a detailed accounting of each province's Hygiene Section by mid-August 1886, although the resulting reports fell fall short of initial expectations. Ranging from a single hand-written page to a bulky file of disorganized receipts, the reports were often incomplete, inaccurate, or totally incomprehensible. Two of the six Civil Governors were in fact unable to supply any financial or administrative documentation relating to the provincial Hygiene Section whatsoever. The Civil Governor of Santiago de Cuba, for example, reported that while a modest Hygiene Section–comprised of a four-member staff and an operating budget of only $538 pesos—had been established in the provincial capital in

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prostitution regulation in that year. ANC/ME, leg. 3639, no. B (1886),"Gobierno General, Negociado de Sanidad: Sobre Reglamentación y Contabilidad de la higiene de esta Isla."

[53] ANC/ME, leg. 3639, no. P (1886:60), "Expediente sobre la Reglamentación y Contabilidad de la Hygiene de esta Isla."

September 1886, no records pertaining to the service existed.[54] In early August 1886, Ramón Barrio, a functionary of Pinar del Río's *Negociado de Orden Público y Policía de Higiene* similarly reported that he was unable to present detailed data relating to prostitution for the province, as only three houses of prostitution had existed there since 1884 (though he did admit that six clandestine prostitutes had recently been detained and fined by the police).[55] Anticipating the Governor General's inevitable skepticism about this dearth of documentation, Barrio enthusiastically praised the efficiency with which local authorities collected monthly registration fees from the provincial capital's three registered madams—Antonia García, Julia Gutiérrez, and Enriqueta Sánchez—and surrendered the resulting eight Mexican pesos to the local Hospital de Caridad.[56] Eager to excuse himself from the responsibility of gathering more comprehensive data in the future, Barrio argued that the limited scope of prostitution in the province made a more rigorous accounting unnecessary. Coincidentally, García, Gutiérrez and Sánchez continued to operate the only three registered brothels in Pinar del Río until 1893.[57]

The Civil Governor of Puerto Príncipe also sent an exceptionally thin file in response to the July 1886 order and reported that despite ratifying a prostitution

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[54] Of course, this data does not account for any clandestine prostitution occurring in the province. ANC/ME, leg. 3639, no. X (1886:60), "Expediente sobre Reglamentación y Contabilidad de la hygiene de Santiago de Cuba."

[55] ANC/GG, leg. 216, no. 11956 (1880), "Documento proponiendo la creación en este Gobierno de una sección para llevar a cabo el Reglamento de meretrices de esta Capital Pinar del Río."

[56] ANC/ME, leg. 3639, no. A (1886), "Gobierno General de la Isla de Cuba, Negociado de Sanidad: Sobre Reglamentación y Contabilidad de la hygiene, Pinar del Río."

[57] Ibid.

regulation for the province in August 1880, local authorities had never actually enforced the system but rather relied on the local police force to deal with any related issues. The Civil Governor justified this administrative laxity on the prostitution issue by citing the need to respond to more pressing local issues; namely, pursuing and capturing local horse and cattle thieves. Believing the local police force best utilized to those ends, the Civil Governor nonetheless assured the Governor General that provincial authorities in Puerto Príncipe would dedicate their attention to the matter of establishing a Hygiene Section "as soon as circumstances permitted."[58] Later communications reveal that authorities in Puerto Príncipe would not, in fact, constitute such an institution until July 1893, and even then its presence was considered more symbolic than substantive.[59]

While the provincial reports from Santiago de Cuba, Pinar del Río, and Puerto Príncipe may have been incomplete, even more perplexing was the report submitted in August 1886 by the Civil Governor of Santa Clara, don Federico Esponda. In his report, Governor Esponda noted that since establishing a Hygiene Section in February 1879, provincial authorities in Santa Clara had been operating independently—formulating their own prostitution regulation and distributing the resulting $16, 313 pesos according to local priorities.[60] Apparently these priorities included attending to Governor Esponda's

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[58] ANC/ME, leg. 3639, no. Ad (1896:61), "Expediente sobre Reglamentación y Contabilidad de la hygiene en Puerto Príncipe."

[59] Ibid.

[60] See ANC/JSS, leg. 32, no. 152 (1879), "Comunicación informando sobre el exámen del Reglamento formado para regimentar la prostitución en Santa Clara" and ANC/GG, leg. 212, no. 11833 (reglamento, 1878), "Expediente y Cuaderno de notas sobre aprobación del Reglamento de Higiene pública por el Gobierno Civil de Santa Clara (Contiene el Reglamento)."

own personal expenses, as records for 1885 include an expense labeled "transportation rental for His Excellency" in the amount of $1,740 pesos—a notable sum considering that it represented 60 percent of the Hygiene Section's income for that year.[61] Accompanying financial documents—which coincidentally made no reference to the number of registered or unregistered prostitutes in the province—also showed a pattern of significant overspending on the part of provincial authorities. The Governor General was horrified by this blatant misuse of Hygiene Section funds, and despite the lack of any official guidelines instructing provincial authorities on the proper use of said funds, Governor Esponda was soundly reprimanded for his questionable fiscal activities.

Perhaps not surprisingly—considering that Matanzas had become one of Cuba's principal port cities—the Civil Governor of Matanzas province sent the most comprehensive documents (relatively speaking) concerning prostitution regulation in that province.[62] Yet, despite the fact that a prostitution regulation had been approved for the province in August 1881[63] and an ad-hoc Hygiene Section had apparently already been

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[61] ANC/ME, leg. 3639, no. Aa (1886:60), "Expediente sobre Reglamentación y Contabilidad de la hygiene en Santa Clara."

[62] The capital city of Matanzas Province (Matanzas) is built at the site of a natural harbor, and by the middle of the nineteenth century, Matanzas Province provided 55 percent of Cuba's insular sugar production. See Oscar Zanetti and Alejandro García, *Sugar and Railroads: A Cuban History, 1837-1959* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolino Press, 1998), 7.

[63] The Civil Governor simply adapted the 1877 *Reglamento general de Higiene Pública* created by Claudio Delgado for the capital city of Havana to the specific needs of Matanzas; namely, licensing fees for prostitutes and madams were less than half what was charged in Havana. ANC/JSS, leg. 28, no. 51 "Comunicación remitiendo el expediente sobre Reglamento para la Policia de la Prostitución."

established prior to that date,[64] the Civil Governor of Matanzas province only provided financial data relating to the Hygiene Section beginning in April 1884.[65] In stark contrast to an earlier communiqué stating that "due to the infinite number of women working as prostitutes, the syphilis virus has spread, particularly amongst the troops"[66] the Civil Governor now claimed that "this Section has very little importance in the Province under my command" offering the Hygiene Section's paltry $2,096-peso-income (based on fees collected from 48 registered brothels) as evidence of its relative inconsequentiality.[67] While the composite nature of the Hygiene Section's financial documents provide little means to confirm or negate the shifting volume of provincial prostitution indicated by the

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[64] According to documents dated August 1881, there were already twelve registered madams and sixteen registered dependent prostitutes in Matanzas. See AHPM/NOPP, leg. 3, no. 344 (1881), "Comunicaciones de la Celaduría de Inspección de Higiene relacionados con los trámites seguidos a las meretrices de la ciudad" and AHPM/NOPP, leg. 3, no. 373 (2-3 Agosto 1881), "Comunicaciones relatives a quejas de vecinos de una casa donde se ejercía la prostitución clandestina."

[65] ANC/ME, leg. 3639, no. W (1886:60), "Expediente promovido sobre Reglamentación y Contabilidad de la hygiene en Matanzas."

[66] ANC/JSS, leg. 28, no. 51 "Comunicación remitiendo el expediente sobre Reglamento para la Policia de la Prostitución." The original Spanish reads: "particularmente en la clase de tropa se había desarrollado el virus Sifilítico siendo infinitas las mugeres [sic] que se dedicaban á la prostitución,"

[67] This total includes registered brothels in Cárdenas and Colón. The Civil Governor claimed that due to their relative importance within the province, Cárdenas and Colón had been given authority to establish their own independent Hygiene Sections under the jurisdiction of their respective Municipal Mayors. See ANC/ME, leg. 3639, no. W (1886:60), "Expediente promovido sobre Reglamentación y Contabilidad de la hygiene en Matanzas," AHPM/NOPP, leg. 3, no. 356 (1886), "Recibo de pago por la cuota de ama de casa de meretrices," AHPM/NOPP, leg. 6, no. 736 (1-15 Mayo), "Celadurías de policia: Recibos y licencias remitidas por la Sección de Higiene de la provincia de Matanzas para las meretrices de la Villa de Colón," and AHPM/NOPP, leg. 6, no. 735 (1886-1897), "Estado sobre el número de meretrices en Colón y comunicaciones relatives a reglamentos y cartillas de ellas." The original Spanish reads: "muy poca importancia tiene esta Sección en esta Provincia de mi mando."

Civil Governor, other administrative documents from the period suggest that whether due to lack of need or a mere lack of concern, the regulation of prostitution in Matanzas province was indeed a limited enterprise. Few women living in Matanzas province between 1881 and 1885 requested prostitution licenses, even fewer were being treated for venereal disease at the Hospital San Nicolás, and police files for the period list only three cases of scandals involving prostitutes.[68]

Authorities in Havana were generally dismayed by the irregular, disorganized, and sometimes even nonexistent, ways that prostitution was regulated throughout the island. In his final report on the matter dated 22 September 1886, the Governor General stated that all of the provinces had responded in a deficient manner to the order to remit detailed financial and administrative documents, thus aptly demonstrating what was already feared—"this grave subject is handled with the most complete and lamentable neglect outside the capital city."[69] The issue was not over, however. In response to the state of "neglect and anarchy" (abandono y anarquía) of the provincial Hygiene Sections,

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[68] See AHP/NOPP, leg. 3, no. 346 (1881), "Comunicaciones relatives a inscripciones de meretrices al ingresar en distintas casas," AHPM/NOPP, leg. 3, no. 352 (1882), "Comunicaciones relatives a informes rendidos por el Vigilante de la Sección, Manuel Arroyo sobre altas y bajas de las meretrices y reconocimientos médicos," AHPM/NOPP, leg. 3, no. 368 (1881), "Comunicaciones relatives a expediente instruído contra el Celador de Higiene, Manuel Arroyo, por los hechos denunciados en la 'Aurora de Yumurí," AHPM/NOPP, leg. 3, no. 351 (1881), "Comunicaciones relatives a escándalos y multas impuestos a meretrices así como pagos de contribuciones y traslados de casas de citas," and AHPM/NOPP, leg. 8, no. 859 (8 Octubre1881-17 Noviembre 1898), "Comunicaciones de la Celaduría del Distrito Norte relatives a multas impuestas a meretrices por promover escándalo en la vía pública, bailar rumba e infracción del Reglamento de Higiene."

[69] ANC/ME, leg. 3639, no. P (1886:60), "Expediente sobre la Reglamentación y Contabilidad de la Higiene de esta Isla." The original Spanish reads: "en asunto tan grave reina fuera de esta Capital el más completo y lamentable abandono."

the Governor General granted provincial authorities one month to remit a rigorous accounting of all incomes and expenses relating to their respective Hygiene Sections, including the exact number of prostitutes and brothels therein and a copy of any current legislation on the matter. [70] The Governor General simultaneously removed many of the powers once enjoyed by the Civil Governors—such as their authority to appoint personnel and distribute Hygiene Section funds—and placed them in his own hands.[71] In light of the fact that "every province handles this service in a different manner, undermining the unity and harmony that should characterize all branches of public Administration," the Governor General ordered that all existing provincial prostitution legislation be made null and void until "authorities devised a definitive and harmonious regime relating to the service that could be imposed everywhere the inevitable evil existed on the island."[72] Though fearing it would be impossible to create and enforce a comprehensive prostitution law reflective of each province's particular needs, the Governor General nonetheless called for a unified budgetary procedure modeled on the example provided by Havana.[73]

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[70] Ibid.

[71] ANC/ME, leg. 3639, no. B (1886), "Gobierno General, Negociado de Sanidad: Sobre Reglamentación y Contabilidad de la hygiene de esta Isla."

[72] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "dicho servicio se desenvuelve en cada provincia de diferente manera, en daño de la unidad y armonía que en éste como en todos los ramos de la Administración de los públicos intereses es necesaria," and "régimen definitivo y armónico del referido servicio en todas las localidades donde desgraciadamente se hace preciso transigir con el mal inevitable de que se trata"

[73] ANC/ME, leg. 3639, no. P (1886:60), "Expediente sobre la Reglamentación y Contabilidad de la Higiene de esta Isla."

The call for a more unified system of prostitution regulation—or at least one that would bring the provinces into line with what was happening in the capital—was primarily motivated by a desire on the part of Cuba's General Government to establish greater order and governmental oversight in the provinces, in order to respond to new fiscal issues emerging in the wake of Cuba's changing economic and political circumstances. The focus on administrative (primarily financial) documents reinforces the view that colonial authorities continued to view prostitution as primarily a fiscal issue. Furthermore, the patchy, incomplete nature of the documents remitted by provincial authorities in response to this request reveals the marked disparity between the magnitude and importance of the prostitution issue for officials in Havana and the provinces. A comprehensive prostitution regulation applicable to all six provinces would not materialize until 1892 when, as we will see in Chapter IV, Cuba's political, economic, and social situation presented an entirely new set of obstacles to prostitution regulation.[74]

Asylum of Disgrace

As the legislative and geographic parameters of the regulatory system expanded in the years following ratification of Delgado's 1877 regulation, ever greater numbers of prostitutes were pulled into the Hygiene Section's orbit and forced to register. With the volume of registered prostitutes rising markedly, it is thus not surprising that the number of prostitutes found to be infected with venereal disease increased accordingly, as registration entailed submission to regular pelvic exams. By early 1878, in fact, Havana's Civil Governor reported that "thanks to the meticulous surveillance affected in the

[74] Ibid.

brothels," the number of women being treated for venereal disease at the Hygiene Hospital had increased seven-fold; a fact that was, in his estimation, "undoubtedly a benefit to public health."[75] The rising numbers of prostitutes treated at the Hygiene Hospital in the late 1870s sparked a renewed interest in the facility. Founded in 1873 by Pérez de la Riva (see Chapter 2), the hospital had been largely ignored by colonial authorities since that time. This negligence stemmed primarily from the fact that existing legislation failed to outline how the facility was to be administered, and the confusion resulting from this legislative omission necessarily impacted both the fiscal and physical condition of the hospital. Described by municipal authorities as a "public mockery of Hygiene, and a holding pen where public women are forcibly remitted only to become deathly ill," the Hygiene Hospital had earned a reputation as a public disgrace that greatly endangered the already precarious health status of the prostitutes treated at the facility.[76]

In order to accommodate the growing number of prostitutes arriving each month, the Hygiene Hospital would need to be reformed and refurbished; yet it was not entirely clear who was supposed to spearhead the massive undertaking. Though vehemently protecting their authority over fiscal and administrative issues relating to the new

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[75] ANC/GG, leg. 212, no. 11896 (1878) "Expediente sobre derogación del Art. 4o del Reglamento de Higiene pública en la parte que determina que en las cartillas de las meretrices se coloque el retrato fotografiado de estas y sobre reformas económicas y administrativas del ramo." The original Spanish reads: "merced a la esquisita vigilancia que se egerce [sic] en las casas," and "indudablemente un beneficio de la salubridad pública."

[76] ANC/GG, leg. 41, no. 1706 (Hospital de Higiene, 1879), "Documento relacionado con la exposición que hacen los Sindicos del Ayuntamiento de la Habana pidiendo se le devuelva la Administración de los Hospitales de San Felipe y Santiago e Higiene (Contiene el Cuaderno de Notas)." The original Spanish reads: "una befa lanzada públicamente contra la Higiene, y un depósito de unas cuantas mujeres públicas llevadas allí a la fuerza para enfermar de muerte."

regulatory system more generally, provincial authorities were eager to shed responsibility for the dilapidated Hygiene Hospital. Exploiting the 1877 regulation's failure to clearly assign administrative responsibility for its operation, provincial authorities referenced freely earlier legislation assigning jurisdiction over all charitable organizations, including hospitals, to municipal authorities.[77] Despite the fact that the Hygiene Hospital did not directly lend its services to the general public and was wholly funded by the prostitutes themselves, provincial authorities maintained that it was primarily a "charitable asylum" for the treatment of ill individuals and thus should not be differentiated from other hospitals.[78] Keen to restore a sphere of authority they felt had been compromised by the 1877 *General Regulation of Public Hygiene,* municipal authorities enthusiastically voiced their willingness to administer the Hygiene Hospital. As was typical at every such jurisdictional juncture, however, the Governor General declared municipal authorities fiscally incapable of administering the facility.[79]

The confusion over administrative responsibility for the Hygiene Hospital might have gone on interminably had it not been for an unexpected natural disaster. The

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[77] The 1861 *Reglamento General de Beneficiencia de la Isla de Cuba* declared that all charitable organizations on the island, with the exeption of the Real Casa de Beneficiencia y Maternidad and the Casa de Dementes, were to be administered by municipal authorities. See *Reglamento General de Beneficiencia de la Isla de Cuba* (Havana: Imprenta del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1861).

[78] ANC/GG, leg. 232, no. 12635 (hospitales, 1874-77), "Expediente respecto al Hospital de Higiene para las meretrices a los médicos higienistas que las reconocen y a los arbitrios con que se costean estas atenciones."

[79] ANC/GG, leg. 41, no. 1706 (Hospital de Higiene, 1879), "Documento relacionado con la exposición que hacen los Sindicos del Ayuntamiento de la Habana pidiendo se le devuelva la Administración de los Hospitales de San Felipe y Santiago e Higiene (Contiene el Cuaderno de Notas)."

monsoon season of 1877 swept through Havana with extreme force, flooding all the hospital rooms and leaving the prostitutes stranded in a completely unhygienic situation.[80] No longer able to overlook the pressing question of its dubious administration, the Governor General called for a new regulation specific to the needs of the Hygiene Hospital. Following a lengthy period of debate and multiple revisions, the first regulation for the administration of the Hygiene Hospital was finally approved in late 1880. The new legislation not only put an end to the ongoing jurisdictional debate by assigning administrative responsibility to provincial authorities, but it also outlined how the facility was to be administered.

The *Reglamento para el Gobierno, dirección y servicio del Hospital de Higiene de La Habana* of 1880 created positions for a sizeable hospital staff, including a hospital director, a chief administrator, a pharmacist, two staff surgeons, a nightwatchman, two nurses, a cook, a gardener, a chaplain, and numerous servants. **[Figure 3.3]** The legislation also outlined the responsibilities of the primary staff members. The hospital director was responsible for the general management of the facility and was required to submit a detailed annual report to the Governor General covering all fiscal and administrative issues. **[Figure 3.4]** The hospital chaplain would conduct mass at the hospital chapel every Sunday and on Catholic holidays and would administer the final sacrament to dying patients.

The position for a nightwatchman at the hospital had actually first been created in

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[80] ANC/GG, leg. 209, no. 11727 (hospitales, 1877), "Expediente y cuaderno de notas para mejorar el piso de las salas del Hospital de Higiene contaminado de madera."

February 1875, when authorities determined that the facility needed someone who would ensure that "order was not disturbed within the establishment" and who would prevent "any dispute that might occur between patients."[81] The nightwatchman's primary duties, therefore, were to control all entrances to and exits from the Hygiene Hospital and to close the entrance to the hospital at 10:30 p.m. every night. In addition to meeting several general requirements for the position, it was determined that the nightwatchman should be at least 60 years of age, a stipulation intended to ensure that he would not become a corrupting, or perhaps corruptible, force within the facility.[82]

The age requirement attached to hospital employment was not, however, gender specific. In a letter dated 28 August 1877, the Corregidor of Havana stated that he strongly believed that the age of women employed at the Hygiene Hospital should be at least 45 years: "as this is the age in which passions subside, and experience has taught these women how to respect and administer a wholesome moral doctrine."[83] Members of the hospital staff—like the patients themselves—were subject to strict enclosure within the self-contained universe of the Hygiene Hospital. With the exception of the Medical Director and the chaplain, all employees were required to sleep on the premises at night

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[81] The original Spanish reads: "no se altere el orden del interior del establecimiento" and "cualquier disputa que pueda ocurrir entre las mismas enfermas."

[82] ANC/GG, leg. 206, no. 11613 (hospitales, 1875), "Expediente promovido para la creación de una plaza de vigilante nocturno para el Hospital de Higiene casa Quinta de San Antonio [Habana]."

[83] ANC/GG, leg. 211, no. 11777 (reglamento, 1877), "Expediente promovido para aprobación del Reglamento para el régimen interior del Hospital de Higiene." The original Spanish reads: "pues es la edad en que las pasiones han dejado de existir, y la experiencia les ha enseñado lo bastante para hacer respetar y poder predicar sana y moral doctrina."

and could only leave the grounds twice a month. Aside from providing a sense of administrative continuity within the facility, the staff's limited access to the outside world served as a deterrent against the unwanted influx of contraband goods, unseemly gossip, and outside diseases. Conversely, citizens living outside of the Hygiene Hospital's walls were spared contact with individuals who lived and worked amongst the physically and morally contaminated.

The new hospital legislation also went to great lengths to establish a regimented schedule of daily activities within the hospital, with each activity signaled by a ringing bell. Meals were served according to a strict schedule (breakfast at 7 am; lunch at 10:30 am; dinner at 4 pm; and *café con leche* at 9 pm) with lights out and complete silence at 9:30 p.m. Visiting hours were held each morning between 7 and 9 o'clock. In what was likely an attempt to prevent contact between patients and their clientele, men were strictly forbidden to visit the women being treated at the Hygiene Hospital unless they were fathers, brothers, or sons who had requested special permission from the Hygiene Section. The legislation made no allowance for the possibility of the women having husbands. In light of the strict guidelines concerning male visitors, it is surprising that madams—certainly one of the most significant representatives of a life of prostitution—were permitted to visit their pupils on Sunday afternoons.[84] Though the rationale behind this concession was never documented, hospital administrators were surely aware that such regular contact would reinforce networks and relationships strained by absence or

[84] ANC/GG, leg. 43, no. 1840 (reglamento, 1880), "Reglamento para el Gobierno, dirección y servicio del Hospital de Higiene de La Habana."

outside influence. This regular interaction between madams and their pupils would later be seen as a threat to the Hygiene Hospital's rehabilitative mission.

While the 1880 regulation clearly filled a legislative void and helped clarify administrative and jurisdictional issues, it did little to alleviate concerns with the Hygiene Hospital's lamentable physical condition. Despite limited efforts to repair the extensive damage caused by the 1877 monsoon, it would be another six years before someone would initiate the massive refurbishment the facility so desperately required. [85] The man responsible for coordinating this monumental effort had already earned a reputation as a progressive and dedicated civil servant—Dr. Claudio Delgado. When Dr. Rafael Fleites died in March 1886, Delgado resumed his position as Director of the Hygiene Hospital.[86] Delgado's second term as Director (1886-1898?) would be remembered as the most transformative era in the Hygiene Hospital's four-decade history, as his expansive vision included a massive renovation of the hospital grounds and a total restructuring of the facility's internal operations. According to an 1888 report compiled by Delgado's chief administrator, Eduardo Crivell, which detailed the multiple reforms and renovations enacted under Delgado's direction, the primary mission of the endeavor was to "promote the highest degree of well-being for the disgraced women who take refuge in this

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[85] The Corregimiento approved a mere $1, 912.75 *pesos* to restore the water-damaged floors in the "Sala de San Bernardo," the "Sala de San Antonio," and the dining area. See ANC/GG, leg. 209, no. 11727 (hospitales, 1877), "Expediente y cuaderno de notas para mejorar el piso de las salas del Hospital de Higiene contaminado de madera."

[86] Ortelio Martínez-Fortun y Foyo, *Dr. Claudio Delgado y su aportación al studio de la fiebre amarilla* (Havana: Consejo Científico, Ministerio de Salud Pública, 1967), 18.

Hygiene Hospital, and to the extent possible during the time they reside in this Asylum, instill in these women habits of decorum and morality."[87]

After almost two years of lobbying for funding, Delgado eventually found a champion for his renovation project in Civil Governor don Luis Alonso Martín, whom he invited to tour the facility. Confronted with the ruinous state of the institution, Governor Alonso immediately approved the use of Hygiene Section funds for a four-month renovation to begin in December 1887. The project was quick and extensive and included the complete restoration of all ceilings, windows, and floors; and the construction of a large laundry facility, a preparation room for the patients' medicinal baths, and a hospital pharmacy. **[Figure 3.5]** On his tour of the grounds, the Civil Governor was especially horrified by the state of the women's rooms, which consisted of rows of rusty cots, a few broken bedpans, and dirty clothing hanging along the walls. He thus ordered that the broken bedpans be repaired and that forty newer beds and several large armoires be brought to the facility. The other beds were structurally reinforced and painted. Hospital administrator Eduardo Crivell applauded the efforts of the Civil Governor stating that "these poor women, confined until recently within uncomfortable, filthy, dark, and poorly ventilated rooms, now enjoy a well-being previously unknown to them, the majority now finding themselves installed with decency and comfort."[88] **[Figure 3.6]**

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[87] Eduardo Crivell, *Memoria presentada al Director del establecimiento Dr. D. Claudio Delgado sobre el estado del Hospital y reformas durante 1887* (Havana: Imp. "La Antilla" de Cacho-Negrete, 1888), 3. The original Spanish reads: "proporcionar el mayor bienestar a las desgraciadas mujeres que se acogen en este Hospital de Higiene, infiltrando a la vez en ellas, en cuanto es posible durante el limitado tiempo que ordinariamente permanecen en este Asilo, hábitos de decoro y moralidad."

[88] Crivell, *Memoria*, 6. The original Spanish reads: "las pobres enfermas que, confinadas hasta hace poco en incómodas, sucias, oscuras y mal aereadas habitaciones,

By the mid-1880s it was common practice in Cuba to segregate individuals confined in hospitals, prisons, and other public institutions according to race as a method of promoting greater internal order and hygiene.[89] Eager to avoid disorderly or unhygienic situations of any kind, hospital administrators took their cue from this established social thinking and segregated patients accordingly. **[Figures 3.7-3.8]** Despite the fact that room assignments within the hospital were determined by race—negras and blancas ate and slept in separate areas of the hospital—there were apparently attempts to provide all patients with the same basic amenities. **[Figure 3.9]** Other hospital policies and practices, however, reinforced the class system established for the world outside the Hygiene Hospital. Wealthy prostitutes wishing to secure private, and considerably more elegant, quarters now had the option of paying a daily fee of 25 *centavos* in order to occupy one of the hospital's reserved rooms. These reserved rooms featured modern luxuries not present in the communal rooms and were meant to "satisfy the greater demands of the women who occupy them." In order to provide an atmosphere that "breathes comfort and distinction," these rooms featured sturdy new beds draped with mosquito netting, freshly painted walls, nightstands, marble sinks with mirrors, modern lamps, colorful bedspreads, linen sheets, and feather pillows, many of which were donated by local madams. These were apparently a popular option for the hospital's more affluent patients and the number of reserved rooms was eventually doubled in order to

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disfrutan ahora un bienestar que las era desconocido, hallándose la mayor parte de ellas instaladas con decencia y comodidad."

[89] One contemporary source compared Havana's city jail, which did not segregate its prisoners, to the city prison, which divided its prisoners by race. The author concluded that while the former was susceptible to the outbreak of epidemics and disorderly conduct, the latter was characterized by "el mayor órden y aseo." Dr. Valespino Andres, *Higiene de las prisiones* (Havana: Imp. de Soler, Alvarez, y Compañía, 1885), 4-5.

accommodate a rising demand for more luxurious accommodations. Fees charged for the reserved rooms also provided the Hygiene Section with an additional source of income.

Delgado's personal pet projects included a drastic renovation of the hospital's central courtyard and the construction of a modern operating room on the premises. During his first term as Medical Director of the Hygiene Hospital, Delgado described the pitiful state of the hospital's garden, stating:

> The general atmosphere within this facility was lamentable and the interiors reflected a state of complete neglect. Piles of rubble covered in trash and weeds spoiled and obstructed the immense patio one encounters immediately upon entering the facility. Here, a miserable path of garden only identifiable by some roots and a few scattered shrubs; there, a fountain that sheds a few tears, perhaps remembering its sad history, and all around, the ancient corridors that appear to have gangrenous skin.[90]

In Delgado's opinion, an attractive courtyard area would not only significantly improve the facility's general appearance, but it would also provide the women with an area to enjoy the pleasures of nature. The transformation of the courtyard was executed according to the "strictest rules of aesthetics" (más exigentes preceptos de la estética) and involved repairing the interior sidewalks, planting a variety of tropical plants and flowers, and installing a new fountain. The Hygiene Section also provided eight benches for the women to sit and breathe the garden's fresh air. **[Figure 3.10]** One of the most significant additions to the courtyard at that time served a more purely practical purpose—the island's first modern operating room to conform to new international standards for

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[90] Crivell, *Memoria*, 16. The original Spanish reads: "Desconsolador era…el aspecto interior que presentaba ese local entregado al más completo abandono. Escombros hacinados, cubiertos de basura y de maleza afeaban y obstruían por todas partes el inmenso patio que al entrar se presenta á la vista. Aquí un mezquino rudimento de jardín, que fue y se conoce que fue por sus raíces y algunos dispersos arbustos, allí una fuente que vierte algunas lágrimas, recordando tal vez su pasada historia; alrededor los viejos corredores que parecen tener la piel esfacelada."

antisepsis and hygiene. This new operating room not only greatly improved the quality of surgical procedure for women at the Hygiene Hospital, but it would later earn Delgado recognition as Cuba's first aseptic specialist.[91] **[Figure 3.11]**

Delgado's ambitious plan to transform the Hygiene Hospital included not only the physical refurbishment of the facility, but also a total restructuring of the ways women spent their time while under treatment. One of Delgado's primary goals was to provide the women with "the means to comply with Christian precepts [by] facilitating opportunities for the women to congregate periodically and hear the word of God."[92] Crivell commented that prior to Delgado's decision to establish a hospital chapel

> nobody....had bothered to provide these unfortunate women—wayward sheep who have strayed from the Lord's flock and for whose physical assistance this Hospital was created—with the benefits of religious practice, which can have such a powerful and wholesome influence on the human heart. Nobody had concerned themselves with providing the sweet comforts of Religion and its sublime teachings, which now flow into the spirits of these poor wretches.[93]

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[91] Dr. Claudio Delgado's notoriety as a leading Cuban expert on clincial antisepsis would lead to his appointment as director of antiseptic surgical procedure at Jesús del Monte Gynocological Clinic, an institution he co-founded with noted Cuban surgeon, Dr. Gabriel Casuso. See Ortelio Martínez-Fortun y Foyo, *Dr. Claudio Delgado y su aportación al studio de la fiebre amarilla* (Havana: Consejo Científico, Ministerio de Salud Pública, 1967), 19.

[92] Crivell, *Memoria*, 19. The original Spanish reads: "los medios de cumplir con los preceptos cristianos, facilitándolas oportunidades de congregarse periódicamente para escuchar la palabra de Dios."

[93] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "nadie...había parado mientes en proporcionar a las desventuradas mujeres, descarriadas ovejas del rebaño del Señor para cuya asistencia física se creó este Hospital, los beneficios de las prácticas religiosas que tan grande y saludable influencia ejercen en el corazón humano: ninguno se había ocupado aquí en llevar los dulces consuelos de la Religión y las enseñanzas sublimes que de la misma brotan al espíritu de esas infelices."

Initially, Delgado found it difficult to bring his idea for a hospital chapel to fruition due to the scarcity of funds, so he appealed to prominent friends and local charitable organizations for aid in his project. Delgado was eventually able to secure monetary contributions totaling 327 pesos and several gifts of decorative items for the chapel, including a large crucifix, a candelabrum, and a large painting of Nuestra Señora de Lourdes (in whose name the chapel was eventually consecrated). Perhaps reflecting a broader perception that donating to the Hygiene Hospital was a gendered duty, all but eight of the 34 donors were women; namely, the Hijas de María del Sagrado Corazón, the Madre Superior de la Real Casa de Beneficiencia, and the Marquesa de Pinar del Río. With the financial and material aid of members of Havana's elite—and an additional sizeable contribution from Delgado himself—the small hospital chapel was finally finished in 1886 and thus became the symbolic link between the material and moral reforms that served as the cornerstone of Delgado's renovation plan.[94]

While religious instruction was a priority for Delgado, so was the need to instill in these women a work ethic and to provide them with some kind of distraction in order to prevent them from engaging in disorderly behaviors. Delgado recognized that as the particular nature of the women's illnesses rarely necessitated their confinement to bedrest, boredom was a primary concern for maintaining internal order. Crivell remarked that every time the women were without other occupation, they would gather in groups to gossip or wander aimlessly through the hospital corridors.[95] More than merely disorderly,

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[94] Crivell, *Memoria*, 19-25.

[95] Crivell, *Memoria*, 26. For the Costa Rican case, Putnam argues that the state hygiene apparatus—including the Casa de Reclusión and the Hospital de Profilaxis Venérea—reinforced prostitutes' social networks by continually bringing them into

these activities were considered potentially dangerous, as they involved "heterogeneous reunions" of women of differing classes and races that could potentially "pave the way for perverted imaginations."[96] Believing the women to be physically capable of engaging in small manual tasks that would occupy their time during their often lengthy internment at the Hygiene Hospital and provide them with the skills necessary to secure employment options outside their current profession, Delgado enlisted the aid of local nuns to instruct the women in domestic tasks, such as sewing and cooking.[97] The women eventually received the opportunity to begin voluntarily assembling boxes of matches. Initially "horrified" by the proposition, some women eventually accepted, stimulated at least in part by the chance to earn a small income.[98] Monies garnered from this labor were distributed on a weekly basis amongst participants and Crivell was pleasantly surprised to find that on several occasions the women surrendered their weekly pay to a fellow patient in greater need. Upon witnessing these displays of mutual support and friendship, he declared that "in addition to individual benefits for the patients, we also obtain the collective advantages born of a noble emulation of work, such as the mutual consideration engendered between the women, the habits of moderation and respect they

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contact with one another. See Lara Putnam, *The Company They Kept: Migrants and the Politics of Gender in Caribbean Costa Rica, 1870-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 96.

[96] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "siendo apropósito la heterogénea reunion de tantas asiladas para incitarlas a distraer su ociosidad, fomentando el vicio de jugar o en conversaciones nada eficantes que sirven para dar pasto a las imaginaciones pervertidas."

[97] Martínez-Fortun y Foyo, *Dr. Claudio Delgado*, 16.

[98] Crivell, *Memoria*, 26. The original Spanish reads: "pues, el horror que las infundía en un principio la sola idea de aplicarse a esa tarea, se ha convertido insensiblemente en amor a tan útil distracción."

contract and, finally, an unconditional submission to, and perfect observance of, the established regime."[99] According to Delgado's formulation, the women's ills were not limited merely to their physical ailments; therefore, an effective treatment program would have to incorporate spiritual and social components as well. This holistic approach to the treatment of Havana's hospitalized prostitutes was intended to establish an environment of order, respect, and discipline within the confines of the hospital while also ensuring the women's greater social utility upon their release.

The renovation of the Hygiene Hospital during the early to mid-1880s was considered an important step in the eradication of venereal disease amongst prostitutes. By transforming what had been a frightfully dilapidated building into a fully functioning and relatively ordered modern hospital, Delgado had greatly improved the facility's physical appearance and advanced its medical capabilities. Reflecting on these changes, Crivell noted that "the repulsive rooms of earlier times have thus been converted into a pleasant mansion uniting all of the principle conditions required by Hygiene."[100] **[Figure 3.12]** These physical and administrative advances not only ensured the hospital's internal

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[99] Crivell, *Memoria*, 27. The original Spanish reads: "además de los individuales beneficios para las enfermas, que anteriormente hemos apuntado, obtenemos también las ventajas colectivas que nacen de una noble emulación en la labor, de la mútua consideración que entre ellas se engendra, de los hábitos de moderación y respeto que contraen y, en fin, de la incondicional sumisión al régimen establecido y su perfecta observancia."

[100] Crivell, *Memoria*, 11. The table demonstrating monthly patient total published in Crivell's report was also published in the February 1888 issue of the medical journal *Revista de Ciencias Médicas*. See "Reforma del Hospital de Higiene," *Revista de Ciencias Médicas* (20 February 1888): 8. The original Spanish reads: "las repulsivas salas de otros tiempos [quedan así] convertidas en agradable mansión donde se encuentran reunidas las condiciones principales que la Higiene reclama."

order and function, but they were also believed to have helped attenuate the long-standing stigma attached to the facility. Crivell attributed the notable increase in the number of prostitutes arriving at the facility during the summer months of 1887 (averaging 66 women compared to 25 for the winter months) to the facility's revamped image declaring that

> little by little the very pronounced prejudices the women had against the hospital and the fear they experienced at the thought of being here, are disappearing; now, if not completely pleasant in general, as it never would be, at least we have observed that the women no longer resist being forcibly remitted to the Establishment for treatment of their ills.[101]

Despite the rosy picture painted by Crivell, however, there are later indications that even in these early years not all patients were content to spend their days sewing, attending Mass, and assembling boxes of matches. After all, and as we will discuss further below, the women's lives were also greatly defined by the excruciating and often ineffectual medical treatments they endured on a daily basis. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that in at least one case, Delgado received several death threats after refusing to bow to the will of a female patient demanding an early release from the facility.[102] Furthermore, critics would attribute the increasing numbers of female patients treated at the Hygiene Hospital during the late 1880s to the social and economic devastation resulting from almost twenty years of ongoing warfare on the island, rather than to the hospital's new flooring and improved public image.

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[101] Crivell, *Memoria*, 28. The original Spanish reads: "poco a poco van desapareciendo entre las mujeres que han de ser asistidas en este Asilo, las muy acentuadas prevenciones que tenían contra él y el miedo que las infundía la idea de permanecer aquí; que ahora, si no las es grato en general, como no ha de serles nunca, el ser conducidas forzosamente al Establecimiento para la curación de sus males, por lo menos se observa que no oponen ya resistencia."

[102] Martínez-Fortun y Foyo, *Dr. Claudio Delgado*, 17.

Time would prove that Delgado's was hardly a perfect system; yet, in the late 1880s he was considered—at least among medical and political authorities—to be a progressive physician and civil servant who made laudable contributions to the internal administration of an institution still cloaked in considerable controversy. While future generations of hospital administrators would sternly criticize the general administrative philosophy of the Hygiene Hospital during this era—an extension of their disdain for colonial administration more generally—the basic organizational principles of the institution remained largely unchanged over the next several decades. For his part, Delgado remained Medical Director of the Hygiene Hospital until 1898, the year of U.S. intervention in Cuba, when he decided to leave the island and return to Spain. Upon his return to Cuba in 1904, Delgado was swept up in the shifting tide of international medical research and joined his friend and colleague Carlos J. Finlay in the battle against yellow fever.[103]

Conclusion

Between 1875 and 1886, Cuba's regulatory system assumed the basic form that it would retain into the final decade of the nineteenth century. Under the guidance of Delgado's 1877 *General Regulation of Public Hygiene*, the central institutions and basic ideology underpinning the system were established and the requisite administrative staff was positioned (if somewhat precariously) according to specified roles. While the main administrative framework of the regulatory system changed relatively little during this period, it was by no means a static institution. Prostitutes, madams, and even Hygiene

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[103] Ibid.

Section employees continuously encountered ways to challenge and subvert the system, which, in turn, forced colonial authorities to reexamine the more problematic or untenable aspects of their regulatory policy. Certainly, colonial officials did not always encounter solutions for such complications, as the issues were not only difficult to address, they were also always changing. Administering the regulatory system thus proved a frustrating venture for colonial authorities. The financial benefits garnered from the regulation of prostitution did at least partially assuage the mounting sense of anxiety, disappointment, and frustration experienced by agents of the regulatory system. These financial benefits became especially attractive when colonial coffers began to run low following years of protracted warfare on the island. The ensuing geographic expansion of the regulatory system into the provinces during the 1880s was, however, also fraught with complications, as provincial authorities tended to operate according to local guidelines devised in response to the provinces' own particular prostitution-related issues.

Other elements of the system, namely the Hygiene Hospital, appeared to benefit greatly from the colonial state's efforts to shore up Cuba's corrupt and fiscally unsound pre-regulation policies. The transformation of the hospital from a dilapidated holding pen for ill prostitutes to a modern medical facility was certainly one of the great triumphs of late-nineteenth century Cuban medicine. Advances in administrative policy within the facility, were not, however reinforced by complimentary developments in the treatment of syphilis, and prostitute's lives and bodies where impacted profoundly by this limitation. Furthermore, the idyllic picture of communal harmony and goodwill described by Crivell is not entirely born out by later sources that describe significant tensions

within the facility. Prostitutes frequently undermined the supervisory and disciplinary intentions of the hospital staff by refusing to comply with the facility's strict guidelines concerning appropriate social interactions and who resisted the regimented nature of their daily schedules. As we will see in later chapters, the challenges of administering an effective regulatory campaign in Cuba only increased over the course of the next decades. The colonial government's continued focus on the administrative and fiscal elements of the regulatory system—as opposed to prostitution's impact on national morality, honor, and identity—was incorporated into the broader critiques of colonial governance that emerged in the late 1880s and early 1890s. In other words, and as we will see in Chapter IV, a rising disdain for the central tenets of the regulatory system under Spain developed alongside rising anti-colonial sentiment more generally.

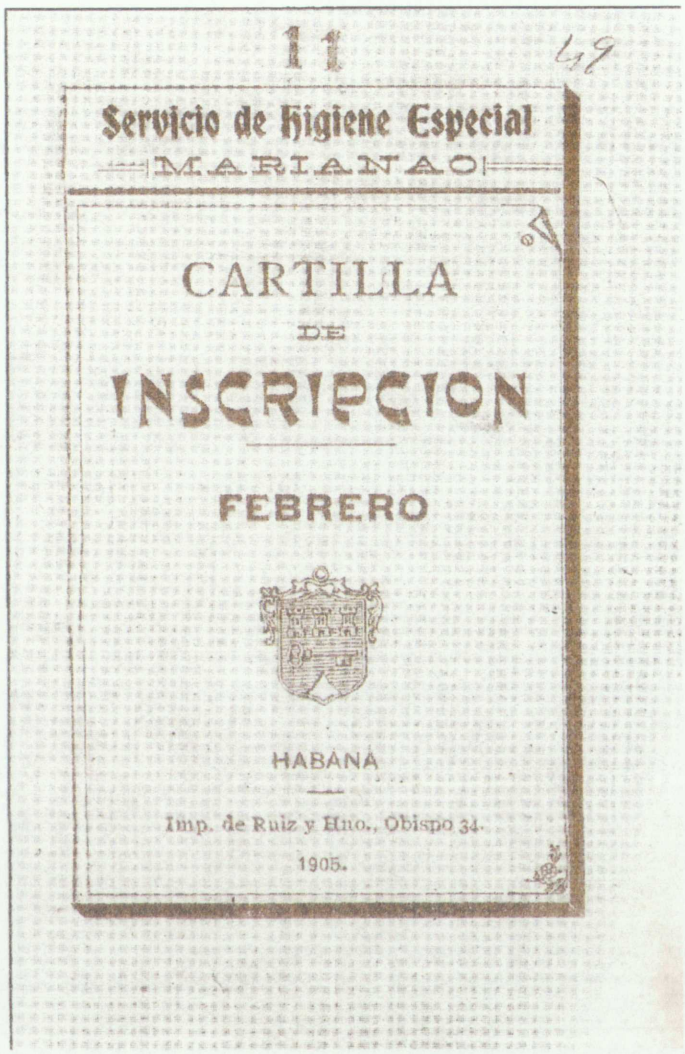

Figure 3.1: Cover of sanitation card from Marianao (1905) (from Dulcila Cañizares, *San Isidro, 1910: Alberto Yarini y su época* (Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 2000)).

Figure 3.2: Inside of sanitation card from Marianao (1905) noting the presence of a perianal scar in the examined prostitute (from Dulcila Cañizares, *San Isidro, 1910: Alberto Yarini y su época* (Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 2000)).

Figure 3.3: Dr. Claudio Delgado (from Ortelio Martínez-Fortun y Foyo, *Dr. Claudio Delgado y su aportación al estudio de la fiebre amarilla* (Havana: Consejo Científico, Ministerio de Salud Pública, 1967).

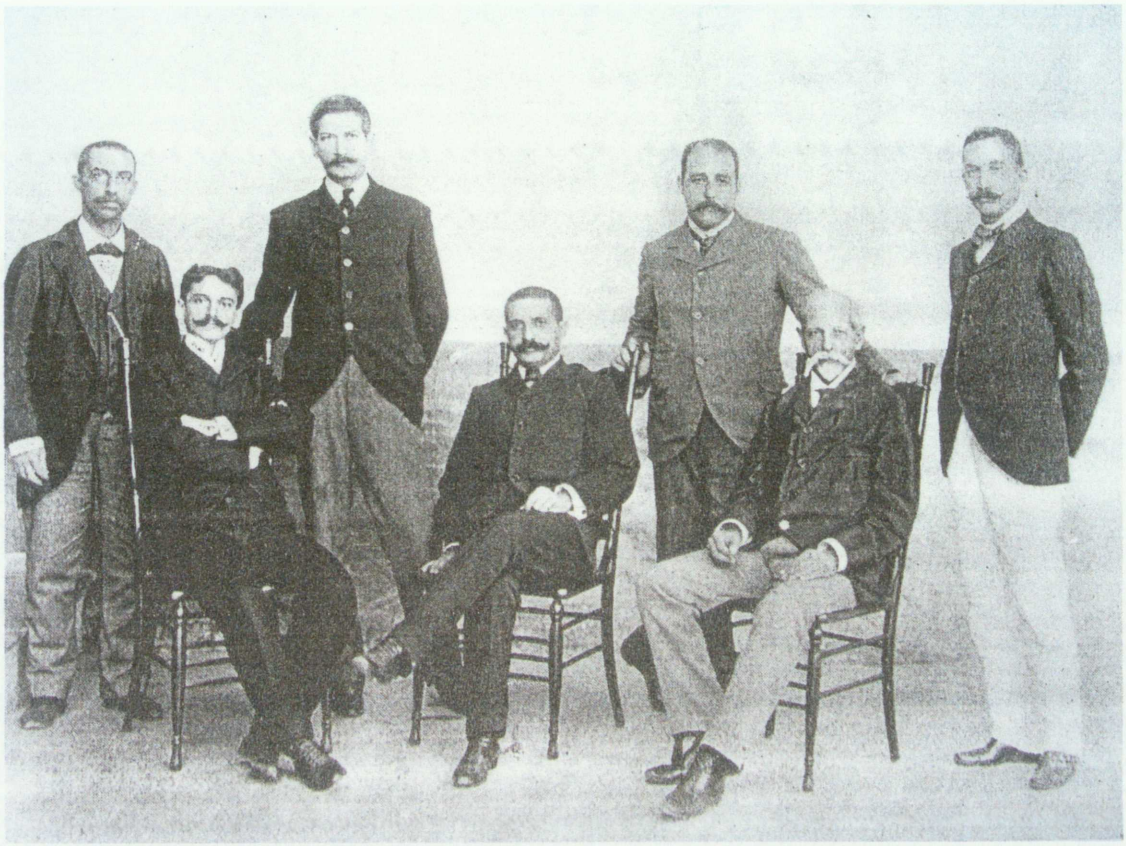

Figure 3.4: Members of Hygiene Hospital medical staff (from Dr. Ramón M. Alfonso, *La prostitución en Cuba y especialmente en La Habana: Memoria de la Comisión de Higiene Especial* (Havana: Imprenta P. Fernández y Ca., 1902).

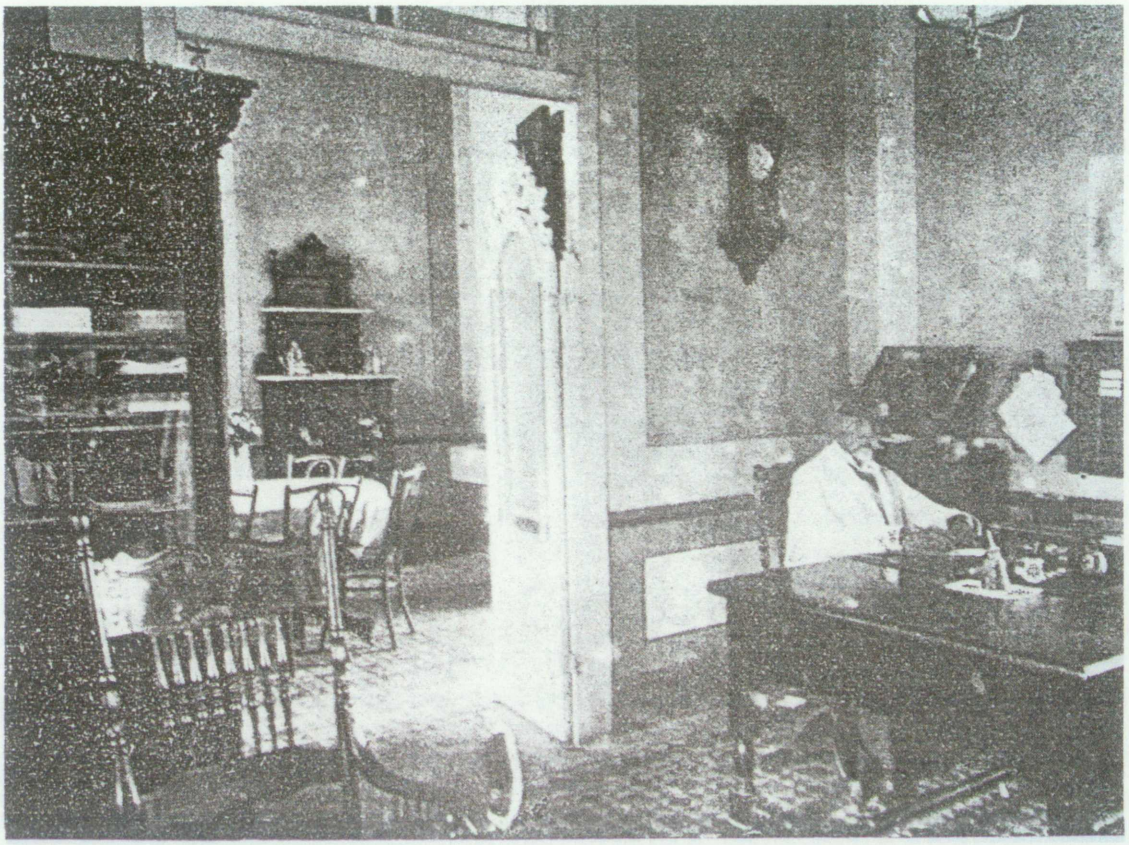

Figure 3.5: Office of Hygiene Hospital Director (from Dr. Matías Duque, *Memoria Informe de la Sección Médica de la Higiene Especial* (Havana: F. Xiques, 1901)).

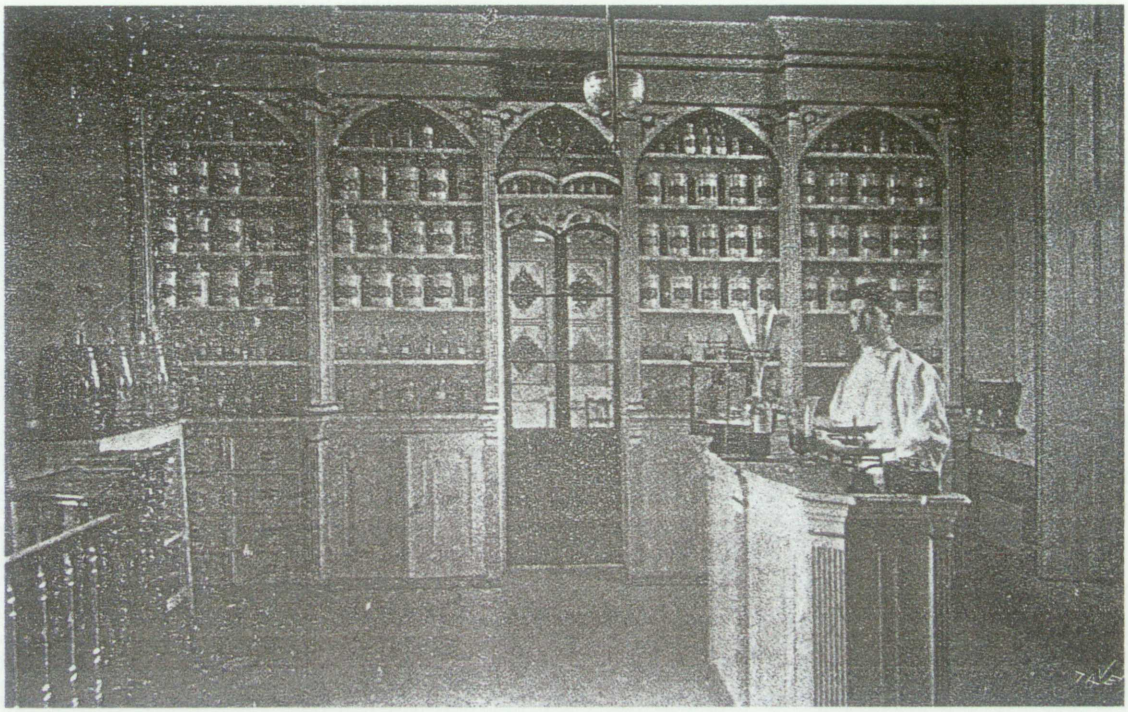

Figure 3.6: Pharmacy at Havana's Hygiene Hospital (from Dr. Matías Duque, *Memoria Informe de la Sección Médica de la Higiene Especial* (Havana: F. Xiques, 1901)).

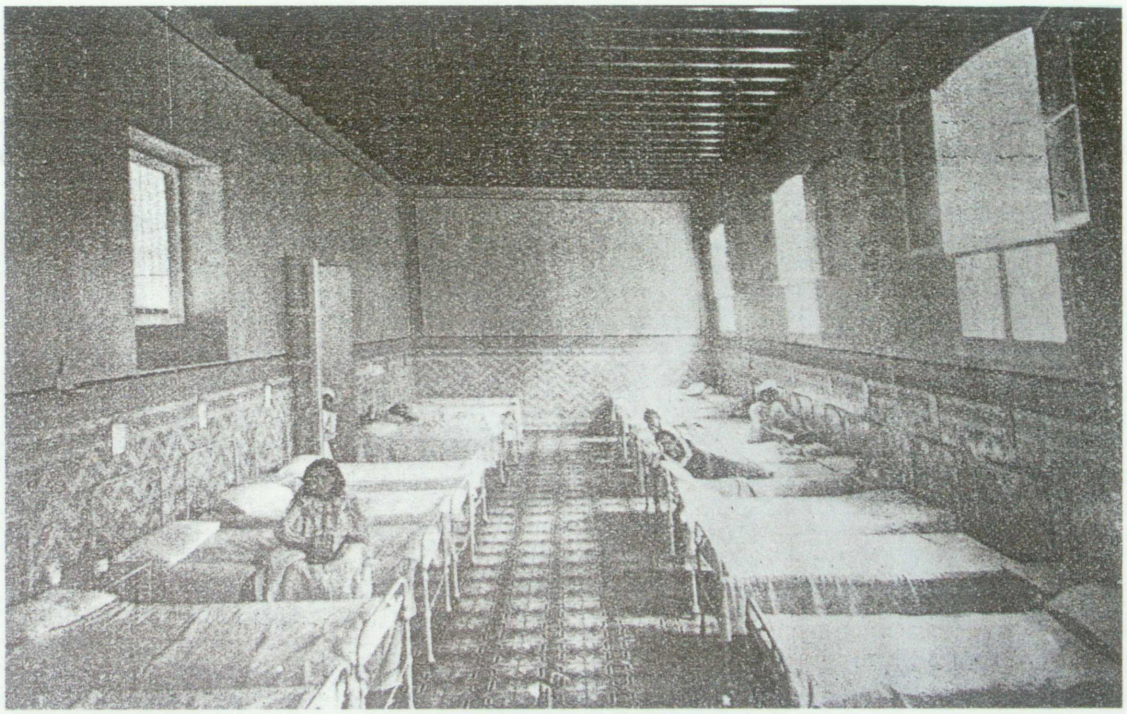

Figure 3.7: Sleeping quarters for white patients at Havana's Hygiene Hospital (from Dr. Matías Duque, *Memoria Informe de la Sección Médica de la Higiene Especial* (Havana: F. Xiques, 1901)).

Figure 3.8: Group photo of white patients at Hygiene Hospital (from Dr. Matías Duque, *Memoria Informe de la Sección Médica de la Higiene Especial* (Havana: F. Xiques, 1901).

Figure 3.9: Group photo of black patients at Hygiene Hospital (from Dr. Matías Duque, *Memoria Informe de la Sección Médica de la Higiene Especial* (Havana: F. Xiques, 1901)).

Figure 3.10: Group of white patients dining with black female servant attending and black female patients dining in separate room in background (from Dr. Matías Duque, *Memoria Informe de la Sección Médica de la Higiene Especial* (Havana: F. Xiques, 1901)).

Figure 3.11: Group of female patients in hospital courtyard with new operating room in background (from Dr. Ramón M. Alfonso, *La prostitución en Cuba y especialmente en La Habana: Memoria de la Comisión de Higiene Especial* (Havana: Imprenta P. Fernández y Ca., 1902).

Figure 3.12: Operating room at Hygiene Hospital (from Dr. Matías Duque, *Memoria Informe de la Sección Médica de la Higiene Especial* (Havana: F. Xiques, 1901)).

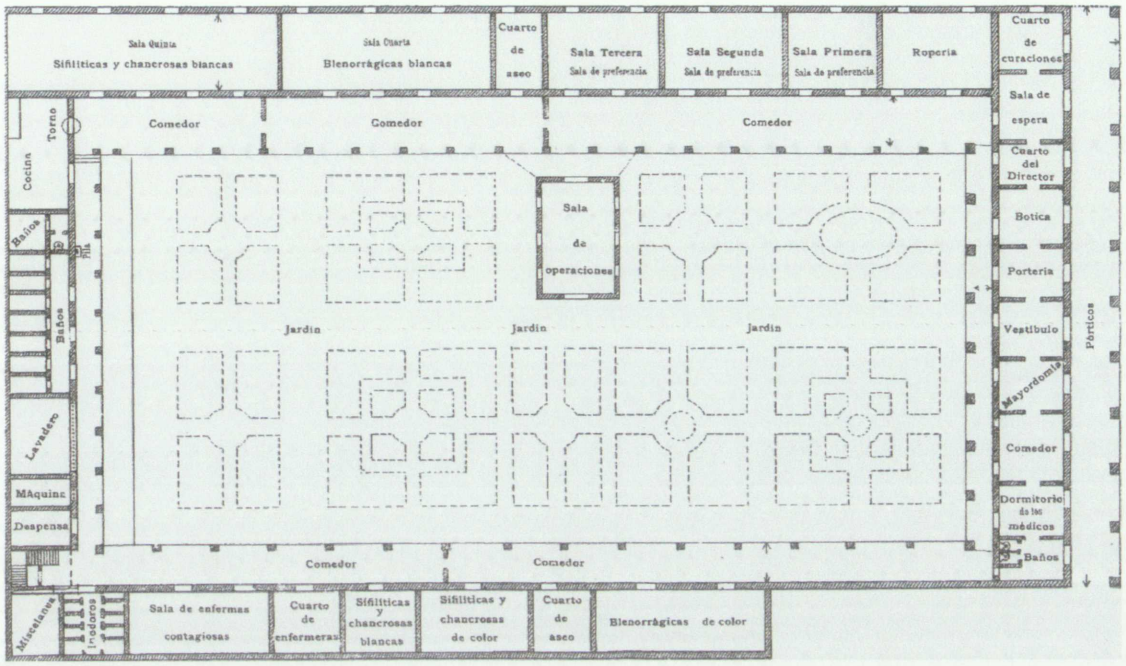

Figure 3.13: Floorplan of Hygiene Hospital following Delgado's extensive reconstruction efforts (from Dr. Ramón M. Alfonso, *La prostitución en Cuba y especialmente en La Habana: Memoria de la Comisión de Higiene Especial* (Havana: Imprenta P. Fernández y Ca., 1902).

CHAPTER FOUR

"Pearl in the Mud": Redefining Citizenship and Challenging Colonial Authority in Havana, 1886-1898

> Those ominous days of grin and bear it are gone, never to return.
>
> Perfecta la Jorobada, *La Cebolla* (1888)[1]

On the morning of 30 September 1888, Sr. Manuel Betancourt, Municipal Judge of the Cerro District, received the fourth issue of *La Cebolla*, a small newspaper dedicated to the plight of Havana's prostitutes. After reviewing its contents, his response was swift. The newspaper's editor, Victorino Reineri, and the director of the press La Tipografía, don Fernando Alonso, were charged with public scandal for publishing materials containing "phrases and concepts contrary to public morality."[2] The judge ordered an immediate halt to all printing of the newspaper and the seizure of every issue found in the capital city—especially the originals of articles titled "Martorell" and "Adiós." All responsible parties were likewise ordered to appear before the court.

Police Inspector don Antonio Pérez López and an accompanying officer from the barrio Tacón arrived at the main office of *La Cebolla* within hours. At the indicated

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[1] Perfecta la Jorobada, "¡Basta ya!" *La Cebolla* 1:2 (16 September 1888): 1. The original Spanish reads: "los tiempos ominosos de aguanta y calla pasaron para no volver."

[2] According to the Código Penal de 1900 the crime of "escándalo público" was defined as "la acción o palabra vertida en público que causa la ruina espiritual de los que la presencian o escuchan, dando motivo a que obren mal y piensen mal de otro." The code goes on to state that "los que expusieren y proclamaren con publicidad y escándalo, doctrinas contrarias a la moral pública, y los que exhibiesen estampas o grabados que ofendan a las buenas costumbres y a la moral." Rafael Roche, *La policia y sus misterios en Cuba* (La Habana: n.p., 1914): 243.

address, Inspector Pérez found a young boy holding several copies of the periodical in question. When approached by the officers, the boy fled, dropping thirteen copies of the newspaper. Upon entering the main office the policemen encountered don Antonio Parets. Informed of the court order, a frightened Parets explained he was only "accidentally" in charge of the main office in the absence of the director, don Fernando Alonso. Pointing to a nearby table, Parets avowed that a mere twenty copies of the issue remained on site. With Parets' permission, the officers conducted a thorough search of the premises and found no additional copies of the issue. Immediately suspicious, Inspector Pérez believed the issues had been removed from the main office to the home of the director, don Alonso.

The officers proceeded directly to don Alonso's apartment at #93 Prado, taking Parets with them. Outside the front door they discovered two employees of the press's distribution center standing guard over an open box filled with copies of the publication. A careful review of the box's contents revealed 1,870 copies of the issue, all of which were immediately confiscated. The originals of the articles "Martorell" and "Adiós" were not, however, among the confiscated copies. The resolute officers, now joined by the officer of the barrio San Felipe, continued to the final destination of their mission—the publishing house La Tipografía. Upon arriving the three officers encountered the press manager, don Joaquín Mascuñana, who stated that in accordance with standard procedure the issue had been edited the previous evening, printed, and then delivered to the press's distribution center early that morning. A thorough examination of the premises revealed no additional copies of the publication but did prompt Mascuñana to surrender the originals of the article "Martorell." The originals of "Adiós," he claimed, had been

destroyed. Thus, with the first stage of the investigation complete, Inspector Pérez remitted all 1,903 confiscated copies of *La Cebolla* to Judge Betancourt. Locating the elusive editor of the periodical, Victorino Reineri, and the director of the press, don Fernando Alonso, however, would prove more of a challenge.[3]

Between 1886 and 1898, Cuba underwent a profound political, economic, social, and demographic transition. The abolition of slavery in 1886 spurred massive foreign immigration to the island, urban areas witnessed a significant rise of labor activism and anarchism, Spanish political and moral authority in Cuba declined precipitously in the face of a third and final war for independence (1895-1898), and by the end of the century U.S. military occupation (1898-1902) brought the complete disintegration of Spanish authority on the island. This was a period of both profound changes and profound reflections, as both Cubans and Spanish colonial authorities contemplated the future course of the island. Prevailing questions concerned not only how Cuba could secure its independence, but also if Cuba was *ready* for independence. Battles over what Cuba was, and was to *become* in the future, during this tumultuous period took place not only on the battlefield with arms, but also discursively within published reports, books, and newspaper articles. The issue of prostitution continued to occupy a key position within these broader national conversations, as both pro-Spain and pro-Cuba factions mobilized around the issue as a symbol of either Cuban moral and cultural inferiority or of Spanish colonial exploitation and backwardness. Portrayed as either a cause or a symptom of colonial degradation, the Cuban prostitute continued as a polemical figure that embodied all of the inherent tension and anxiety that accompanied Cuba's political, economic, and

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[3] ANC/AH, leg. 584, no. 6, "Por Escándalo Público en el periódico *La Cebolla*."

social turmoil during this period. No longer merely a topic tossed about between colonial officials and select members of the medical community, a wider array of groups and individuals articulated their positions on the issue of prostitution in Cuba during the late 1880s and 1890s. Not until decades later when Cubans began to shape the parameters of a post-independence republican status would the topic of prostitution have such widespread salience (Chapter VI).

Céspedes and his Critics

In 1888, Dr. Benjamin de Céspedes published the first large-scale study of prostitution in Havana titled *La Prostitución en la Ciudad de La Habana.*[4] A several hundred-page tome, the work represented Céspedes' attempt to compile all existing data on the practice of prostitution in the capital city and functioning of the regulatory system. The work was also an endeavor to present Céspedes' ideas about the root causes of widespread prostitution in Havana and the effect of its practice on Cuban national identity. Much more than a scientific (and ostensibly objective) discussion of prostitution in Havana, Céspedes work was an unapologetically inflammatory character sketch of the island in which various sectors of society (namely ex-slaves and foreign immigrants) were fingered as the primary culprits in Cuba's declining social and moral standards. Produced at a time when the definitions of citizenship, as they related not only to individual and group rights but also to the future progress of the Cuban nation, were under intense scrutiny, Céspedes' work set off a firestorm of responses from groups and individuals who lambasted the book as a racist, biologically essentializing polemic. To be sure, the

[4] Dr. Benjamin de Céspedes, *La prostitución en la Ciudad de La Habana* (Havana: Establecimiento Tipográfico O'Reilly, 1888).

publication of Céspedes' work did not create new tensions within late-nineteenth-century Cuba, but rather the book ignited social tensions already simmering. Ultimately, Céspedes' attempts to place blame for widespread Cuban prostitution on the island's increasingly racially-mixed and immigrant-infused population reflected, and was refracted through, the broader class-based and racial anxieties that marked Cuban society more broadly during the late-nineteenth century.

Applauded by many scholars both within Cuba and abroad, Céspedes' book quickly became a best seller, prompting Havana publishing houses Tipografía O'Reilly and La Lucha to produce three separate printings of the book in 1888.[5] Céspedes' work received rave reviews in conservative Cuban periodicals like *La Lucha* and *El País,* as reviewers applauded Céspedes' efforts to uncover the root causes of Havana's moral decline. By extension, the editorial board of these periodicals also agreed with Céspedes' final assessment that the ultimate blame for widespread prostitution lay with individuals, groups, ideas, and practices infiltrating the country from without—not emanating from within the Cuban population itself. Céspedes' work also earned the praise of scholars outside of Cuba. In his massive tome titled *Historia de la prostitución en España y América*, Spanish historian Enrique Rodríguez-Solís, praised Céspedes as "a reputable physician and excellent scholar" (un reputado médico y excelente literato) and dedicated nine full pages of his book to a textual reproduction of a selection from Céspedes' work.[6]

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[5] Carlos Manuel Trelles, *Bibliografía cubana del siglo XIX, Tomo VII, 1886-1893* (Matanzas: Imp. de Quirós y Estrada, 1914), 94.

[6] Enrique Rodríguez-Solís, *Historia de la prostitución en España y América* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, n.d.), 249-257.

However, not everyone was happy with Céspedes' ideas, and members of those groups blamed for Cuba's moral decline dissected in minute detail offending chapters of *La prostitución en La Habana* within their own periodicals and publications.

One of the primary targets of Céspedes' book, the capital city's Afro-Cuban population, was roundly defended within the pages of the independent Havana newspaper, *La Fraternidad.* First published in 1883, the periodical was intended to serve as a public forum for the "defense of the general interests of the colored race" (defensa de los intereses generales de la raza de color). Various contributors to the periodical between August and December 1888, immediately following the publication of Dr. Céspedes' book, took special issue with the sixth chapter of the tome, titled "Prostitution within the Colored Race," ("La prostitución de la raza de color"). In this chapter, Céspedes placed the burden of Cuba's perceived moral decline on the shoulders of Cubans of African descent, stating that "in the lymphatic organism of Cuban society the suppurating abscess of prostitution is located in the customs of the colored race."[7] The anonymous author of one article published in *La Fraternidad,* titled "Hateful Injustice," decried Céspedes' "tremendous injustice with respect to the colored race," stating that his "vengeful accusation is directed against the entire black race…and not simply the corrupt portion…with the sole *patriotic* goal of degrading and insulting the colored race that has come to represent in these times the causes of all misfortunes, of all disorders, indeed of

[7] Dr. Benjamin de Céspedes, *La prostitución en la Ciudad de La Habana* (Havana: Establecimiento Tipográfico O'Reilly, 1888), 171. The original Spanish reads: "En el organismo linfático de la sociedad cubana, el abceso purulento de la prostitución, radical en las costumbres de la raza de color."

the very material and moral ruin and decadence that overwhelms this country."[8] The sense of irony communicated by the emphasis placed on the word "patriotic" within this published retort not only leveled a clear criticism against Céspedes, but also, by extension, against white elite society, which labeled the black race "as the font of all evils, forgetting that it was also the source of all prosperities."[9]

In his published response to Dr. Céspedes' book, published in *La Fraternidad* on 10 October 1888, H.B. Peña both railed against the stereotypical nature and inaccuracies of Céspedes' analysis of Havana's prostitution problem and decried the horrors of slavery that created the current social and economic marginalization of blacks in Cuba.[10] Discounting Céspedes' writings as the rantings of a member of the privileged class, Peña posed the rhetorical question:

> Why must the weak, the oppressed, the pillaged, the black race, carry the burden of causing prostitution in Havana? Because Dr. Céspedes belongs to the race of the strong, of the oppressors, of the pillagers, of the owners, of the children who steal victuals from the cooking pot, of the men who steal the wives of slaves, of the fathers of mulatas…of the gentlemen, of the lions.[11]

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[8] n.a., "Odiosa injusticia," *La Fraternidad* 31 (21 August 1888): 1. The original Spanish reads: "tremenda injusticia con respecto a la raza de color"…"inquinosa acusación se dirije a toda la raza negra, pues que toda ella, y no sólo la parte corrompida"…"solo con el *patriótico* fin de rebajar y afrentar a la raza de color que ha venido a ser en estos tiempos la causa de todas las desgracias, de todos los trastornos, de la ruina y decadencia así material como moral que agobia el país." Emphasis in original.

[9] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "como fuente de todos los males, olvidando que también fue origen de todos las prosperidades."

[10] H.B. Peña, "La raza negra cubana ante la ciencia, la experiencia, la justicia y la conciencia," *La Fraternidad* 36 (10 October 1888): 1

[11] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "toda la causa de la prostitución en la Habana, recae sobre el débil, sobre el oprimido, sobre el espoliado, sobre el negro; ¿por qué? Porque el Dr. Céspedes pertanece a la raza de los fuertes, de los opresores, de los expoliadores, de los amos, de los niños que sustraían las viandas del caldero, de los

Recasting blacks as contributors to—rather than detractors from—Cuban society, Peña concluded that "it is neither just, nor prudent, nor truthful, nor scientific, to amass insults against the unfortunate blacks, [who] bear no responsibility for the damages caused by slavery."[12] Peña's article ultimately turned Céspedes' argument on its head by stating that Cuban social and moral degradation was the result of decades of slavery imposed by a morally bankrupt white race, and not the result of any inherent degeneracy of the island's Afro-Cuban population. In short, Peña believed that members of Cuba's white elite were simply reaping the seed sown by centuries of exploitation and corruption. Outraged responses to Dr. Céspedes' book continued to appear within the pages of *La Fraternidad* into December of 1888. In that month, another anonymous article reaffirmed "the justified indignation of the colored race" in light of the fact that Céspedes had "essentialized an entire race" (generalizado a toda la raza).[13] After all, the author proclaimed,

> has the author not unilaterally condemned an entire race to eternal debasement, to eternal physiological misery? Has he not accused the *entire* race of being unrepentant, supposing it to be, now that it is free, more degraded, more sinful, [and] more covered in the quagmire of irredeemable degradation? In attempting to ascertain the physical constitution of the individuals of this race, has he not

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hombres que robaban las mujeres a los esclavos, de los padres de las mulatas…de los señores, de los leones."

[12] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "no es justo, ni prudente, ni veráz ni científico, acumular insultos sobre los desdichados negros, irresponsibles de los daños causados por la esclavitud."

[13] n.a., "Una carta y un libro," *La Fraternidad* (10 December 1888): 1. The original Spanish reads: "lo justificado de la indignación que la raza de color experimenta hacia los desahogos del autor de "La Prostitución en la ciudad de La Habana."

judged them to suffer an insatiable inclination toward vice and moral abandonment?[14]

By the following year, Havana's La Universal publishing house had printed the first manuscript-length response to Céspedes' tome. Penned by an author of Afro-Cuban descent, the book—titled *Whites and Blacks: A Refutation of the Book "Prostitution" by Dr. Céspedes*—lambasted Céspedes for the "great injustice" he had committed by "stamping the forehead of all blacks, who are also men, with the stamp of disgrace."[15] Lagarde further argued that, "it is [Céspedes'] sincere opinion that the black race is a…constant obstacle to the decorum and stability necessary to [form] modern institutions in these distant Spanish provinces of America."[16] Countering Céspedes' "pseudo-scientific" assertions, Lagarde posited that "there are no superior or inferior races [but] only races that have been held back, races that have been plunged into degradation, and steeped in servility."[17] Speaking to a collective oppression of which he was also a victim,

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[14] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: has the author not condemned No ha condenado con desenfado sin igual a toda una raza á eternal abyección, a eternal miseria fisiológica? ¿No ha lanzado sobre *toda* ella la acusación de impenitente, suponiéndola, hoy libre, más rebajada, más viciosa, más que nunca le estuvo, encenegada en el asquerosa lodazal de irremidible envilecimiento? ¿No ha pretendido deriver la constitución física de los individuos de esa raza, la que juzga invincible inclinación al vicio y al desenfreno?" Emphasis in original.

[15] Rudolfo Lagarde, *Blancos y negros: Refutación al libro "La prostitución" del Dr. Céspedes* (Havana: Imprenta "La Universal," 1889), 1. The original Spanish reads: "Grande injusticia comete el Dr. Céspedes…al sellar con sello de infamia la frente de los negros, también hombres."

[16] Lagarde, *Blancos y negros*, 3, 13. The original Spanish reads: "[E]sto es, su opinion profundamente sentida, de que la raza negra es un…obstáculo constante del decoro y la estabilidad necesarias de las instituciones modernas en estas apartadas provincias españolas de la América" and "Dr. Céspedes, muy ciego y…muy orgulloso con su semi-ciencia."

Lagarde cried: "We blacks have suffered every human setback, all the excesses of the thirst for gold, all the miseries of avarice, all the idolatries of *Dios vientre*! We blacks [are] victims of all the impatiences…of all the delusions and humiliations of a utilitarian morality!"[18] Although disgusted by its content, Largarde conceded that "[Dr. Céspedes'] book is not completely without utility [as it] has impacted the majority of a race, and planted many ideas that are now germinating in the souls, in the hearts of the black youth so full of willpower and profound faith [and] with a hunger for liberty, a hunger for justice, and a hunger for vindication."[19]

Havana's growing population of *dependientes* (semifree immigrant *peninsulares*)[20] also took offense to Céspedes book, especially to the eighth chapter titled

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[17] Lagarde, *Blancos y negros*, 14. The original Spanish reads: "[N]o hay razas superiores ni inferiores. No hay castas cuyo origin avergüenze. Sólo existen razas atrasadas, razas sumidas en la degradación, sumidas en el servilismo." Emphasis in original.

[18] Lagarde, *Blancos y negros*, 9. The original Spanish reads: ¡Los negros! los que hemos sufrido todas las contrariedades humanas, todos los escesos de la sed de oro, todas las miseries de la codicia, todas las idolatrias del *Dios vientre*; ¡Los negros! víctimas de todas las impaciencias, de todos los ajiotajes, de todos los delirios y vejaciones de una moral utilitarian…"

[19] Lagarde, *Blancos y negros*, 36-37. The original Spanish reads: "Pero el libro del citado doctor no ha sido inútil; el notable libro *La Prostitución* que le han inspirado, ha dejado su huella en la mayoría de una raza, y sembrado muchas ideas que han germinado en las almas, en los corazones de la juventud negra, llena de una voluntad única y de una fé profunda…que tiene hambre de libertades, hambre de justicia, hambre de reivindicaciones."

[20] According to Casanovas, "the great majority of *dependientes* were poor *peninsular* immigrants who lived and worked in very oppressive conditions. Most were employed in small stores and workshops, but some worked in tobacco factories. Dependientes usually lived at the workplace, often with some apprentices, slaves, or indentured Chinese laborers with whom they shared tasks and many of the same labor conditions…Even after the end of slavery in 1886 and into the twentieth century, this group of workers remained 'semifree' and endured very harsh working conditions." Joan

"Male Prostitution" ("La prostitución masculina"). Within that particular chapter, Céspedes insinuated that the close, all-male quarters in which most dependientes lived fostered pederasty and male homosexuality. Claiming to have evidence concerning "the entrenched nature of such crimes within workshops and establishments in which single men live communally and sleep under the same roof," Céspedes sounded the alarm that Havana was at risk of "returning to the shameful days of decadent Rome [where everyone] wallowed in the mud of those sodomitic cities documented within Biblical archives."[21]

Céspedes' evidence for his assertion concerning the prevalence of homosexuality and pederasty in Havana—two sexual practices which he felt little need to distinguish—lay with an isolated medical case involving a fifteen year-old dependiente treated in a colleagues' office for a syphilitic chancre in the anal region. During the course of his treatment for the chancre, and questioned by the attending physicians about the source of the infection, the teenager had apparently "confessed" to having had sexual relations with several of the older male dependientes who worked in the same clothing store.[22] While Céspedes never explicitly cited peninsular dependientes as the target of his accusations of

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Casanovas, *Bread or Bullets! Urban Labor and Spanish Colonialism in Cuba, 1850-1898* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), 61.

[21] Dr. Benjamin de Céspedes, *La prostitución en la Ciudad de La Habana* (Havana: Establecimiento Tipográfico O'Reilly, 1888), 192, 190. The original Spanish reads: "cuan arraigados se hallan estos vicios contra natura, en talleres y establecimientos frecuentados por hombres solos, y en donde se hace vida común pernoctando bajo un mismo techo" and "habremos retrogradado hasta los bochornosos dias de la Roma decadente, revolcados en el lodo de esas ciudades sodomíticas que nos describen los archivos biblicos."

[22] Céspedes, *La prostitución*, 192-195.

rampant pederasty, members of the Asociación de Dependientes del Comercio de La Habana interpreted his references to the "growing invasion of a revolting plague" (la invasion creciente de la plaga asquerosa) as an indictment of Havana's expanding male immigrant population and responded in kind.[23]

In 1889, the Asociación de Dependientes published a response to Céspedes book in a compilation of three articles originally printed in their official periodical, *El Progreso Comercial*. The anonymous authors of the articles—who signed their respective contributions with an initial—denounced Céspedes and attributed the "indescribable popularity" of his book to its "pornographic nature."[24] The various contributors to the pamphlet took tremendous offense to Céspedes' essentializing commentary that cast dependientes as morally corrupt pederasts. "For Dr. Céspedes," one author claimed, "everything imported into this country via European immigration is appalling, horrific, detestable, and worthy of hatred and complete condemnation."[25] In order to dispel Céspedes' depiction of dependientes' living quarters as seedbeds of male homosexuality, venereal disease, and pederasty, one author went so far as to write letters to six Havana hospitals requesting confirmation of the supposed "numerous and frequent cases of diseases originating from acts of sodomy" (numerosos y frecuentes hechos de las

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[23] Céspedes, *La prostitución*, 190.

[24] Asociación de Dependientes del Comercio de La Habana, *Folleto en refutación al libro que bajo el titulo "La prostitución en la ciudad de la Habana" dió estampa el Dr. D. Benjamin de Céspedes* (Havana: Imp. de P. Fernández, 1889), 9.

[25] Asociación de Dependientes, *Folleto en refutación*, 33. The original Spanish reads: "Para el Dr. Céspedes…cuanto se ha importado en este país por la inmigración europea, todo es atroz, espantoso, detestable, digno del ódio y de la reprobación más completes."

enfermedades que originan de la sodomía).[26] After receiving the responses to his query, the author pronounced that the Directors of Havana's principle Casas de Salud reported only ten such cases—three of which involved dependientes—in their combined four decades of medical practice. Significantly for the author, the Casa de Salud del Centro de Dependientes reported only one medical case relating to sodomy (fisuras del ano).[27]

Though certainly no true reflection of the prevalence or absence of male homosexuality within the dependiente population in Havana, this particular exercise was about meeting Céspedes on his own "scientific" turf. Having collected medical data discounting Céspedes' alarmist claims, the author could triumphantly proclaim: "as the evidence clearly illustrates…sodomy does not, in fact, reign supreme within the working class."[28] With tongue firmly planted in cheek, another contributing author basked in the newfound notoriety Céspedes book granted to members of the dependiente class, stating that

> only if our demoralization, lasciviousness, and obscenity were so pronounced, so scandalously notable, and so phenomenal, would we have deserved the honor of a book. [T]his [event] must surely indicate that we have crested the pinnacle of scandal, and having surpassed Paris, Naples, Rome, London, New York and the other great cities so universally notorious for their carnal disorders, we now receive the honor of a *literary monument* consecrated in our name.[29]

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[26] Asociación de Dependientes, *Folleto en refutación*, 36-46.

[27] Asociación de Dependientes, *Folleto en refutación*, 45.

[28] Asociación de Dependientes, *Folleto en refutación*, 36. The original Spanish reads: "Sin embargo, sucede lo contrario, como se comprueba evidentemente con los documentos que a este escrito acompañan. En el comercio de la Habana no reina la sodomia, como da por cierto el Dr. D. Benjamin de Céspedes."

[29] Asociación de Dependientes, *Folleto en refutación*, 26-27. The original Spanish reads: "Sólo alcanzando un grado máximo nuestra desmoralización, solo siendo escandalosamente notables, fenomenales, nuestra lascivia y obscenidad, habrían merecido los honores de un libro: no se concibe otra coasa; de manera que, según este

That same year, yet another enraged member of the immigrant working class, Pedro Giralt, published his response to Céspedes "pornographic" (pornográfico) and "extremely vulgar" (vulgarísima) book, which he titled *Love and Prostitution*.[30] A several hundred-page tome, Giralt characterized his book as an "energetic defense of the immigrant classes of America [who are] rudely attacked every day within American books and periodicals."[31] Denouncing the collective discrimination which he, and other immigrants to the island, suffered, Giralt proclaimed: "We Europeans have brought civilization to the New World [and] we continue to sustain it with our labors[; thus,] we have as much of a claim over America as the native-born son whose life we engendered."[32] The victim of "American fanaticism," Giralt claimed that Céspedes had wrongfully "deduced that Europeans are the *sole* originators…of prostitution in Cuba."[33]

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lógico razonar, hemos llegado al pináculo del escándalo, dejando a la zaga las renombradas escenas de París, Nápoles, Roma, Lóndres, New York y otras grandes ciudades que en punto a desórdenes carnales son de universal notoriedad, que no obstante su culminancia hayan obtenido la honoración de que se les consagre un *monumento literario*." Emphasis in original.

[30] Pedro Giralt, *El Amor y la Prostitución: Replica a un libro del Dr. Céspedes* (Havana: Imp. "La Universal," 1889), 2, 4.

[31] Giralt, *El Amor y la Prostitución*, v. The original Spanish reads: "una enérgica defensa de las clases inmigrantes de América, rudamente atacadas todos los días en libros y periódicos americanos."

[32] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "los europeos que hemos dado la vida de la civilización al Nuevo-Mundo, que lo sostenemos aún con nuestro trabajo, y que tenemos sobre América, por lo menos, tanto derecho como el hijo que en esta tierra hemos engendrado."

[33] Giralt, *El Amor y la Prostitución*, 2. The original Spanish reads: "El doctor Céspedes…tuvo la humorada de escribir un libro sobre la Prostitución habanera, y, como buen sectario de su causa, ha dado á su obra el giro y conclusiones que requería el fanatisismo americano. De tal libro había forzosamente de deducirse que los europeos

Furthermore, like the members of the Asociación de Dependientes, Giralt was outraged by Céspedes' claims about the prevalence of homosexuality and pederasty among dependientes and asserted that "Céspedes has done nothing more than impugn an entire social group for the isolated defects of a few individuals [and] anyone who confuses the part with the whole, the coincidental with the typical, is unworthy of entering the temple of science."[34] Viewing Céspedes' erroneous allegations as an assault on dependientes' heterosexual masculinity, Giralt came to their defense stating:

> The pure and burning passions are daily stoked in the dependiente who watches the most beautiful women in the city pass in the street, and as a witness to this pure image of desire, he can only be repulsed by the *charms* of a man. Before resorting to pederasty, he would satiate himself with a prostitute, and when that was not possible, he would secretly turn to masturbation, a despicable sin to be sure, but not nearly as abominable as sodomy.[35]

As honorable male laborers, dependientes only engaged in honorable (heterosexual) sexual practices, and "any [man] who was prone to [homosexuality], was surely not one of the honorable sons of work whose tired muscles yearned only for rest and the sobriety of *legitimate* pleasures."[36]

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somos los *únicos* causantes y odiosos responsables de la prostitución en Cuba." Emphasis in original.

[34] Giralt, *El Amor y la Prostitución*, 83. The original Spanish reads: "[Céspedes] no ha hecho más que imputar á todo un grupo social los defectos aislados de uno de sus individuos. El que confunde la parte con el todo, lo accidental con lo permanente; esta incapacitado para penetrar en el templo de la ciencia."

[35] Giralt, *El Amor y la Prostitución*, 84. The original Spanish reads: "El dependiente que vé todos los días pasar por la calle las mujeres más hermosas de la ciudad, alienta su ilusión femenil con un fuego purísimo y ardoso, y ante esa pura imágen del deseo, solo pueden inspirarle repulsion los *encantos* íntimas de un hombre. Antes que acudir á la pederastia irá á saciarse con una prostituta, y cuando así no pueda, apelará secretamente á la masturbación, vicio censurable en extremo, pero no tan abominable como la sodomía." Emphasis in original.

During the late 1880s, as Cuba entered a period of significant flux and change, members of Cuban society began to question the very nature of their society. Surveying the radical transformations wrought by abolition, war, and mass foreign immigration, Céspedes zealously blamed ex-slaves and foreign male immigrants for widespread social instability and moral degradation. Roundly denouncing these accusations, irate members of the black community and immigrant labor force similarly utilized the press as a forum to advance their own vision of the underlying ills plaguing Cuban society. This particular set of debates centered on the problem of widespread prostitution in Havana; yet, the conversation encompassed much more than that one issue. During this period of tremendous instability and dislocation, prostitution became a contentious social terrain upon which members of Cuban society debated appropriate social and sexual behaviors, the legitimate exercise of political power, the nature of cultural transformation, and even the parameters of national identity. By the summer of 1888, bookshelves and newspaper stands throughout the capital city were filled with copies of Céspedes book and the incensed responses of his critics, and by year's end the most fascinating response to date emerged from the least expected source.

"We the Horizontals"

Returning to the criminal case concerning the periodical *La Cebolla* introduced at the outset of this chapter, a complex convergence of events and concerns prompted Judge

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[36] Giralt, *El Amor y la Prostitución*, 85. The original Spanish reads: "Y los que se están propensos á eso, no son por cierto los honrados hijos del trabajo cuyo músculos fatigados solo aspiran al descanso, y á la sobriedad del placer legítimo." Emphasis mine.

[37] Eileen J. Suárez Findlay, *Imposing Decency: The Politics of Sexuality and Race in Puerto Rico, 1870-1920* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 9.

Betancourt's verdict in September 1888. Certainly, a newspaper advocating prostitutes' rights and lampooning corrupt government officials might be expected to raise a few eyebrows. Yet, as we saw in previous chapters, Reineri was not the first to broach these sensitive topics. Long considered choice fodder for social and political debate, both subjects received considerable attention at the hands of Spanish and Cuban intellectuals. At Reineri's hand, however, generalized complaints of systematic government corruption gave way to detailed accounts of specific cases of police abuses, including the names of offending officers. Scholarly ruminations on the dubious role of prostitution in a modernizing world were likewise replaced by rousing defenses of prostitutes as working-class heroines and fiery attacks on the arbitrary enforcement of contemporary prostitution legislation.

While the content of *La Cebolla* may have been alarming, its timing was no less a factor in its eventual condemnation. Though still teetering on the edge of promise, a post-war, post-emancipation Cuba seemed poised to shed the trappings of the colonial order and step into a new era. While the route to full independence and social equality was not yet clear, a number of signposts came into view in the late 1880s. In the exuberance following the complete abolition of slavery in 1886, various sectors of Cuban society began to advocate for a broad set of social and legislative reforms. Eager to placate their rebellious colonial subjects, the Spanish government responded to these demands by pledging to grant suffrage rights to males, approving the first labor association law in 1887, and allowing increased freedom of press. These important concessions—coupled with the energy derived from emergent labor movements in Europe and the United

States—would have a profound effect on Cuban society in general, and on urban laborers in particular.[38]

The years between 1887 and 1890 were marked by a series of important events for the laboring classes; namely, the first Cuban labor congress in the summer of 1887, a general lockout organized by the Cigar Manufacturer's Union (UFT) in 1888, and a series of "worker's dignity" strikes in several of the largest cigar factories. The achievements of these mobilization efforts led to a general rise in trade unionism in both Havana and outlying provinces as workers joined together to demand an end to racial discrimination and other workplace abuses. So forceful was this push for worker mobilization that few labor sectors were left unaffected—even toilet cleaners and stable workers began to unionize.[39] These efforts were, in turn, greatly aided by the ratification of a revised press law that removed censorship power from the Press Tribunal and the Cuban governor and instated a more complicated protocol for denouncing subversive publications and their staff members. Under the new law, crimes of press—now defined as infractions of the Cuban penal code—were to be handled within the regular tribunals and required that colonial officials denounce a periodical, editor, or journalist for a crime such as "escándalo público" (public scandal).[40] Thus, while not entirely without recourse,

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[38] In 1889, the Cuban anarchist newspaper *El Productor* published a general review of the accomplishments of worker movements in France, Spain, Belgium, and the United States during the previous year. See "El año 1888," *El Productor* II:32 (20 January 1889): 1-2.

[39] For further details on what Casanovas termed a "new phase" in Cuban labor mobilization during the late 1880s, see Joan Casanovas, *Bread or Bullets! Urban Labor and Spanish Colonialism in Cuba, 1850-1898* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), 182-198.

[40] Casanovas, *Bread or Bullets*, 178-179.

colonial authorities would find it significantly more difficult to censure publications deemed controversial.

The concessions made by the Spanish government in the late 1880s initiated a moderately reformist era that opened the door to precisely the kind of scathing social commentary featured in *La Cebolla*. Motivated perhaps first and foremost by contempt for legislation intended to limit the ability of prostitutes to publicly solicit clients, the articles published within *La Cebolla* also offered a pointed critique of prevailing definitions of citizenship, the rights of the laboring classes, and the methods employed to "modernize" the Cuban nation. On 23 September, for example, La Madrileña offered the following assessment of contemporary politics and society:

> We, the horizontals of this capital pay more tax to the State than is required to exercise the vote. Yet, even though we contribute more than the other classes to the nourishment of the Treasury with the sweat of our…brows, we are treated like slaves, as if we were outside of the law. That is to say, we are considered citizens with duties but not rights.
>
> The Municipal Mayor, who is old and so grouchy even a fly won't land on him, has ordered that we not exhibit ourselves in the doorway of our establishments. Is this fair? In what country are industrialists prohibited from exhibiting their merchandise to the public?[41]

Drawing on the emotionally charged discourses of a burgeoning Cuban labor movement and poking at the still tender wounds of a national abolition struggle resolved only two

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[41] La Madrileña, "Carta Abierta," *La Cebolla* 1:3 (23 September 1888): 1. The original text reads: "[L]as horizontales de esta capital pagamos más contribución al Estado que la que necesita para ser elector y elegible. Y, sin embargo, aunque contribuímos más que las otras clases á nutrir los fondos del Erario con el sudor de nuestras…frentes, se nos trata como si fuéramos esclavas, como si estuviésemos fuera de la ley. Es decir, se nos considera ciudadanas para cumplir deberes, pero no para gozar derechos…[E]l Alcalde Municipal, que como es viejo y regañón, no se le para una mosca encima; ha dispuesto que no podamos exhibirnos en la puerta de nuestros establecimientos. ¿Es esto justo? ¿En qué país se prohibe al industrial exponer al publico su mercancia?…."

years prior, *La Cebolla* was undoubtedly a product of the times. Yet, while the new dynamism of the Cuban political scene in 1888 allowed the seed of *La Cebolla* to be planted, its ability to take root would depend on both public support and governmental indifference. It would also require the endorsement of a publishing house prepared to gamble on a newspaper featuring an anarchist editor and a writing staff composed largely of female prostitutes.

Victorino Reineri found a willing collaborator for his venture in the Havana publishing house, La Tipografía. Better known for such scintillating fare as city council manuals and customs law handbooks, it seems an unlikely pairing.[42] Though only four issues of the newspaper were ever published, by late September 1888 at least three thousand copies of the four-page publication were being printed each week.[43] Priced at one peso per issue in Havana and 1 peso 20 centavos in the provinces,[44] the editorial board at La Tipografía may have seen *La Cebolla* as nothing more than a lucrative investment.[45] Alternatively, the editorial board may have hoped to capitalize on the recent

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[42] See, for example, Francisco López y Mayol, *Guía práctica de Ayuntamientos y Diputaciones* (Havana: Impr. la Tipografía, 1891) and Hortensia Hiráldez de Acosta, *La causa de la aduana: Conclusiones definitivas, acusación fiscal, informes de los letrados, sentencia, voto particular* (Havana: Impr. la Tipografía, 1900).

[43] ANC/DR, box 554, file 18, "*La Cebolla* 1:3 (23 September 1888)."

[44] According to a closing section of the 23 September issue of *La Cebolla*, Reineri was filling orders for hundreds of copies of the newspaper for supporters in Villaclara, Colón, Jovellanos, Cienfuegos, Jaruco, Marianao, and Cárdenas. Perhaps not surprisingly, these were all cities noted for prostitution. Ibid, 4.

[45] For comparison, the weekly, four-page anarchist newspaper, *El Productor* sold for 15 cents per issue in September 1888. A one-month subscription to the newspaper cost 50 cents in Havana or 60 cents in the provinces. See, for example, *El Productor* II:10 (6 September 1888): 4.

fascination surrounding the issue of prostitution prompted by Céspedes controversial book, which was indeed referenced twice within the periodical.[46] Whatever the motivation, the press agreed to sponsor Reineri's small newspaper and the first issue hit newsstands on 9 September 1888. Targeting a niche audience that included registered prostitutes and urban laborers with anarchist leanings, Reineri and his collaborators offered a view of the world of Cuban politics as seen from the red-light district.[47]

Before proceeding with a more thorough analysis of the content of *La Cebolla*, it is necessary to first address the sticky question of the newspaper's authorship. What do we really know about those supposedly involved in producing the newspaper? What was Victorino Reineri's role in the publishing process? Opinions on the periodical's authorship range from Beatriz Calvo Peña's contention that Reineri alone penned the periodical as a satirical anarchist response to colonial corruption on the island to María del Carmen Barcia Zequeira's speculation that wealthy prostitutes both financed the

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[46] The third issue of *La Cebolla*, published on 23 September, contained a brief, but explicit, reference to Céspedes' book. However, a lengthy poem titled "Soleares" published within the 9 September issue contained a stanza referencing "un 'dotor' [sic]/ Se puso a escribir un libro/Que habla de prostitución," which seems a likely reference to Céspedes. See *La Cebolla* 1:3 (23 September 1888): 1 and *La Cebolla* 1:1 (9 September 1888): 4.

[47] Reineri's sympathies with the burgeoning anarchist movement in Havana—primarily in relation to worker mobilization—are apparent throughout the publication. In light of the open antagonism toward prostitutes espoused in local anarchist newspapers at the time, it is fascinating that Reineri would attempt to bridge this gap. See, for example, *El Productor* 2:55 (14 April 1889): 1; *El Productor* 2:39 (17 February 1889); and *El Productor* 2:41 (24 February 1889). For a general history of the anarchist movement in Cuba, see Frank Fernández, *Cuban Anarchism: The History of a Movement* (Tucson: See Sharp Press, 2001).

periodical and submitted articles for publication.[48] A cursory examination of the periodical's content reveals that several articles are directly attributed to Reineri, while still others are signed IRENIER—Reineri spelled backwards—a purposefully absurd attempt to establish anonymity. Various articles attributed to female authors end with the words "Approved by Reineri" (Vto. Bno. Reineri) or "Published by Reineri" (Publíquese Reineri)—perhaps indicating that Reineri honored his promise to accept contributions from "anyone wishing to voice complaints and grievances against any of these *losers* who carry a sword in their sash and a baton with tassels."[49]

Even if *La Cebolla* was a collaborative project, were there any actual prostitutes involved? In the case of La Madrileña—frequently credited for her contributions to the newspaper—the biographical note accompanying her portrait in the 23 September issue is sufficiently detailed to suggest that a woman with that nickname existed. Furthermore, the language and tone of the articles attributed directly to Reineri are strikingly different than those attributed to women. Reineri's contributions utilize highly polished prose, sophisticated cultural and literary references, and forceful lines of argumentation. Contrastingly, street slang, grammatical and spelling errors, and sexual innuendo characterize many of the articles attributed to women. Here, too, philosophical musings

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[48] See Beatriz Calvo Peña, "Prensa, política y prostitución en La Habana finisecular: El caso de *La Cebolla* y la 'polémica de las meretrices,'" *Cuban Studies/Estudios Cubanos* 36 (2005): 23-49, and María del Carmen Barcia Zequeira, "Entre el poder y la crisis: Las prostitutas se defienden," in *Mujeres latinoamericanas: Historia y cultura, Siglos XVI al XIX* (Tomo I), ed. Luisa Campuzano. (Havana: Casa de las Américas, 1997), 263-273.

[49] *La Cebolla* 1:2 (16 September 1888): 4 and *La Cebolla* 1:3 (23 September 1888): 4. The original Spanish reads: "Toda la persona que tenga que exponer quejas y reclamaciones contra cualquier *perdío* de esos que llevan espada en el cinto y bastón con borlas…"

give way to ground-level accounts of specific incidents and issues. Notwithstanding these variations in style and approach, however, the newspaper's content presented a cohesive denunciation of a colonial order deemed exploitative and corrupt. Sounding a discordant note in the changing official discourses on urbanity, respectability, and even nationhood, *La Cebolla* sought to expose the "great abuses perpetrated against those here who have the misfortune of being honorable, decent, and hardworking."[50]

Through a careful textual analysis of each individual contribution to the periodical, as well as criminal documents relating to Reineri's eventual arrest not referenced by previous scholars, I find significant evidence that *La Cebolla* was a collaborative effort between Reineri and a specific group of prostitutes residing in Havana who found common ground in a desire to lampoon corrupt colonial officials. The variety of contributions that focus exclusively on contentious inter-communal dynamics within prostitute circles in Havana—a subject in which Reineri would hardly seem to have a vested interest—suggests that the periodical was also a forum for prostitutes to air their own specific grievances and concerns. In short, the multivocality of *La Cebolla* suggests a perfect marriage between the electric prose and editorial experience of an anarchist editor who found in the regulatory system a perfect symbol of colonial corruption and a community of prostitutes who found a vociferous ally who could put into typeset their grievances. Though it would be difficult to prove or disprove the identity of each of the newspaper's cited contributors, it is at least plausible that some were prostitutes. According to one of the few studies of literacy amongst prostitutes,

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[50] ANC/DR, leg. 554, no. 18. *La Cebolla* 1:3 (23 September 1888): 1. The original Spanish reads: "los grandes abusos que se perpetran en contra de los que aquí tienen el mal gusto de ser honrados, decentes, y trabajadores."

approximately 32% of the Cuban-born women were able to read and write.[51] Although this report does not provide information regarding literacy rates amongst foreign-born prostitutes, it nonetheless suggests that the newspaper's contributors—and, by extension, the audience—for *La Cebolla* could well have included prostitutes.

The Layers of the Onion

While the specific content of the issues varied by week, the general format of *La Cebolla* was fairly standardized. Each week the newspaper began with a forceful editorial denouncing colonial authorities as abusive and corrupt, especially in their treatment of prostitutes. Purposeful and incendiary, these opening pieces sought to educate the readership on its rights and motivate them to take direct—even violent—action in their own defense. Following these introductory remarks, a collection of humorous poems, pithy anecdotes, and scandalous jokes provided the bulk of the periodical's weekly content. Here the reader glimpsed a world turned upside down; where abusive policemen die at the hands of vengeful prostitutes who are, in turn, elevated to the status of saints. This canon of prostitute-saints—including La Madrileña, La Charo and Matilde la Rubia—was honored each week in a featured centerfold. Mimicking the style and symbolism of small portrait medallions popular with the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie, these tributes included a large-scale portrait of a prominent prostitute and a brief

[51] The data for this report was based on information gathered by the administrative staff of the "Quinta de Higiene" concerning the 744 registered and clandestine prostitutes treated at the facility between 1899 and 1902. Dr. Ramón M. Alfonso, *Memoria de la Comisión de Higiene Especial de la Isla de Cuba* (Havana: P. Fernández y Ca., 1902), 27-28.

biographical sketch extolling her personal characteristics.[52] The final page of the publication typically consisted of a review of local gossip and responses to incoming questions and comments from readers.

Despite adhering to a standard format, Reineri's editorial intentions were otherwise unconventional. He immediately announces the irreverent tone of his publication with the rather cryptic title—*La Cebolla: Organo Oficial del Partido de su nombre, Periódico Ilustrado* (*The Onion: Official Organ of the Party of the Same Name, Illustrated Newspaper*). Tipping his hat to the world of scientific knowledge, Reineri provides his readers with a small sketch of an onion accompanied by a brief definition of the word excerpted from the *Diccionario de la Academia*: "a plant the height of garlic, with hollow and plump leaves whose stem is swollen in the middle and ends in a spherical bulb, etc., etc."[53] Aside from this botanical reference—and the unmistakably sensual shape of the onion implied therein—Reineri offers few other clues into the significance of his chosen title. One possible explanation is that Reineri was referencing contemporary Cuban street slang. In at least one article, the adjective *cebolla* was used to compare clandestine and registered prostitutes, with the former declared "mucho más cebollas" than the latter. Considered within the broader context of the article as a whole, the word was apparently synonymous with scandalous, shameful, and/or dishonorable.

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[52] According to Rosario, "La Charo" Martínez, this mimicry of nineteenth-century portrait medallions was intentional. In her 23 September tribute to "La Madrileña," she stated: "Ahora que corren de moda los medallanes y que cada cronista estampa ó burila (como dicen ellos) la figura que exponen a la simpatía o a la admiración, permítaseme rasguear en cuatro trazos mi figurita elegida." *La Cebolla* 1:3 (23 September 1888): 1.

[53] *La Cebolla* 1:1 (9 September 1888): 1. The original Spanish reads: "una planta de la altura del ajo, de hojas huecas y rollizas cuyo tallo está hinchado por el medio y termina en una mazorca globosa, etc. etc."

Though it is unclear whether Reineri was reflecting or augmenting the idioms of Havana's red-light district, the word *cebolla* seems to have had particular resonance for those involved in the newspaper.

As for the reference to *La Cebolla* as the "Official Organ of the Party of the Same Name," there is no evidence to suggest that said party actually existed. By adopting a title phrase commonly utilized by publications linked to official political parties or labor organizations, Reineri may have hoped to lend an air of authority to his newspaper.[54] It is also possible that his intentions were much more tongue-in-cheek—insinuating that a party platform based on prostitute's rights was no less ridiculous than those of established political parties. Though we will return to this topic later in the discussion, it bears mentioning that Reineri would employ this same strategy months later when christening a new publication. The concluding two words of the newspaper title, "Periódico Ilustrado," were frequently linked to periodicals geared to a popular or working-class audience. By employing the term "ilustrado" in this manner, Reineri promised readers an easily accessible and titillating peek into the red-light district via a mixture of text and illustration.[55]

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[54] For example, the anarchist newspaper *El Productor,* published in the same year, carried the subtitle *Organo Oficial de la Junta Central de Artesanos de La Habana.* The common use of this title phrase apparently fell from vogue following U.S. intervention, and the "órgano oficial" was replaced by the less intrinsically partisan "órgano oficioso." See Rafael María Angulo, "Influencia política y social de la prensa en Cuba," *Diario de la Marina—Número Centenario* (1932): 84.

[55] Thank you to Dr. Elizabeth Hutchison for sharing her insights on title strategies utilized in working-class newspapers garnered from her extensive research on Chilean working-class periodicals.

Though the title of the periodical is open to interpretation, its purpose was stated clearly in the first issue. Claiming the "stadium of the press" as an appropriate forum to announce a new platform of prostitute's rights, Teresa Machete stated:

> The moment has arrived when we will no longer tolerate with our silence the unjust fines imposed upon us, at times because we refuse to submit to the lecherous whims of cops, and other times, because we don't hand over the money they ask us for…Today we won't grin and bear it, rather we will count on the fourth power of the State, the press, which is in charge of putting a stop to the ferocious instincts of our executioners…I guarantee you, my distinguished compañeras, that if you lend this publication the protection you should, all the injustices to which we are subject will end. Whenever someone tries to run you down, here you have at your disposal the columns of this newspaper to voice your complaints, with the security of knowing that you will be defended with energy, with the same energy with which our exploiters will be combated.[56]

Aside from establishing the principal themes and issues that would pervade the publication as a whole, this opening article is an attempt to incite prostitutes to collective action. Frequent utilization of the words "we" "us" and "our" throughout the piece underscore both the communal nature of their victimization and the potential force of their combined efforts. While the pages of *La Cebolla* are offered as the primary staging ground for this war against police exploitation, Machete also presents outright rebellion as a suitable method of protest. Evoking a language of warfare that would undoubtedly resonate with her Cuban contemporaries, Machete declared that "if, by chance, our

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[56] *La Cebolla* 1:1 (9 September 1888): 1. The original Spanish reads: "Ha llegado el momento de que no toleremos con nuestro silencio esas multas injustas que se nos imponen, unas veces por que no queremos ceder a los caprichos lujuriosos de un polizante, y otras, porque no le aflojamos el dinero que nos pide…Hoy ni se aguanta, ni se calla, que para eso contamos con el cuarto poder del Estado, con la prensa, que es la encargada de poner coto a los instintos feroces de nuestros verdugos…Os garantizo, dignísimas compañeras, que si prestais a esta publicación la protección que estáis en el deber de prestar, que he de acabar con todas las arbitrariedades que están cometiendo con nosotras. Cuando alguno quiera atropellaros, aquí tenéis a vuestra disposición las columnas de este periódico para exponer vuestras quejas, en la seguridad que sereis defendidas con energía, como con energía serán combatidos nuestros explotadores."

laments were not headed by those who have the duty to protect honorable citizens… we would rush to conquer with the force of reason and the reason of force, the rights they wish to deny us."[57] Though averse to such extreme measures, Machete nonetheless assures readers that their administrative adversaries would eventually have to "stop their arbitrary behavior and collapse at our feet like tamed mountain ranges, and they will even have to offer us money to get us to shut up."[58]

Complementing the sense of urgency communicated in Teresa Machete's contribution to the first issue of *La Cebolla*, La Madrileña's article titled "We Protest" ("Protestamos") pinpoints the main issue facing prostitutes working in Havana—the legal requirement that they maintain their homes completely closed at all times and not openly solicit customers. Colonial officials had expressed a concern with public solicitation as early as the 1850s, and legislation hindering the practice had existed since 1873.[59] According to the *General Public Hygiene Regulation* of 1877 still in effect at this time, any prostitute exhibiting herself in a doorway, window, open carriage, or theater balcony

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[57] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "Y si por casualidad nuestros lamentos no fueran escuchados por aquellos que tienen el deber de protejer a las ciudadanas honradas… correríamos presurosas a conquistar con la fuerza de la razón y la razón de la fuerza, los derechos que nos quieren negar."

[58] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "han de cesar en su arbitraria conducta y han de caer rendidos a nuestros pies como mansos cordilleros, y hasta nos han de ofrecer dinero muchas veces porque nos callemos."

[59] YUL/MA, box 82, folder 1652, Prefectura Principal de Policia, Havana, "Disposiciones sobre mugeres públicas desde el año de 1851," and *Reglamento Especial de la Higiene Pública* [27 December 1873], in Dr. Benjamin de Céspedes, *La prostitución en la Ciudad de La Habana* (Habana: Establecimiento Tipográfico O'Reilly, 1888), 86-88.

faced one day in prison or a fine of five pesos.[60] As we saw in previous chapters, prostitutes had long voiced disdain for any policy designed to restrict their visibility or mobility within the city. The motivation for the criticism was always the same; the women believed that the legislation impaired their ability to solicit customers and thus secure an income. The difference with La Madrileña's article lies in her attempt to frame the dispute not as an abuse of prostitutes but as an affront to honorable laborers. As she states, "*La Cebolla* protests with all its energy the Municipal President's arbitrary law, which requires that prostitutes keep their homes completely closed. That is iniquitous, that is unconstitutional. That is an abuse of unfortunate women who practice an *industry* sanctioned by a Law, and for which they pay an enormous fee."[61] Her indignation with regard to the unjust nature of the legislation was validated by Perfecta la Jorobada who was equally incensed with the arbitrary enforcement of the law. Echoing Teresa Machete's aggressive tone, Perfecta la Jorobada sounded a battle cry:

> Yes, an end to abuses and disgraces! No more robbery, no more pillaging. Get back bandits in frock coats! These should be our battle cries in the face of the criminal conduct of the Municipal Mayor, Commander and Chief of these hijackers who, baton in hand and sword in belt, leave us without even our nightgown by way of the unjust fines they impose upon us…Why would we tolerate with our silence the criminal conduct of this gang of thieves who, without

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[60] *Reglamento general de Higiene Pública para esta Isla* (Havana: Imp. del Gobierno y Capitanía General por S.M., 1877), 10.

[61] La Madrileña, "Protestamos," *La Cebolla* 1:1 (9 September 1888): 4. The original Spanish reads: "*La Cebolla* protesta con toda la energía que la caracteriza contra esa disposición arbitraria del Presidente Municipal, en la que se ordena a las meretrices que tengan completamente cerradas sus casas. Eso es inícuo, eso es anticonstitucional. Eso es un atropello contra infelices mujeres que ejercen una *industria* al amparo de una Ley, y por lo cual pagan una enorme contribución"

> reason or justification of any kind, are robbing us of that which costs us so many *wiggles*?[62]

Officers imposing fines on prostitutes continuously defied the central tenets of due process by refusing to call on witnesses to confirm the infraction. Even more frustrating was that police officers routinely enlisted the aid of young boys who would, in the officer's absence, monitor the brothels and report any legal violations. Perfecta la Jorobada accused the officer assigned to Bomba Street of this unethical practice, stating,

> This *guy* has a little kid, whom he orders to go through the streets in his district where there are houses of prostitution and see if any of them are leaning out of their doors. The kid goes around and those he sees and those he doesn't see leaning out of their door or with the door open, he writes them down on a piece of paper, noting the street and the house number. When the task is complete, the kid goes back home to his blessed father and turns in the list of the prostitutes who were or weren't leaning [out of their doors]. The father takes the list and, like a thug, steps out on the street and goes to the houses noted on the paper, informing the madams that they have received a fine. Naturally, the madams are surprised to hear that they have been fined without having committed an infraction.[63]

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[62] Perfecta la Jorobada, "Basta ya," *La Cebolla* 1:2 (16 September 1888): 1. The original Spanish reads: "Sí, ¡basta ya de atropellos y de infamias! No más robo, no más pillaje. ¡Atrás, bandidos de levita! Estos deben ser nuestros gritos de guerra ante la criminal conducta que con nosotros está siguiendo el Alcalde Municipal, General en Jefe de esos secuestradores que, bastón en mano y espada al cinto, nos están dejando hasta sin camisón, á fuerza de multas injustas que nos imponen....¿Por qué vamos á tolerar con nuestro silencio la criminal conducta de esa gavilla de ladrones que, sin motivo ni fundamento alguno, nos están robando lo que tantos *meneos* nos cuestan?"

[63] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "Este *gachó* tiene un chiquillo, á quien encarga que vaya por las calles de su distrito donde hay casas de meretrices para que vea si hay alguna asomada á la puerta. El chiquillo pasa revista, y á las que vé y á las que no ve asomadas á la puerta ó con la puerta abierta, las apunta en un papel, consignando la calle y número de la casa. Concluida la faena, se va el chiquillo para casa de su bienaventurado padre y le entrega la lista de las meretrices que estaban ó no estaban asomadas. El padre coje la lista, y con aire de perdonavidas, sale á la calle y se dirije á las casas anotadas en el papel, y les hace saber á las dueñas que han incurrido en una multa. Naturalmente, las dueñas se sorprenden al ver que se les impone una multa sin haber cometido ninguna falta." Emphasis in the original.

There were few means for a prostitute to protest these fines. Lamenting this lack of options, Perfecta la Jorobada stated that, "There is no explaining; the fine stands: and if she doesn't pay it, she has to go to jail or give the officer something to put an end to the matter, all because a little kid felt like telling his dad that So-and-So or What's-Her-Name had their door open or they were leaning out of it."[64] Despite the apparently hopeless nature of the situation, *La Cebolla* contributors repeatedly reminded their fellow compañeras of their right to petition government officials and voice their complaints. These petitions would, in turn, be published in *La Cebolla* in order to encourage fellow members of the "union" to take action.[65]

The fiery missives published by Teresa Machete, La Madrileña, and Perfecta la Jorobada, amongst others, communicated a message of empowerment to prostitutes via a language of community, collectivity, and collaboration. In short, these contributions call for group action in defense of prostitutes' collective rights. The actual composition of the community of prostitutes entitled to these rights was, however, much more limited than the egalitarian language of these writings implies. Three key words contained within La Madrileña's manifesto of 23 September reveal the basic requirement for membership in this new sisterhood of prostitutes: "We, the horizontals." A popular nineteenth-century euphemism for upper-class Parisian prostitutes of the *maisons de tolerance* (registered

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[64] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "De nada valen razones; la multa queda inpuesta [sic]: y si no la pagan, hay que ir á cumplir al Vivac ó darle algo al Inspector para que la cosa no siga, todo porque á un chiquillo se le ha antojado decirle á su papá, que Fulanita ó Menganita tenían la puerta abierta ó estaban asomadas á ella."

[65] See for example the euphoric article congratulating "La Charo" for her petition to the Civil Governor requesting an end to the abuse of prostitutes by colonial authorities. "Muy bien," *La Cebolla* 1:3 (23 September 1888): 4.

brothels), the term "horizontals" was more generally synonymous with a kind of prostitution aristocracy.[66] Considered alongside other contextual evidence imbedded within the content of *La Cebolla*—namely weekly centerfolds depicting the newspaper's principle contributors as white (perhaps even Western European) females adorned with various types of finery—La Madrileña's use of the term "horizontals" may have contained embedded racial, gender, and/or class-based meanings. Most explicit throughout the publication, however, is the assertion that Havana's "horizontals" all possessed government-issue registration cards. Ultimately, the contributors to *La Cebolla* defined inclusion and exclusion in terms of legitimacy relative to state mechanisms. According to this formulation, while registered prostitutes were automatically considered members of the new "party," unregistered prostitutes (namely clandestine and homosexual male prostitutes) were categorically excluded. Furthermore, only registered prostitutes could make legitimate claims against the colonial government, as only they adhered to the central tenets of contemporary prostitution legislation. Any rebellious activity emanating from non-registered prostitutes was thus labeled illegitimate and dismissed outright. For example, when reporting news of an uprising of prostitutes against an abusive madam in the city of Jovellanos (Matanzas Province), La Catalana first posed the rhetorical question: "Do they have registration cards?" As for the madam at the center of the mutiny, the author inquired: "Does doña Ignacia abide by the precepts

[66] Just one year following the publication of *La Cebolla,* the Medical Hygienist Dr. Joaquín Jacobsen utilized the term "horizontals," when addressing Cuba's prostitution hierarchy, stating: "En el grupo, algunos muy contadas, recuerdan el tipo de las famosas *horizontales*, tan bien descritas por Reuss entre otros, representando en la prostitución, la aristocracía. Dr. Joaquín Jacobsen, "Servicio de Higiene," *Revista de Ciencias Médicas* (5 June 1889): 129.

of the Hygiene Regulation?" After first charging the regional Hygiene Section in Matanzas to bring all parties to order, the author promised to investigate the matter further and report back to her "illustrious readers, those with registration cards."[67]

Crucial for defining membership and determining legitimacy within prostitution circles, the registration card was nonetheless a heavy burden for the women who possessed it. Exposed to more intense levels of police and governmental scrutiny than their clandestine neighbors, registered prostitutes faced a dilemma: "either turn in our registration cards to the Civil Government, stating that repentant of our way of life we wish to retire to a private life, or we should form a union in order to hire an intelligent lawyer capable of filing all the necessary lawsuits against the first inspector or officer who commits an injustice against us."[68] Either change professions or mobilize; these were the only two legitimate options for registered prostitutes hoping to change their circumstances. Retreating into a life of clandestine prostitution—though it might grant a reprieve from police abuses—was not considered an acceptable alternative. Indeed, the perceived impunity enjoyed by clandestine prostitutes was regarded as yet another symptom of systematic governmental corruption.[69] Barely containing her own bitterness

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[67] "¿Qué pasa?" *La Cebolla* 1:1 (9 September 1888): 4.

[68] Perfecta la Jorobada, "¡Basta ya!" *La Cebolla* 1:2 (16 September 1888): 1. The original Spanish reads: ó entregar las cartillas en el Gobierno Civil, haciendo constar que arrepentidas de nuestro modo de vivir, queremos retirarnos á la vida privada, ó bien debemos formar un gremio en debida forma, á fin de elegir un Abogado inteligente que esté dispuesto á plantarle todas las querellas criminales que sean necesarias al primer Inspector ó Celador que cometa una arbitrariedad contra nosotras."

[69] In his work on nineteenth-century French prostitution, Alain Corbin likewise notes the prevalence of bitterness and jealousy between the *filles en carte* (registered prostitutes) and unregistered prostitutes and even claims that "the latter were often the victims of their colleagues' denunciations." The primary motivation of this bitterness

on the matter, Perfecta la Jorobada inquired: "Aren't there more than twenty thousand women much more scandalous (mucho más cebollas) than us walking these unpaved streets whom nobody bothers? Why does this occur? Because these women don't have registration cards, they don't count as public women, and therefore nobody can bother them."[70]

Clandestine prostitutes were not the only group specifically targeted for exclusion within the pages of *La Cebolla*. In an article bearing the pejorative title "Los Maricones" ("The Faggots"), La Conga equates Havana's male homosexual prostitutes with individuals suffering severe physical deformity, including "children with two heads and only one eye, like the famed Cyclops…hermaphroditic infants… monstrous dwarfs, hunchbacks, etc. etc. etc."[71] Echoing the sensationalism of Dr. Benjamin Céspedes' study published the same year (see above), she remarks that these "unlikely characters" were sure to astonish foreigners unaccustomed to encountering males whose "gestures are timid like those of a young girl," whose "walk is audaciously erotic," and who "use

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stemmed, Corbin claims, from the fact that "in districts where the surveillance of the vice squad was inadequate, the *filles soumises* saw their clientele melt away, to the profit of the unregistered prostitutes." Alain Corbin, *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France after 1850* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 86.

[70] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "¿No hay por esas desadoquinadas calles…más de veinte mil mujeres mucho más cebollas que nosotras, á quien nadie molesta? ¿Por qué sucede esto? Porque esas señoras no tienen cartilla, no constan como mujeres públicas, y nadie por lo tanto puede molestarlas.

[71] La Conga, "Los Maricones," *La Cebolla* 1:1 (9 September 1888): 1. The original Spanish reads: "niños con dos cabezas y un solo ojo, a semejanza de los fabulosos Cíclopes… párvulos hermafroditas…enamos [sic] monstruosos, jorobados, etc. etc. etc."

feminine names [like] Princess, Mulata, [or] Mayorcan."[72] Labeling their sexual relationships pederasty, the author nonetheless concedes that as servants in prostitutes' homes they frequently proved "excellent cooks and very clean." Apparently keen to caricature homosexual male prostitutes, La Conga's primary goal was to enjoin local officials to censure them. Protesting both their presence and their lifestyle, she demanded: "Should the faggots of San Miguel and other streets…be tolerated by authorities? Can the law not correct that which nature has created in jest?"[73] Perhaps eager to demonstrate that she was not wholly incapable of compassion, the author clarified that she sought only increased regulation of homosexual male prostitutes, not their total elimination from society (after all, they made excellent servants!). Ultimate responsibility for the control of unruly citizens lay in the hands of the state, and to emphasize her point, La Conga mischievously threatened to offer any unresponsive government official as the jackpot prize in a raffle between Princess and Mayorcan.

The democratic language invoked in Teresa Machete's inaugural address or in La Madrileña's battle call thus belies the narrowly defined nature of their target audience.

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[72] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "sus ademanes son tímidos como los de una señorita; su paso es, audázmente erótico… Llevan nombres femeninos: uno se llama Princesa; otro Mulata; otro Mallorquina." Dr. Benjamin Céspedes made these same points concerning the behavior patterns of homosexual male prostitutes in his study of prostitution published that same year. See Dr. Benjamin Céspedes, *La prostitución en la Ciudad de La Habana* (Havana: Establecimiento Tipográfico O'Reilly, 1888), 190-192. His book is briefly referenced in an article published in *La Cebolla,* demonstrating that the newspaper staff was at least aware of its existence if not its content. It would have been difficult to avoid Dr. Céspedes' book, as high public demand prompted the publication of three separate editions in 1888. Carlos Manuel Trelles, *Bibliografía cubana del siglo XIX, Tomo VII, 1886-1893* (Matanzas: Imprenta de Quirós y Estrada, 1914), 94.

[73] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "¿Los maricones de San Miguel y otras calles…deben ser tolerados, por la autoridad?…¿La ley no puede corregir lo que la naturaleza se ha burlado en crear?"

Only those women possessing a government-issue registration card were invited to participate in the mobilization of Havana's tolerance zone. As both the primary victims of police oppression and the sole adherents of colonial prostitution legislation, registered prostitutes ranked themselves highest amongst Havana's urban marginalized. This elevated status entitled them to a voice in matters of local governance and control of those they deemed unruly or dishonorable. The challenge to colonial authorities was to uphold and enforce the regulatory system—insofar as it did not impede the ability of registered prostitutes to solicit customers—and failure to do so guaranteed a forceful denunciation in *La Cebolla.*

While membership in the union of legitimate prostitutes hinged on possession of a registration card and the appropriate gender characteristics, an ideal candidate for inclusion would also exhibit a number of ideal personal qualities. Prostitutes possessing these characteristics were celebrated in a weekly centerfold consisting of a large-scale illustrated portrait. Strikingly similar to one another in both form and content, these centerfolds communicated an ideal through symbols easily recognizable to most Cubans.[74] The prostitutes honored in these centerfolds—La Madrileña, Matilde la Rubia, and Rosario "La Charo" Martínez—are all presented as relatively unattractive, heavy-set, white females in their late twenties or early thirties. Modestly wrapped in traditional Spanish *mantillas* and wearing conservative jewelry and a serious expression, they could easily be mistaken for members of high society. Surrounded by symbols of the state—Havana's coat of arms to the left, a five-pointed crown overhead, and a bound volume of

[74] Unfortunately, the centerfolds are not attributed to a specific artist, but the similarity of style suggests that the same artist executed all three portraits.

the *Hygiene Regulation of Havana* to the right—they were also presented as model citizens. Pious, orderly, modest, and refined, these women seemed a far cry from the scandalous harlots of popular imagination.

At first glance—and considered within the frequently irreverent content of the newspaper more generally—the three centerfolds might easily be deemed ironic, farcical, or even mocking were it not for the serious tone of the brief dedication accompanying each portrait. In a tribute to Matilde la Rubia, Canducha lauds her compañera as "an angel in a human body." Describing her actions as "honorable, pure, and extremely dignified" Canducha praises Matilde la Rubia for offering aid to those in need, stating that "[i]nstead of squandering her earnings she opened a home and thus liberated from sin individuals seemingly predestined for suffering."[75] In a more biographical account, La Charo described La Madrileña as a generous spirit whose political consciousness was forged in the tobacco factories of Andalucía and Madrid. Committed to the overthrow of "all forms of tyranny…exploitation, abuse, or despotism" she had initiated this uprising of prostitutes and proven herself willing to "throw herself before authorities, demanding justice."[76] Generosity, selflessness, and a keen sense of justice were presented as the ideal characteristics for a prostitute. Though perhaps tempering reality with myth—Matilde la Rubia's halfway house may actually have been nothing more than a brothel—these tributes were crafted for a specific audience. Equal parts role model, benefactor, and

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[75] Canducha, "Matilde la Rubia," *La Cebolla* 1:2 (16 September 1888): 4. The original Spanish reads: "En vez de dilapidar las ganancias ha levantado un hogar y librado del vicio á seres que parecían predestinados al dolor."

[76] La Charo, "Patrocinio La Madrileña: Iniciadora de la huelga en el tercer distrito," *La Cebolla* 1:3 (23 September 1888): 1.

union leader, women like La Madrileña and Matilde la Rubia were offered as inspiration for a group of marginalized women forging a new identity as female laborers.

While newspaper contributors dedicated considerable attention each week to honoring heroines, perhaps even greater effort was expended detailing the abuses of enemies; namely, the Municipal Mayor (Conde de Ibañez), and his district police officers. Considered meddlesome, dishonest, abusive, and lazy, these men were regarded as government corruption incarnate by Havana's prostitutes. The Municipal Mayor, as one of the most visible and accessible representatives of government authority, was held primarily responsible for the unjust nature of prostitution legislation. Even more despised was the local beat cop—considered nothing more than a heartless lackey—who wielded the law to his own benefit. An almost permanent fixture of the tolerance zone, these notorious officers were referred to by nicknames like Juan-Blondie (Juan-Rubio) and Juan the Loser (Juan el Perdío) within prostitution circles. By lampooning these men in poems and stories, contributors to *La Cebolla* tapped a common pool of experience and resentment among prostitutes and gave a specific face to the specter of the corrupt, abusive colonial official.

The poetry submitted by *La Cebolla*'s contributors served as a textual forum for the public derision and denunciation of the Mayor of Havana and his police force. Bearing titles like "Soleares" and "Peteneras"—both references to Andalusian folk songs—these poems use biting sarcasm and an often-violent imagery to communicate deep anger in unequivocal terms. In a poem attributed to Lola la Sevillana, the author condemns the systematic exploitation of prostitutes, stating,

I entered the cemetery	En el simenterio [sic] entré
And told the gravedigger	Le dije al seporturero [sic]

That when the Mayor arrives	Que cuando llegue el Arcarde [sic]
Send him to hell for me.	Me lo mande pa [sic] el infierno.
A furious she-wolf	Arguna [sic] loba rabiando
Pulled out your entrails	Te jizo [sic] a tí las entrañas,
When you ordered them to fine me	Al mandar que me echen multas
If I lean out my window.	Si me asomo á la ventana.
Girls, get inside	Niñas, métense *pa* [sic] dentro
Here comes the Inspector	Que allí viene el Ispector [sic]
Look at the face he has,	Mirenle que cara tiene,
He looks like a kidnapper.	Paese [sic] un secuestraor [sic].
[...]	
Lean out that window	Asómate a esa ventana
And throw your arms outside	Y echa los brazos ajuera [sic],
The *cop* doesn't say anything	Que el *sorchi* no dice nada
If you hand him a coin.[77]	Si le aflojas la monea [sic].

Expressed in the familiar language of the streets, gruesome acts of vengeance executed by a bold protagonist unfold before the readers' eyes. In this world through the looking glass, police officers fall prey to the merciless prostitutes they exploit and the toss of a hard-earned coin sends the uniformed pawn on his way. Themes of revenge, death, and vindication were common. In a poem attributed to "Patrocinio" (a.k.a. La Madrileña), the deceased protagonist stands in judgment of the world's sinners:

Ten years after I am dead	Diez años después de muerta
And the worms have eaten me,	Y de gusanos comía [sic],
I will have to say that the Mayor	He de decir que el Arcalde [sic]
Has neither mother, nor...aunt	No tiene madre, ni...tia.
[...]	
The woman who turns out bad	La mujer que sale mala
Send her to Mount Mercy	Llévala al Monte Piedá [sic]
And the Mayor who is a thief	Y al Arcalde [sic] que es ladrón
Send him to be shot. [78]	Lo mandas afusilar [sic].

[77] Lola la Sevillana, "Soleares," *La Cebolla* 1:1 (9 September 1888): 4.

[78] La Madrileña, "Peteneras," *La Cebolla* 1:2 (16 September 1888): 4

Turning the tables on those traditionally sanctioned to determine guilt and innocence, the author promises that the sins of government officials would eventually be punished. While forgiveness awaits the prostitute, the corrupt Mayor will be justly executed for his crimes. Clearly not a message for the fainthearted, this poem may nonetheless have offered some consolation to readers troubled by their life circumstances.

For those seeking a less caustic response to official corruption, other contributors offered a more humorous commentary on the life of a prostitute. In the anonymous poem "Cantares," the author playfully laments the nonsensical system that shapes the contours of her life:

I went to the sea for oranges	A la mar fui por naranjas
A thing the sea doesn't have	Cosa que la mar no tiene,
And there I found a Mayor	Y allí me encontré un Alcalde
Who lives off robbery.	Que del robo se mantiene.
For a glance, a world	Por una mirada, un mundo
For a smile, a sky	Por una sonrisa, un cielo
To see a Count in jail	Por ver á un Conde en presidio
I would give what I don't have.[79]	Daría lo que no tengo.

There is an unmistakable sadness undergirding this poem. Resigned to a life of vain longings and frustrated dreams, the author goes in search of oranges in the sea knowing that she will never find them there. Despite her disappointment—and a stinging reminder of the Mayor's larceny—she nonetheless nurtures the hope that justice will someday be served. Proving that resignation comes in many forms, the dauntless IRENIER declares

[79] ANC/ALH, leg. 584, no. 6, "Causa criminal contra--Por Escándalo Público en el periódico *La Cebolla,*" 30 September 1888. An original copy of the fourth issue was not located; rather, I refer to the transcribed copy of the fourth issue included in Victorino Reneiri's criminal file, which does not indicate the issue's original pagination.

himself resigned to a life of willful harassment in a sarcastic love poem dedicated to Patrocinio:

To Patrocinio	A Patrocinio
To tell me to forget you	El decirme que te olvide
And not to love you anymore,	Y que no te quiera más,
Is the same as telling me	Es lo mismo que decirme
To leave the Mayor in peace.[80]	Que deje al Alcalde en paz.

Biting humor and subtle sarcasm were favored poetic devices throughout *La Cebolla,* but nowhere were they used to better effect than in the poems directed at specific police officers. Contributors frequently cast officers as lazy oafs who spent the better part of their day imbibing in alcoholic beverages at the local bar. In fact, IRENIER mockingly reported that one particularly infamous police officer's love for alcohol was seconded only by his love for imposing fines.[81] The preferred target of these incriminations was the Municipal Inspector known as "Salamanca" or "Caifás" who patrolled Sol Street in the heart of Havana's commercial district. Labeled a bully (abusador) who "had all the prostitutes in his district beset with unjust fines," La Charo reported that "Salamanca" had been hand-selected to serve as a police officer when the Mayor went from "gambling den to gambling den, and tavern to tavern looking for *chosen* men to make into Municipal *Inspectors*."[82] One anonymous contributor even hoped to turn the officer's famed affinity

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[80] ANC/ALH, leg. 584, no. 6, "Causa criminal contra—Por Escándalo Público en el periódico *La Cebolla,*" 30 September 1888.

[81] IRENIER, "A Patrocinio," *La Cebolla* 1:2 (16 September 1888): 4.

[82] La Charo, "Otro que bien baila," *La Cebolla* 1:2 (16 September 1888): 1 & 4. The original Spanish reads: "A las meretrices de su distrito las tiene acosadas con multas injustas…No parece sino que el Alcalde ha ido de garito en garito, y de taberna en taberna buscando hombres *escogidos* para hacerlos *ispectores* Municipales." Emphasis in the original.

for alcohol to his own financial benefit. Offering a "generous reward to anyone able to tell [him] how many bottles of brandy the 'municipal inspector' drinks each day" the author explained s/he "needed to know in order to see if it was worth opening a distillery in the neighborhood."[83] Having issued this request for information, the author playfully jeered,

Because the other day	Porque el otro día
They told me,	A mí me dijeron,
That the Conde de Ibañez's hired assassin	Que ese sicario del Conde de Ibañez
Is a drunk and a half.[84]	Es borracho y medio.

Sardonic, humorous, and ultimately hopeful, the poetry published in *La Cebolla* was the perfect mixture of all the ingredients that constituted the newspaper as a whole. Sandwiched between fervent calls to action and captivating tales of police entanglements, these poems spoke of everyday experiences in a language the readership would easily comprehend. While more formal contributions provided doctrine—defining issues, membership, and strategies of resistance for the union—the poems were an arena to vent frustrations. Entertaining, but also educational, they revealed the range of emotions motivating the actions and reactions of those seeking change. All of the contributions to *La Cebolla,* in fact, revolved around this basic theme—the urgent need for collective resistance to administrative corruption. Reineri and his collaborators were clearly treading (and not particularly lightly at that) in sensitive territory. Within hours of publishing the fourth issue of *La Cebolla* on 30 September, Reineri discovered that while

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[83] *La Cebolla* 1:3 (23 September 1888): 1. The original Spanish reads: "Se gratificará generosamente al que me diga cuantos garrafones de aguardiente se bebe al día el "ispector munecipal" [sic] que morodea por la calle del Sol. Necesito saberlo para ver si me conviene poner un alambique en ese barrio."

[84] Ibid.

mocking references to a local beat cop's predilection for cheap brandy might go unpunished, colonial authorities would not tolerate a detailed incrimination of high-ranking colonial authorities.

The End of the Onion

The morning of 30 September was not, in fact, the first time Reineri had been reprimanded by colonial officials. According to a letter dated 23 September published in the fourth issue of *La Cebolla*, the Civil Governor, don Carlos Rodríguez Batista, had already warned Reineri that he was treading on thin ice. After first emphasizing the generally (or perhaps newly) "benign" attitude of the government toward the press, the Civil Governor declared emphatically his intolerance of the "effrontery, corruption, the derision of all moral principles that some of the contributions to the newspaper symbolize."[85] He was particularly vexed by La Madrileña's "Carta abierta" lambasting the Municipal Mayor for his abuse of "horizontals." Thus, in honor of the "grave responsibility for civilized society" he bore, the Civil Governor fined Reineri $62.50 gold pesos to be paid in three days.[86]

Not easily cowed, Reineri's response was swift and vitriolic. In an editorial published in the 30 September issue of *La Cebolla,* he dismissed the charges stating: "Oh, morality!…The Governor does not realize that the Municipal Mayor, Martorell, Cubero

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[85] ANC/ALH, leg. 584, no. 6, "Causa criminal contra—Por Escándalo Público en el periódico *La Cebolla,*" 30 September 1888. The original Spanish reads: "La licencia, la corrupción, el escarnio de todo principio de moral que simbolizan algunos escritos de esa revista…"

[86] Ibid.

and Patata ate morality for breakfast one morning. I protest this fine, because it is unjust. I could not have offended morality because morality no longer exists in Cuba."[87] Adamantly refusing to pay the fine—preferring to spend the money on "chicken and rice at the home of don Agustin Arana"—Reineri acknowledged that his defiance would result in incarceration. Undaunted by the potential consequences of his actions, however, he mockingly agreed to serve time in jail after his "other *144* criminal proceedings were complete, which at six months each total *864* months in jail."[88] He furthermore challenged the Civil Governor to indicate the article's offensive phrases, doubting that a language "more suited to culture and decency" (más amoldado á la cultura y á la decencia) could be found anywhere. The fact that both Serapia Machete and Perfecta la Jorobada read the article without blushing proved the article's acceptability, as Reineri deemed them "virtue personified and amongst the most immaculate women in the first district."[89] The sense of irony employed here is undeniable. Aside from the reference to two women so closely linked to prostitution within the newspaper itself, the first district—comprised of the neighborhoods Angel, San Juan de Dios, Santo Cristo, San Felipe, and Templete—was notorious for prostitution. Reineri concluded his response to

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[87] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "¡Oh! ¡la moral¡…No sabe el Gobernador que la moral se la almorzaron una mañana entre el Alcalde Municipal, Martorell, Cubero y Patata. Protesto contra esa multa, porque no tiene razón de ser. Yo no he podido ofender á la moral porque la moral no existe en Cuba."

[88] Ibid. The original Spanish reads "pero le he de pagar después que cumpla mis 144 causas criminales, que á seis meses cada una importan 864 meses de cárcel." Emphasis in the original.

[89] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "Serapia Machete y Perfecta la Jorobada la han leido, y ninguna de las dos se ha ruborjada; y nadie podrá negarse que esas dos jóvenes son la virtud personificada y de lo mas pulcras [?] que hay por el primer distrito.

the Civil Governor's charges with a final sarcastic flourish: "Have I said something? Let's move on to something else."

For Reineri, moving on did not apparently entail a retreat from controversial topics. In collaboration with Serapia Machete, he had already laid the groundwork for his most scathing incrimination of a government official to date. The target of this editorial assault was none other than the notorious Municipal Chief of Police, don Enrique Martorell. Considered the "terror of guardians, coachman, prostitutes and other commoners," he was accused of "engaging in the lowliest and denigrating activities that the most degraded being could engage in."[90] A singularly unpopular individual, the obvious question was: "If the whole world despises him, how is he still Municipal Chief of Police?"[91] Serapia Machete and Victorino Reineri's answer to that question was revealed in a two-part editorial titled simply "Martorell." A sensational tale of political conspiracy and illicit sex that directly incriminated several high-ranking government officials, "Martorell" was certainly Reineri's most elaborate and polemical article to date. For these reasons, "Martorell" ultimately marked the beginning of the end of *La Cebolla*.

The short version of Serapia Machete and Reineri's scathing explanation for Martorell's seemingly inexplicable ability to remain employed was that "Martorell has a niece, whom…he sends along with his mommy to certain big wigs to implore them for compassion. Since they know how to play the part so well, they always get what they ask

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[90] "Martorell," *La Cebolla* 1:2 (16 September 1888): 4. The original Spanish reads: "Es el terror de los salvaguardias, de los cocheros, de las meretrices y demás gente del pueblo…De Martorell puede decirse que ejerce los papeles más bajos y denigrantes que puede desempeñar el ser más degradado."

[91] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "Y si todo el mundo le desprecia, ¿cómo es que se sostiene en su destino de Jefe de Policía Municipal?"

for."[92] The longer version involved Martorell first offering his niece's sexual favors to a Colonel and Lieutenant Colonel of the Spanish military as a means for securing a position as a Police Assistant in the capital city.[93] Having secured this position, he set his sights on replacing the Municipal Chief of Police, don Alejandro Elizaya, and thus immediately called on the assistance of his mother and niece. Clearly reveling in the sordid details, Serapia Machete and Reineri reported that the "little mother and the niece never rested for one minute: visits here, visits there…visits high, visits low, visits in front, visits behind; the result is that with so many goings and *comings* (This bit about comings bears no malice) they were able to secure the position for don Enrique Martorell."[94]

Despite the women's dauntless efforts, however, Martorell's incompetence quickly proved problematic. Faced with the loss of his cushy new job, Martorell resorted to his tried and true method of influence: his niece. No longer in the prime of her youth, however, the niece seemed unlikely to further his cause. Therefore, he enlisted the aid of another young woman whom he intended to introduce to don Cubero, the highly influential private secretary of the Municipal Mayor. His plan succeeded brilliantly and the elated Cubero "upon seeing that he could count on a beautiful young girl, cast aside

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[92]Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "Porque Martorell tiene una sobrina, que en casos de esta naturaleza, la manda acompañada de su mamita á donde ciertos y determinados persoges [sic] gordos á implorar misericordia. Como saber [sic] representar tan bien el papel, siempre consiguen lo que van a pedir."

[93] "Martorell," *La Cebolla* 1:3 (23 September 1888): 4.

[94] ANC/ALH, leg. 584, no. 6, "Causa criminal contra--Por Escándalo Público en el periódico *La Cebolla,*" 30 September 1888. The original Spanish reads: "La mamita y la sobrina no descansaban un minuto: visitas aquí, visitas allí..visitas por arriba, visitas por abajo, visitas por delante, y visitas por detrás; la cuestión es que con tantas idas y venidas [Esto de venidas no trae malicia] lograron la Jefatura para el Sr. D. Enrique Martorell." Emphasis in original.

all the antipathy he felt for Martorell and immediately went to see the Conde de Ibañez in order to ask that he not remove Martorell as Chief, because [he] was a good employee, dignified, upright, honorable and so-on and so-forth."[95] The Mayor finally acquiesced to his Secretary's request and Martorell continued to serve as Municipal Chief of Police. For their part, Serapia Machete and Reineri could only ask, "isn't it true that those who allow such a lowly, degraded and corrupt man as Martorell to occupy such an important position are just as degraded, lowly, and shameless as he is?"[96]

Having concluded this tale of intrigue and deception—and perhaps realizing that it would displease his readers—Reineri published an alternate ending to the story. Beneath a headstone inscribed with a horned beast, IRENIER announced Martorell's sudden death: "Today don Enrique Martorell ceases in his position as Municipal Chief of Police…Poor Martorell! To die so young! And at the hands of Serapia Machete! Good luck and take care of your niece for me. The funeral procession will depart from Bomba [Street]."[97] The dramatic murder of a notoriously corrupt police officer at the hands of a

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[95] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "Cubero al ver que podía contar con una buena hembra, echó a un lado toda la antipatía que tenía contra Martorell y enseguida se fue á ver al Conde de Ibañez para decirle que no quitara á Martorell de Jefe, porque Martorell era un buen funcionario, digno, recto, honrado y que matatín y que patatá."

[96] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "si no es cierto que los permiten que un hombre tan bajo, tan degradado y tan corrupto como Martorell ocupe un destino tan importante, no son tan degradados, tan bajo, y tan sinverguenzas como él."

[97] ANC/ALH, leg. 584, no. 6, "Causa criminal contra—Por Escándalo Público en el periódico *La Cebolla,*" 30 September 1888. The original Spanish reads: "Hoy cesa D. Enrique Martorell en el cargo de Jefe de Policia Municipal, y en su lugar será nombrado D. Francisco Alfonso persona dignísima por todos conceptos. Al fin el Ayuntamiento se ha convencido de quien es D. Enrique. ¡Pobre Martorell! ¡Morir tan joven y ¡¡¡ á manos de Serapia Machete!!! Que te vaya bien y cuídame la sobrinita. El duelo se despide en la Bomba."

prostitute—even if only fictional—provided Reineri with an appropriately shocking finale for his newspaper. Even the setting of Martorell's funeral provided scandal, as Bomba was one of the capital city's most notorious alleyways and a reputed den of vice, violence, and general disorder.[98] In anticipation of his almost-certain arrest, Reineri composed a farewell article titled "Adiós," announcing his intention to depart from Havana immediately.[99] Distance from the capital city would not, however, protect Reineri from colonial officials anxious to bring him to justice.

In the days following Judge Manuel Betancourt's 30 September verdict, colonial officials began a nation-wide manhunt for Reineri and don Facundo Alonso, the director of La Tipografía. By early October, police officials had apprehended don Alonso who testified that Reineri had fled to the eastern city of Bayamo. Judge Betancourt thus ordered that a copy of the fourth issue of *La Cebolla* be sent immediately to officials in Bayamo. Reineri was quickly located, arrested, and interrogated by local officials who were concerned primarily with determining the author of the articles published in the controversial fourth issue. During the course of their questioning, police were able to ascertain information regarding the elusive Reineri's personal background. In his signed confession, Reineri indicated that he was originally from Guriezo, Spain in the Northern province of Santander (now Cantabria). Currently residing in Havana, he declared that he

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[98] Just four years later, for example, Dr. Manuel Delfin offered the following assessment of life in the notorious alleyways known as Bomba and Cuchillo: "[S]on focos terribles en que los gérmenes de la corrupción moral corren parejas con los de la podredumbre material." Dr. Manuel Delfin, "Estadística demográfica del año 1892," *Crónica Medico-Quirurgica de la Habana* XIX (1893): 69-76.

[99] The exact contents of "Adiós" are unknown, as the originals were apparently destroyed, and the court-appointed scribe who transcribed the contents of the fourth issue for Reineri's criminal file omitted the contents of that article.

was single, 30 years old, literate (a key point for proving his involvement in the publication), and had previously been convicted for a crime of press.[100] Following weeks of interrogation, on 19 November, Reineri assumed full responsibility for all articles published in the fourth issue of *La Cebolla* and on 19 January 1889 he was convicted for the crime of "Escándalo Público" (public scandal). Though the terms of the final sentencing are unclear, Reineri would soon get a lucky break. On 23 February 1889, in celebration of his own birthday, the Spanish king, Alfonso XIII, pardoned all criminals charged with violations of the press law. Reineri was consequently released from prison having served just over four months.

After Words

Victorino Reineri's arrest and incarceration may have marked the end of *La Cebolla*—no known attempts were ever made to resurrect the publication—but Reineri's journalistic career continued long after his release from prison. Immediately after receiving his Royal pardon in Bayamo, Reineri apparently relocated to Santiago de Cuba where he quickly regained his reputation as a troublemaker. However, this time Reineri's antics appeared to be exacting a much heavier price. In early April 1889, Havana's anarchist periodical, *El Productor,* published a brief article—titled simply "Reineri"—detailing the events surrounding an attempt made on Reineri's life by an officer of the Spanish military. According to the article, Reineri had recently published a denouncement of "certain *irregularities* committed by a public functionary" in Santiago de Cuba's newspaper, *El*

[100] It is unclear if Reineri was referencing the fine he had received in early September 1888 from the Civil Governor of Havana, or if he was accused of a "delito de imprenta" at some other date.

Triunfo. Local witnesses reported that soon after the publication of this article, Captain don Pedro Garrido attacked Reineri in the street. Approaching from behind, Captain Garrido apparently bludgeoned Reineri on the head, sending him into the mud, and then struck him repeatedly with his fists. Reineri narrowly escaped and took refuge in a nearby blacksmith shop only to be cornered by Captain Garrido who now brandished a loaded revolver. A young passer-by, Antonio Reitor, encountered the dramatic scene and wrestled the firearm from the assailant, sending a bullet into the air in the process. Undeterred, however, Captain Garrido fell upon Reineri and might have killed him had a group of workers not intervened. The editorial staff at *El Productor* thus enjoined their readers, as well as other newspapers, to forcefully protest the incident in hopes that justice would be served.[101]

Approximately one month later, the pertinacious Reineri had established a new periodical in Santiago de Cuba with the lengthy and dramatic title *El Machete: Organo official del partido de su nombre y con más filo que una navaja.* (*The Machete: Official Organ of the Party of the Same Name and Sharper than a Knife's Edge*).[102] In his latest enterprise, Reineri revisited many of the general issues confronted in *La Cebolla.* In articles like "Today like Yesterday" ("Hoy como Ayer"), he took a strong stance against the war of independence asking: "What have we gained?" Answering his own question,

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[101] "Reineri," *El Productor* II:52 (4 April 1889): 1-2. The original Spanish reads: "ciertas *irregularidades* llevadas á cabo por un funcionario público." Emphasis in the original.

[102] The Biblioteca Nacional José Martí in Havana possesses only the 27 July 1890 issue of *El Machete*. At that time, *El Machete* had been in publication for 14 months and 113 issues of the periodical had been published. Reineri was released from prison in February of 1889, so he must have began publishing *El Machete* around May of 1889, approximately 3 months after his release.

he claimed that only slaves were true beneficiaries of the war effort, having gained their "humanity." For society as a whole he found only a militarized society and deplorable economic conditions. Most troubling, however, was the prevalence of administrative corruption and immorality, or "chocolate."[103] In true dramatic Reineri style, he declared that "[t]he abuses, the disgraces, the frauds, the malfeasances, the bribery, the smuggling, and the crimes of the oh-so-Spanish go unpunished."[104] He was especially disdainful of the Liberal Party whose representatives he felt "live in infamous conspiracy with the conservatives."[105] On a more positive note, Reineri gave strong support for Afro-Cubans and their *Centros de Asociación* claiming that the "colored race in Santiago de Cuba is distinguished for its refinement, its erudition, and for its resolute love of progress."[106]

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[103] Victorino Reineri, "Hoy como Ayer," *El Machete* (27 July 1890): 1. The terms "chocolate" and "chocolateros" were invoked commonly during the nineteenth century to refer to governmental corruption in Cuba. In his book *El país del chocolate,* F. Moreno lambasts all major sectors of Cuban bureaucracy—including Aduanas, El Banco Español, and the Ramo de Higiene Pública—for their corruption. In an especially vivid segment, he states: "todos, absolutamente todos los que son *gastrónimos*, pueden saciar sus aficiones con el sabroso *chocolate*; con la única diferencia de que unos lo toman en pocillos y por *onzas* y los otros tienen que contentarse con rebañar el *chocolotero*…¡Cuantos abusos, cuántas arbitrariedades y cuantas injusticias se cometen por el maldito chocolate!" Moreno, F. *El país del chocolate: La inmoralidad en Cuba* (Madrid: Imprenta de F. García Herrero, 1887): 78.

[104] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "Los atropellos, las infamies, los frauds, las prevaricaciones, los cohechos, los contrabandos y los crimines todos de los españolisísimos, quedan impunes."

[105] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "el partido liberal, porque sus directores viven en infame contubernio con los conservadores."

[106] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "la raza de color en Santiago de Cuba se distingue por su cultura, por su ilustración, y por su decidido amor al progreso." These Centros de Asociación were formalized Afro-Cuban societies often organized around specific occupations, cultural activities, or purposes. They gained influence following strict restrictions placed on traditional African *cabildos de nación* in 1877. Joan Casanovas states that these associations differed from *cabildos* in that "all members of

Perhaps not surprisingly, Reineri's opinions seemed to be ruffling feathers amongst local Conservatives and Autonomists.[107] In his own defense, Reineri agreed to alter the content of *El Machete* as soon as government officials agreed to "govern us better." Always quick to defend the popular nature of his publications, Reineri declared: "And, after all: What is it that I write? Is it not what the people say all the time in their homes, in the streets and everywhere?...If what I say were a lie, the people would not read *El Machete*, and *El Machete* would die."[108] By July 1890, Reineri had published 113 issues of his contentious new periodical and was apparently still relishing his rabble-rouser status.[109]

As for the women who supposedly helped co-author *La Cebolla* during its brief existence, we may never know what became of them. In Bayamo, Reineri assumed total responsibility for the articles published in the fourth issue of *La Cebolla*. Only one article

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the black community could join, regardless of language group or place of birth, and their formal objective was to promote European culture among Afrocubans." Casanovas, *Bread or Bullets*, 69. See also Alejandro de la Fuente, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 161-171 and Robert L. Paquette, *Sugar is Made with Blood: The Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict between Empires over Slavery in Cuba* (Middleton, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 125-126

[107] Following ratification of the Treaty of Zanjón in 1878, creole elites in Cuba eager to assert themselves politically fractured into two main parties, the Liberal (Autonomist) party and the Conservative Partido Unión Constitucional. The former found a solution to their discontent in reformism and the latter upheld integrationism. The two sides, however, shared a total disdain for the insurgent separatists and a basic belief in the legitimacy of the Spanish colonial regime. Louis A. Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995): 139-143.

[108] Victorino Reineri, *El Machete* (27 July 1890): 2. The original Spanish reads: "Y después de todo: ¿Qué es lo que yo escribo? ¿No es lo mismo que lo que el pueblo dice a todas horas en su casa, en la calle y en todas partes?...Si lo que yo digo fuera mentira, el pueblo no leería *El Machete*, y *El Machete* moriría entonces."

[109] An investigation of archival holding in Santiago de Cuba might well provide further information on Victorino Reineri and *El Machete* after July 1890.

in the fourth issue was in fact attributed to a female author—Serapia Machete. Might this indicate that Reineri and Serapia Machete were one and the same, or was Reineri perhaps protecting his collaborators? As authorities were solely (or at least primarily) concerned with assigning blame for the content of the fourth issue, Reineri was not required to testify about the authorship of the other three issues. Thus, Reineri never explicitly confirmed or denied the involvement of prostitutes in the publication of *La Cebolla* nor offered any further information concerning the specific women cited within the newspaper. With only a few nicknames as evidence, it would be almost impossible to trace any of these women's histories. In fact, Rosario "La Charo" Martínez was the only full name ever printed in *La Cebolla* and a review of over one-thousand police, court, and hospital records provided no leads on her life.[110] It is interesting to note, however, that in May of 1897 a madam named doña Antonia "La Madrileña" Pérez Secades, was cited in a bizarre poisoning case involving two prostitutes working in her *casa de citas* (hotel where rooms are rented by the hour) in Matanzas.[111] According to police records, doña Ana Milian, a seventy-seven year old widow from Salamanca, Spain arrived at the brothel she had only recently established to find that three of her prostitutes were violently ill. When the doctor arrived he verified that the women had indeed ingested an unknown toxin. According to the victim's own testimony, at around seven-thirty the previous evening, the defendants walked past the *casa de citas* owned by La Madrileña at

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[110] The 1,080 archival documents utilized in this study are filed in a database that includes an alphabetical listing of all women cited, including any known nicknames.

[111] According to the records of the Negociado de Orden Público y Policia, doña Antonia "La Madrileña" Pérez also owned a *casa de citas* at Daoiz #11 in Matanzas. APHM, N.O.P.P, leg. 3, exp. 341.

Santa Teresa #34. Upon passing the house, the *parda* Bernardina Rodríguez called them over to a window where she stood, claiming she wished to speak with them. After a brief conversation, Rodríguez offered the women some wine, which they accepted. Within half an hour all three women were overcome with violent attacks of vomiting. Officials inspected La Madrileña's house and confiscated several bottles for further inspection. La Madrileña, Rodríguez, and the house servant, Julio Morejón, were all arrested in connection with the case.[112] If La Madrileña was in fact convicted for the poisoning of doña Milian's tenants, however, she apparently served only a couple of months in jail. By August of 1897 she had tangled with the Hygiene Section for failure to pay the monthly fee for a brothel located at #23 Tirry in Matanzas.[113] Whether or not this defiant madam was the notorious La Madrileña of *La Cebolla* fame is purely a matter of speculation.

During its brief existence, *La Cebolla* tapped into new conversations concerning expanding definitions of citizenship and shifting notions of legitimate governance in a society hovering between abolition and independence. Certainly innovative in approach and unorthodox in content, *La Cebolla* was not, however, an entirely radical or revolutionary publication. On the one hand, contributors endeavored to reposition (registered) prostitutes relative to both the colonial state and dominant definitions of honor, work, and citizenship by portraying themselves as legitimate laborers entitled to certain rights and protections. On the other hand, the ultimate authority of the state to confer or deny those rights, determine legitimacy, and regulate the behaviors of citizens was affirmed. Furthermore, while denouncing specific abuses perpetrated by colonial

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[112] APHM, N.O.P.P, leg. 3, exp. 344.

[113] Ibid.

officials, the contributors to *La Cebolla* leveled no real challenge to the power of state authorities to mete out justice, but simply implored them to do so judiciously. In the end, Reineri and his collaborators were not advocating an end to the state regulation of prostitution in Cuba. The existing regulatory system was, in fact, generally applauded—with the exception of those policies impacting a registered prostitute's ability to procure clients. Ironically, *La Cebolla* revealed the existence of a fairly large area of common ground existing between colonial officials and registered prostitutes. Albeit for distinct reasons, both parties were exceptionally eager to censure clandestine prostitutes and viewed the state regulation effort as the most effective means to do so. Colonial authorities might well have tolerated the publication, in fact, had it not been for Reineri's defiant refusal to desist in the incrimination of high-ranking officials. Originally considered only a troublesome local newspaper, *La Cebolla* was eventually denounced as seditious propaganda warranting absolute censure.

Conclusion

During the final decade of colonial rule in Cuba, as Spain's political and moral authority on the island declined precipitously in the face of continuous warfare, colonial authorities focused their energies on maintaining a grip on a colony slipping ever more rapidly through their fingers. Within this context, innovating Cuba's regulatory apparatus fell to the bottom of a long list of state priorities. The ratification of a new prostitution regulation in 1892 established a medical dispensary within the confines of the tolerance zone (barrio San Isidro), to which prostitutes were required to convene for their bi-weekly pelvic exams, in hopes of eliminating the obstacles faced by Medical Hygienists

making their rounds to each individual brothel.[114] **[Figures 4.1 and 4.2]** Later sources reveal, however, that the creation of the dispensary did little to ease the troubles of the Hygiene Section's medical personnel. Minimal revisions to the new regulation, proposed in 1894, centered primarily on administrative details and not on reformulating any major component of the regulatory apparatus.[115] Also reflective of a shift in colonial state priorities vis-à-vis the issue of prostitution is the dearth of police files or criminal cases involving prostitutes produced during the late 1880s and 1890s. If the attention of colonial authorities was otherwise absorbed with schemes to perpetuate Spanish dominance over the island, most Cubans were busy grappling with the destruction and dislocation wrought by three decades of warfare and extreme anxieties about Cuba's political, economic, and social future.

Like the contributors to *La Cebolla*, many Cubans lay the blame for the widespread chaos wracking the island squarely at the feet of Spanish colonial authorities. As Cuban writer, Raimundo Cabrera proclaimed in 1887, "everything that is wrong with Cuban society—and there is a lot—has to do with its status as a Spanish colony."[116] Steeped in cynicism and mistrust of Spain's intentions on the island, the writings of

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[114] See Articles 76 and 77 of Gobernador de la Region Occidental, *Reglamento para el régimen de la prostitución en la Ciudad de La Habana y de la Provincia de La Habana* (Havana: Imprenta del Gobierno y Capitanía General por S.M., 1892), 32-33.

[115] Gobernador de la Region Occidental, *Reglamento para el régimen de la prostitución en la Ciudad de La Habana y de la Provincia de La Habana* (Havana: Imprenta del Gobierno y Capitanía General por S.M., 1892) and ANC/ME, leg. 3639, no. Y, (1894) "Reglamento para el régimen de la prostitución propuesto por el Gobernador Regional y aprobado provisionalmente por el Gobernador General de la Isla."

[116] Raimundo Cabrera, *Cuba y sus juices: Rectificaciones oportunas* (Havana: Imprenta "El Retiro," 1887), 11. The original Spanish reads: "lo que tiene de malo—y no es poco—esta sociedad cubana tan culmniada—es lo que tiene de colonial española."

Cabrera and others also offered a vision of ultimate redemption for the island. Refusing to believe that centuries of colonial exploitation had corrupted the spirit and integrity of the island, Cabrera declared: "Havana is simply the capital of this *pearl in the mud*."[117] The message was clear: although mired in the mud of Spanish exploitation, Cuba—the Pearl of the Antilles—remained socially and morally intact and unspoiled and upon extraction from this colonial mud could be restored to its previous splendor. In a time of anxiety and fear, messages of hope of salvation played powerfully on Cubans' raw emotions and stoked the fires of nationalist sentiment. The question, however, of exactly who would extract Cuba from the mud of Spanish colonialism, and by what means, proved troubling as the final war for Cuban independence raged between 1895 and 1898. By the war's end, however, a somewhat unlikely ally to the North proved perfectly willing to step in and extract Cuba from Spain's muddy colonial grip.

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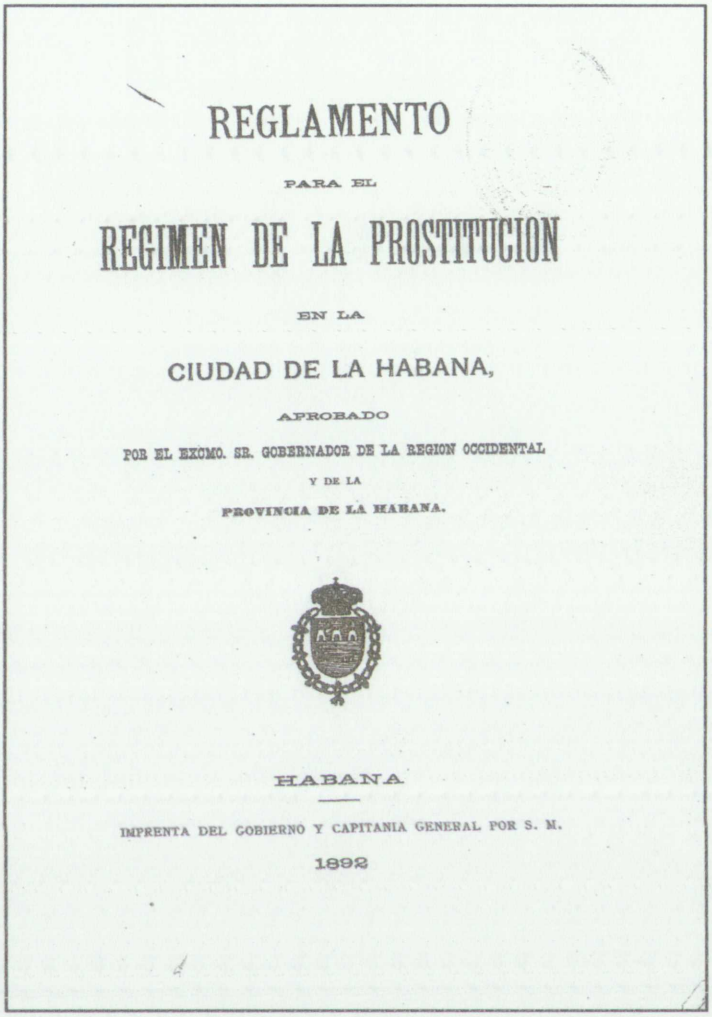
[117] Cabrera, *Cuba y sus juices*, 120. The original Spanish reads: "La Habana es simplemente la capital de esta *perla en el fango*." Emphasis in original.



REGLAMENTO

PARA EL

REGIMEN DE LA PROSTITUCION

EN LA

CIUDAD DE LA HABANA,

APROBADO

POR EL EXCMO. SR. GOBERNADOR DE LA REGION OCCIDENTAL

Y DE LA

PROVINCIA DE LA HABANA.

HABANA

IMPRENTA DEL GOBIERNO Y CAPITANIA GENERAL POR S. M.

1892

Figure 4.1: Cover of revised prostitution regulation for Havana ratified under Spanish colonial authority in 1892 (from Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, Havana, Cuba).

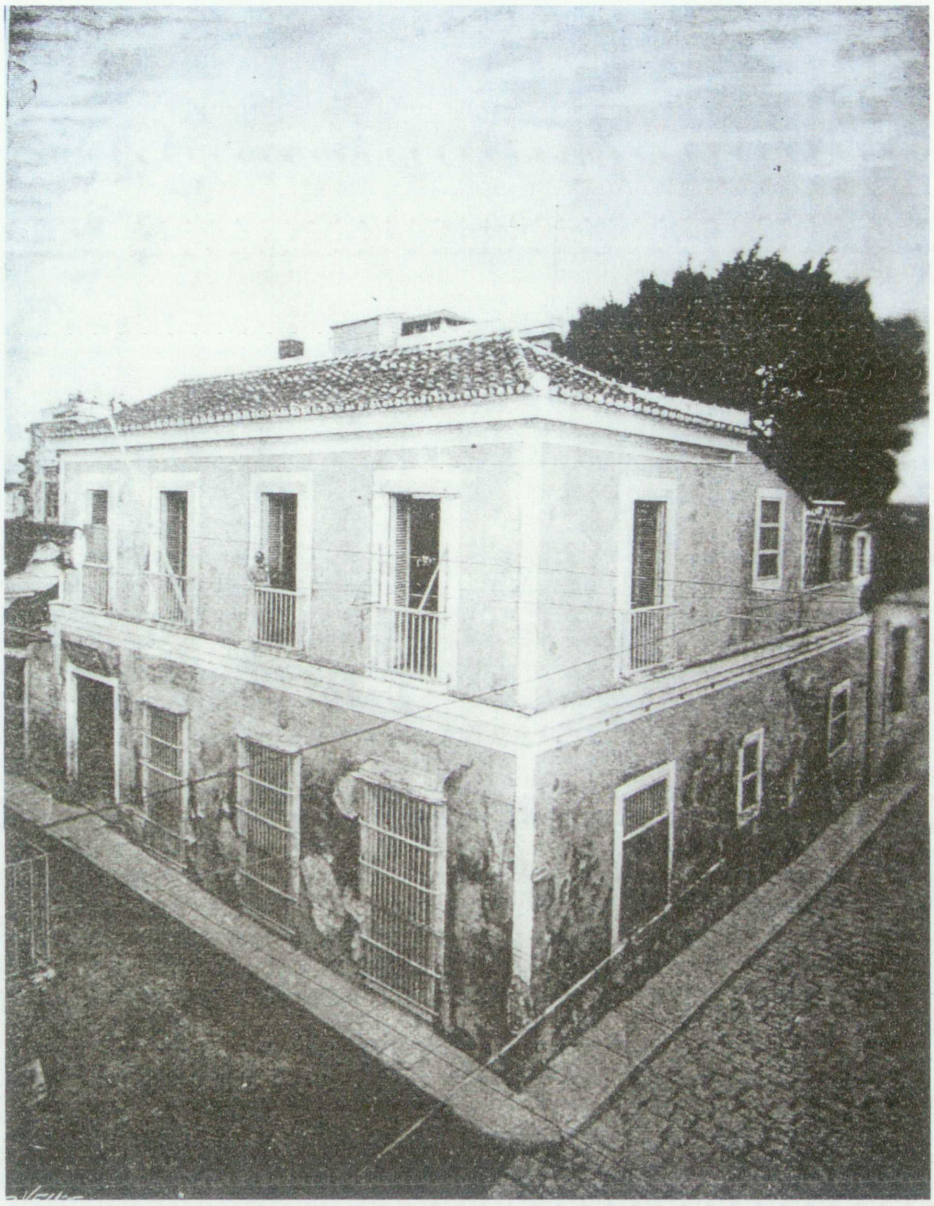


Figure 4.2: Dispensary established at the corners of Paula and Picota streets in Havana's tolerance zone within the barrio San Isidro in 1892 (from Dr. Ramón M. Alfonso, *La prostitución en Cuba y especialmente en La Habana: Memoria de la Comisión de Higiene Especial* (Havana: Imprenta P. Fernández y Ca., 1902).

CHAPTER FIVE

Trading the Hydra for the Octopus: The Limits of Social and Moral Reform during the U.S. Intervention in Cuba, 1898-1902

> In the first sixty days of American occupation and control…the twig was bent for future growth. Whether the grown tree shall bear the fruit of national independence or of colonial dependence or of complete political assimilation depends largely upon the development and conditions of the future. The twig certainly was trained to stand erect and to grow straight and true by the American army officials and others, so as to produce national independence.
>
> Franklin Matthews, *The New-Born Cuba* (1899)[1]

> Prostitution [in Cuba]…has changed in form but not essence. No longer the hydra, [the beast of prostitution] has become the octopus, stealthily extending its clandestine tentacles toward centralized neighborhoods…defying the civilization of a Republic that has entered the world surrounded by all dangers, acclaimed by all voices, blessed by all hearts.
>
> Dr. Ramon María Alonso (1902)[2]

In his 1914 publication titled *The Development of Sanitation and Charities in Cuba during the Last Sixteen Years*, Dr José López del Valle described the period of U.S.

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[1] Franklin Matthews, *The New-Born Cuba* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1899), v.

[2] Dr. Ramón María Alfonso, *La prostitución en Cuba y especialmente en la Habana: Memoria de la Comisión de Higiene Especial de la Isla de Cuba elevada al Sr. Secretario de Gobernación* (Havana: P. Fernández, 1902), 17-18. The original Spanish reads: "[L]a prostitución…ha cambiado de forma pero no de esencia, que ha dejado de ser la hydra para el pulpo, extendiendo sigilósamente sus tentáculos clandestinos hacia los barrios centrales…desafiando la civilización de una República que ha venido al mundo rodeada de todos los peligros, aclamada por todos los labios, bendecida por todos los corazones."

intervention in Cuba as "the era of light and hygienic progress."[3] Penned over a decade after the end of U.S. military intervention in Cuba (1898—1902), del Valle's statement encapsulates a familiar vision of those few momentous years as a whirlwind of decisive political, economic, and epidemiological change that forever altered the course of Cuban national history. Faced with the devastation wrought by three decades of war, Cubans hoped U.S. authorities would promote the kind of broad-ranging economic, political, *and* social reforms that would pull Cuba out of the mud of colonialism and set the nation on the road to modernity.

As the "saviors" of the war-ravaged and capital-starved Cuban nation, however, U.S. authorities felt entitled to set the Cuban reform agenda. Eager to secure a stable trade partner in the Caribbean, U.S. officials executed reform and revitalization projects that assured easy execution of their political and commercial interests on the island. The Military Government of Cuba never promoted social reforms that would foster a capacity for self-government, self-determination, and self-fulfillment, as a self-governing Cuba was never a U.S. goal.[4] As historian Louis Pérez states, the "acquisition of Cuba was

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[3] Dr. José A. Lopez del Valle, *The Development of Sanitation and Charities in Cuba during the Last Sixteen Years* (1899-1914) (Havana: La Moderna Poesía, 1914), 5.

[4] Article IV of the Teller Amendment passed by the U.S. Congress under President McKinley prevented the U.S. from annexing Cuba. A compromise to congressional defenders of the cause of *Cuba Libre,* the amendment proclaimed that the U.S. had no interest in exercising sovereignty over the island and promised to leave the Cuban government in control of the island once "pacification" was achieved. The original spirit of the Teller Amendment was later compromised by the Platt Amendment (1901), which gave the U.S. the right to intervene if the Cuban government failed to protect "life, property, and individual liberty." In contrast, the Teller Amendment made no reference to Puerto Rico, so as a result of the Spanish American war, the U.S. annexed Puerto Rico outright. See Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 177-178.

envisaged always as an act of colonial continuity, formally transferred and legitimately ceded by Spain to the U.S.—an assumption of sovereignty over a territory presumed incapable of a separate nationhood."[5]

This chapter contends that the U.S. intervention in Cuba was fundamentally an imperialist project, and that only in recognizing it as such can we fully understand the agenda of the occupying government.[6] Designed to meet specific goals, the U.S. intervention in Cuba was a bounded endeavor, and the delineation of those boundaries illustrates a great deal about U.S. priorities in—and attitudes toward—Cuba. Why did U.S. officials prioritize certain kinds of reform measures in Cuba and not others? Specifically, why did U.S. officials preserve (and even bolster) Cuba's regulatory system while simultaneously condemning prostitution on the U.S. mainland? What does this disparity reveal about broader U.S. attitudes toward Cuba and Cubans and about U.S. aspirations on the island? Ultimately, the case of U.S. intervention in Cuba demonstrates that the silences within colonial projects speak volumes about the broader attitudes colonial nations harbor toward colonized peoples. To put it clearly, what a colonial power *does not do* is perhaps as important (if not more so) as what it *does*. The implications of the limited U.S. reform agenda in Cuba stretched far beyond the temporal boundaries of

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[5] Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Cuba and the United States: Ties of Singular Intimacy*, 2nd ed. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 94.

[6] The literature on the United States imperial project is vast. See, for example, the quintessential William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1959), Amy Kaplan and Donal E. Pease, eds., *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), Gilbert M. Joseph, Catherine LeGrand, and Ricardo D. Salvatore, eds., *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), and Ann Stoler, eds., *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

the intervention period, as lingering questions about the disparity between the expansive political and economic reform agenda enacted during the "era of light and hygienic progress" mentioned above and the limited nature of social reform on the island during those years helped shape the contours of republican *cubanidad* (Cuban national identity) in the years following U.S. occupation.

The Era of Light and Hygienic Progress

When General John R. Brooke assumed his position as the first U.S. Military Governor of Cuba in January 1899, he came bearing gifts; namely, a massive military and financial aid package intended to sponsor political and economic stability on the war-ravaged island.[7] More than a mere recovery mission, U.S. officials in Cuba endeavored to

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[7] For a general discussion of the U.S. military intervention in Cuba, see: Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Cuba and the Unites States: Ties of Singular Intimacy*, 2nd ed. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Cuba Between Empires, 1878-1902* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1983), Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999), Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), John L. Offner, *An Unwanted War: The Diplomacy of the United States and Spain over Cuba, 1895-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), Ivan Musicant, *The Banana Wars: A History of U.S. Military Intervention in Latin America from the Spanish-American War to the Invasion of Panama* (New York: Macmillan, 1990), and David Healy, *The United States in Cuba, 1898-1902: Generals, Politicians, and the Search for Policy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963), Philip Sheldon Foner, *The Spanish-American War and the Birth of American Imperialism, 1895-1902* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), Luis F. Sfeir-Younis, "State Formation in the Periphery: The United States Military Occupation of Cuba and Puerto Rico, 1898-1902" (Ph.D., diss., University of Michigan, 1991). For a discussion of General-Governor Leonard Wood's role in the U.S. intervention, see Roberta Susan Thornton, "Leonard Wood and Cuban-American Relations, 1898-1902" (M.A. thesis, James Madison University, 1987), Rhoda Hoff and Margaret Regler, *Uneasy Neighbors: Cuba and the United States* (New

modernize Cuba by fundamentally re-contouring the island's existing political and economic landscape. The sweeping away of all things colonial, of all things quintessentially Spanish, became the modus operandi of U.S. reform on the island.[8] The U.S. agenda to modernize Cuba occurred on three overlapping fronts: political, economic, and epidemiological. Over the course of the next three years, occupying authorities would spend millions of U.S. dollars (at a rate of half a million dollars a month) to repair and expand the island's urban and rural infrastructure, overhaul unwieldy administrative systems, widen congested urban streets, and immunize local citizens against contagious diseases.[9]

Occupying military authorities prioritized the consolidation of Cuba's existing 128 municipalities into fewer, more economically viable, political entities. Reduced in

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York: F. Watts, 1997), James H. Hitchman, *Leonard Wood and Cuban Independence, 1898-1902* (Nijhoff: The Hague, 1971), and Jack Edward McCallum, *Leonard Wood: Rough Rider, Surgeon, Architect of American Imperialism* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).

[8] Historian Louis A. Pérez claims that in post-independence Cuba, "[t]he postcolonial condition implied, by definition, transition and transformation, often as conscious efforts to create cultural distance from the discredited past." Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1999), 133.

[9] Richard Gott, *Cuba: A New History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 107. For a discussion of U.S. infrastructure development projects in Cuba, see General Leonard Wood, *Civil Report of Brigidier General Leonard Wood* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), Leonard Wood, *Report of the Military Governor of Cuba on Civil Affairs [Dec. 20, 1899—Dec. 31, 1900]* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1902), Franklin Matthews, *The New-Born Cuba* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1899), Ricardo Narganes, *Sanitary Conditions of the City of Havana* (Havana: n.p., 1898), William Ludlow, *Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1899, from Dec. 22, 1898, William Ludlow, Brig. Gen., U.S., Commanding Department of Havana and Military Gov. of City of Havana* (Havana: The Department, 1899), and Oscar Zanetti and Alejandro García, *Sugar and Railroads: A Cuban History, 1837-1959* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 194-234.

number by one-third, these newly-created municipalities could assume the burden of many local administrative duties and services previously shouldered by provincial authorities, including sanitation, police, public education, charities, and eventually prostitution regulation.[10] U.S. authorities applauded this bureaucratic restructuring as "an important step… towards giving the Cuban municipalities a position similar to that occupied by cities and towns in the American political system."[11] Furthermore, the centralization of existing Spanish bureaucratic forms assured the kind of parity between Cuban and U.S. administrative processes considered by U.S. authorities as a prerequisite for the development of a capitalist economy on the island. From a war-torn landscape dotted with scorched fields, slaughtered animals, and homes and businesses reduced to rubble, U.S. officials in Cuba would construct a modern consumer nation. Long denied the comforts and conveniences of modern household appliances, plumbing, and concrete floors, Cubans would now reap the bounty of a market culture centered on North American ideals of hard work and material success. Widely circulated racist portrayals of Cubans as "little more than…turbulent and illiterate negroes…indisposed to industry," while not completely erased from U.S. popular imagination, were modified by news of

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[10] General Leonard Wood, *Civil Report of Brigidier General Leonard Wood* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), 3-6.

[11] Dr. L.S. Rowe, "The Reorganization of Local Government in Cuba," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* XXV (Jan-June 1905): 112-113, and General Leonard Wood, *Civil Report of Brigidier General Leonard Wood* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), 3-4, 114. For a compilation of Cuban municipal and provincial law as defined by the U.S. government of intervention in 1899, see, War Department, Division of Customs and Insular Affairs, *Translation of the Municipal and Provincial Laws in Force in the Island of Cuba* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1899).

Cuba's rapid assimilation of American patterns of production, consumption, and recreation.[12]

With the desired political and economic structures in place, U.S. authorities could effectively respond to yet another hindrance to North American penetration on the island—yellow fever. The cause of 8,220 deaths in Havana alone between 1890 and 1899, U.S. military officials labeled yellow fever the "scourge which has made Havana a byword of reproach in the civilized world.[13] Concerned not only for the health of Cuban citizens but also, and perhaps more importantly, for the health of the 50,000 U.S. troops stationed on the island during the occupation, U.S. authorities eagerly pursued an effective method to combat the disease. Fortunately, they would not have to look far for an answer. In 1881, noted Cuban physician Dr. Carlos J. Finlay theorized that yellow fever was transmitted by the *Stegomya Fasciatus* mosquito. Following almost a decade of research, Finlay received a financial windfall when the Military Government of Cuba agreed to fund a series of scientific experiments to verify the exact means of yellow fever propagation. Confirmation of Finlay's theory—a discovery considered "worth the cost of the war, and probably the most important made in the field of medicine since the discovery of vaccination"—prompted U.S. Army medical officers and Cuban public

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[12] Albert G. Robinson, *Cuba and the Intervention* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1905), 95. To view a selection of nineteenth and twentieth-century political cartoons circulated in U.S. print sources that depict Cubans as lazy, rebellious, and/or incapable of self-government, see John J. Johnson, *Latin American in Caricature* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997). For See also Pérez's discussion of Cuba's adoption of a North American market ethic, in Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1999), 142-164.

[13] Headquarters Department of Cuba, *Civil Orders and Circulars* (1901), 3. See also Dr. José A. Lopez del Valle, *The Development of Sanitation and Charities in Cuba during the Last Sixteen Years* (1899-1914) (Havana: La Moderna Poesia, 1914), 3.

sanitation personnel to launch a massive yellow fever campaign across the island.[14] U.S. officials mobilized public support for their mission by invoking a language of warfare sure to resonate with a nation emerging from three decades of conflict. In a 1901 circular, for example, Lieutenant Carpenter proclaimed that "the mosquito is one of the most dangerous enemies we have to contend with and intelligent self preservation requires that a relentless war should be waged against it by all means in our power."[15] This U.S.-sponsored war on mosquitoes was staged on multiple fronts. Under the direction of a newly-created National Department of Sanitation, officials quarantined yellow fever patients at Havana's Las Animas Hospital, while special Mosquito Divisions fumigated

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[14] General Leonard Wood, *Civil Report of Brigidier General Leonard Wood* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), 5. For further information on Dr. Carlos Finlay's important scientific contribution to yellow fever eradication, see: Carlos Eduardo Finlay, *Carlos Finlay and Yellow Fever* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940), Carlos Juan Finlay and César Rodríguez Expósito, *Obras Completas* (Havana: Academia de Ciencias de Cuba, 1965-1981), and Sergio Amaro Méndez, *Alas amarillas: La historia de Carlos J. Finlay y su descubrimiento* (Havana: Editorial Científico-Técnico, 1983). For a general discussion of the impact of yellow fever on Cuban history, see: Kathryn Keller, "Racing Immunities: How Yellow Fever Gendered a Nation" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 2001), Mariola Espinosa, "Epidemic Invasions: Yellow Fever, Public Health, and the Limits of Cuban Independence, 1878 through the Early Republic" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, 2004), and Katherine Hirschfeld, *Health, Politics, and Revolution in Cuba, 1898-2005* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2006). For a discussion of how the U.S.-sponsored yellow fever eradication campaign in Cuba shaped later responses to the disease elsewhere in Latin America, see, Rebecca Ann Lord, "An 'Imperative Obligation:' Public Health and the United States Military Occupation of the Dominican Republic, 1916-1924 (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland-College Park, 2002), Kenneth F. De Masi and R.J. Stahl, *Panama Canal: Building the 8th Wonder of the World* (Amawalk, N.J.: Jackdaw Publications, 2003), David Ray Abernathy, *Bound to Succeed: Science, Territoriality, and the Emergence of Disease Eradication in the Panama Canal Zone* (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 2000).

[15] Headquarters Department of Cuba, *Civil Orders and Circulars* (1901), 4.

mosquito-infested buildings, flushed petroleum into sewers, drains, and cisterns, removed standing water, and covered open barrels and water tanks.[16] **[Figures 5.1-5.2]**

Concerned that passenger ships could introduce new infestations of the disease, in 1900 the U.S. War Department constructed the Tiscornia Department of Immigration across the harbor in Casablanca.[17] New immigration procedures, modeled on New York's Ellis Island (opened 1892), mandated the disinfection of all passenger baggage, clothing, and personal effects and an obligatory quarantine period for all entering passengers without immunity to yellow fever.[18] **[Figure 5.3-5.4]** These sanitation and immigration measures effectively wiped out yellow fever within two years, prompting General Wood to euphorically proclaim the island "free from yellow fever for the first time in 200 years."[19] Similar campaigns were later instigated to eradicate smallpox, dysentery, typhoid fever, infantile tetanus, leprosy, tuberculosis, and glanders.[20]

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[16] Superior Board of Health, *Sanitation in Cuba* (Havana: n.p., 1904), vii-viii. See also Dr. José A. Lopez del Valle, *The Development of Sanitation and Charities in Cuba during the Last Sixteen Years* (1899-1914) (Havana: La Moderna Poesia, 1914), 6.

[17] Richard Gott, *Cuba: A New History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 118.

[18] Arturo Navia y Montero, *Leyes de Inmigración de la República de Cuba: Sus reglamentos y demás disposiciones complementarias de las mismas, dictadas hasta la fecha, que se encuentran vigentes* (Havana: Carasa y Compañía, 1930), 5. For a complete compilation of immigration regulations instituted for the island of Cuba by the U.S. War Department, see ANC/SG, leg. 93, no. 469 (Inmigración, 1899), "Expediente relativo a inmigración."

[19] General Leonard Wood, *Civil Report of Brigidier General Leonard Wood* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), 5. U.S. sanitation efforts focused exclusively on the capital city and the adjacent municipal districts of Havana, Guanabacoa, Marianao, and Santiago de las Vegas until 1902 when the first "National Terrestrial Sanitary Organization" was created to carry these hygienic measures into the provinces. See Dr. José A. Lopez del Valle, *The Development of Sanitation and Charities in Cuba during the Last Sixteen Years* (1899-1914) (Havana: La Moderna Poesia, 1914),

The installation of impressive new sanitation measures on the island, combined with the ubiquity of new factories, fashions, and foodstuffs, seemed to signal Cuba's transition to a modern national status and a sweeping away of four centuries of Spanish rule. Within three short years, Cuba had been remade in the U.S. image—a modern, capitalist nation ripe with potential—and U.S. officials and Cubans alike enthusiastically heralded Cuba's entrée into the modernizing world. Government reports, scholarly treatises, and even tourism brochures produced during the period of U.S. intervention reflected the euphoria that accompanied the abundant material evidence of Cuba's progress. In his 1901 *Civil Report*, General Leonard Wood proclaimed that thanks to U.S. efforts, Cuba was:

> brought from the conditions resulting from the system of reconcentration, poverty, entire lack of sanitation, starvation, and a death rate appalling in magnitude, to a condition in which suffering disappeared, and beggars became almost unknown. Large crops of sugar cane and tobacco were in the fields, towns were rebuilt and the marks of war largely removed. With her own revenues she was supporting nearly four thousand schools, an excellent and extensive system of charities and hospitals, conducting extensive public works, building up a splendid system of sanitation [and] reconstructing her public buildings.[21]

9-10, 11. Published data later confirmed the eradication of yellow fever in Havana by 1901. Whereas 310 cases of yellow fever were reported for the district of Havana in 1900, no cases of yellow fever were reported between 1902 and 1905. Superior Board of Health, *Sanitation in Cuba* (Havana: n.p., 1904), ix. Another serious outbreak of yellow fever, which was linked to the port of New Orleans, spread across Cuba in 1905 but was contained within a year. Dr. José A. Lopez del Valle, *The Development of Sanitation and Charities in Cuba during the Last Sixteen Years* (1899-1914) (Havana: La Moderna Poesia, 1914), 11.

[20] General Leonard Wood, *Civil Report of Brigidier General Leonard Wood* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), 5, 23. See also Dr. José A. Lopez del Valle, *The Development of Sanitation and Charities in Cuba during the Last Sixteen Years* (1899-1914) (Havana: La Moderna Poesia, 1914), 4.

[21] *General Leonard Wood,* Civil Report of Brigidier General Leonard Wood *(Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), 4-5.*

Many Cubans surveying the recent changes likewise celebrated Cuba's march toward modernity. Reflecting on the benefits of the capital city's new street cleaning system, for example, Cuban sanitation officer, Dr. José López del Valle, concluded that Havana was surely poised to "take on the features of the most advanced civilized, cultured and refined centers of population, the wide world over."[22] A bilingual Havana tour guide also touted the rapid improvements witnessed in the capital city during the first year of U.S. intervention, stating

> the city has received great benefits by the cleaning process adopted and the strict observance of hygiene measures. Havana is a conglomeration of a diversity of people, who are all now united by *liberty* and, in view of the prosperity and progress of the Island to sustain the title in its coat of arms: THE KEY TO THE NEW WORLD. Notwithstanding the wars and discords which have desolated the Island in its efforts to conquer its absolute independence, and which has left such deep traces of desolation; it has managed to come out from the deep sea of passions with scars but healed up, no more blood; peace and a bright future for the Pearl of the Antilles.[23]

Touted by many as material evidence of U.S. generosity toward the island, U.S. efforts to reconstruct Cuba were never intended to promote Cuban independence. Packaged as benevolent "modernization" efforts, U.S. activities in Cuba between 1898 and 1902 were more accurately "Americanization" efforts intended to facilitate easy satisfaction of U.S. political and commercial interests. Motivated to secure a modernized trade partner in the Caribbean—and not an independent, progressive nation—U.S. officials prioritized the dramatic rupture of colonial economic and political forms over social and moral reform in Cuba. The limited social reform enacted on the island focused primarily on the

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[22] Dr. José López del Valle, *The Development of Sanitation and Charities in Cuba during the Last Sixteen Years* (1899-1914) (Havana: La Moderna Poesia, 1914), 31.

[23] Anthony Menéndez, *Guide to Havana and Vicinity* (Havana: M. Ricoy, 1899), 41. Emphasis in original.

eradication of social institutions and behaviors most associated with Spanish backwardness; thus, U.S. officials moved quickly to suppress lotteries, cockfights, and bullfights, whose effects on Cuban society General Leonard Wood considered "demoralizing and disastrous."[24] While blood sports and gambling were considered particularly onerous examples of Spanish barbarity and immorality, U.S. officials preserved another controversial institution imposed under Spanish rule—the prostitution regulation system. Rife with contradiction, the U.S. social reform agenda in Cuba spoke volumes about U.S. priorities in Cuba.

Regulation in Translation

In the general upheaval that accompanied the official end of Spanish rule in Cuba on 31 December 1898, U.S. officials moved quickly to erase or replace many existing Spanish administrative systems. As part of this general dissolution of Spanish administrative systems, U.S. officials briefly dissolved Cuba's regulatory system in December 1898. Reflecting on the general atmosphere of pandemonium wrought by this event, Dr. Eugenio Molinet reported that sick prostitutes interned at Havana's Hygiene Hospital

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[24] General Leonard Wood, *Civil Report of Brigidier General Leonard Wood* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), 22-23. For a discussion of U.S. attempts to replace bullfighting with the quintessentially American pastime of baseball, see Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1999), 78-79 and Louis A. Pérez, Jr., "Between Baseball and Bullfighting: The Quest for Nationality in Cuba, 1868-1898," *Journal of American History*, 81:2 (September 1994): 493-517. For a discussion of the history of bullfighting and cockfighting in Cuba, see Pablo Riaño San Marful, *Gallos y toros en Cuba* (Havana: Fundación Fernando Ortiz, 2002), and Miguel Angel López Rinconada, *Los toros y la guerra de Cuba: Las corridas benéfico-patrióticas, 1895-1898* (Madrid: Egartorre, 1996). For a discussion of the early history of gaming in Cuba, see Ena Mouriño Hernández, *El juego en Cuba: Sus factores, su desenvolvimiento histórico durante la época colonial* (Havana: n.p., 1947).

were "thrown out into the street without taking into account their miserable state."[25] The chaotic dissolution of the Special Hygiene Section was short-lived. Only one month later (January 1899), the regulatory system was reconstituted and a new hygiene regulation was ratified for the island.[26]

The initial repeal of the regulatory system in 1898 was largely a by-product of the general sweeping away of all things Spanish that occurred with the regime change. Yet, the 1899 reconstitution of the regulatory system was a purposeful act intended to promote increased U.S. oversight and control on the island. Intended only as a temporary stopgap measure to permit U.S. authorities to focus on the more pressing issues of political stabilization, economic recovery, and eradication of contagious diseases, the 1899 regulation was little more than an English-language facsimile of the earlier Spanish regulation of 1892 (Chapter IV). Reflecting on this ironic endorsement of Spanish legislation by U.S. officials, American journalist Charles Pepper remarked in 1899: "The American military authorities accepted the system as they found it, which was as a measure of hygiene and not of reformation…Under military administration the enforcement of the regulations was rigid, but no effort was made to give them other than a hygienic character."[27] Under the "new" system, registered prostitutes still convened on

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[25] Dr. Eugenio Molinet, *Memoria Informe de la Sección Médica de la Higiene Especial correspondiente al año por el Jefe Médico Dr. Eugenio Molinet* (Havana: Imprenta de Francisco Xiqués, 1900), 7. The original Spanish reads: "lanzadas a la calle sin tener en cuenta su miserable estado."

[26] Ramón María Alfonso, *La prostitución en Cuba y especialmente en la Habana: Memoria de la Comisión de Higiene Especial de la Isla de Cuba elevada al Sr. Secretario de Gobernación* (Havana: P. Fernández, 1902), 16-17.

[27] Charles Pepper, *To-morrow in Cuba* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1899), 282.

a bi-weekly basis at the Dispensary for their pelvic examination and syphilitic prostitutes were still sent for treatment at Havana's Hygiene Hospital. The few changes made to the regulation were intended to shore up existing prostitution policy, fashion the regulatory system as a self-sustaining economic unit, increase income derived from the regulatory system, reduce the likelihood of public disorder within brothels, and generally exert increased state control over the lives of prostitutes and madams. For example, Article 20 of the 1899 regulation made it illegal for brothel owners to sell alcohol within their establishments, and Article 65 created an additional (fifth) category of prostitutes in order to expand the existing fee schedule and boost the Special Hygiene Section's monthly income.[28]

One Step Forward, Two Steps Back

The dissolution of existing Spanish administrative systems conducted at the outset of U.S. occupation was intended to signal Cuba's modernity and progress. In so doing, however, U.S. officials periodically threw the baby out with the bathwater. In the case of Havana's Hygiene Hospital, for example, patients and medical staff at the facility were thrown into a complete state of upheaval in the months following the U.S. occupation. Dr. Molinet's dramatic account of hundreds of syphilitic prostitutes being cast out of the hospital onto the open street captures the chaos and confusion that accompanied the dissolution of the Special Hygiene Section.

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[28] Alcaldía Municipal, *Reglamento para el régimen de la prostitución en la ciudad de La Habana* (Havana: Imp. Avisador Comercial, 1899).

When the doors of the hospital were reopened several months later, newly-appointed staff members entered the facility without the benefit of any legislative or administrative guidance, as the 1899 regulation made no explicit mention of the facility. Unfamiliar with the progressive reforms operationalized at Havana's Hygiene Hospital during the nineteenth century (Chapter III), the hospital staff inadvertently began to reinvent the wheel. Reports produced by the two Chief Officers of the Special Hygiene Section appointed during the U.S. occupation—Dr. Eugenio Molinet (1899) and Dr. Matías Duque (1900)—reflect the general atmosphere of stagnation that characterized the Special Hygiene Section and the Hygiene Hospital between 1898 and 1902. Members of the Special Hygiene Section's medical staff grappled with the same questions that plagued their predecessors during the period of Spanish rule. How could staff members effectively detect and treat syphilitic prostitutes despite a lack of medical advances in the treatment of venereal disease? Was the Hygiene Hospital solely a medical facility or also a center for the social rehabilitation of wayward prostitutes? How could the hospital staff prepare prostitutes to enter productive society?

Lack of legislative or administrative guidance was undoubtedly the primary cause of the Hygiene Hospitals' general decline between 1899 and 1902. The lack of medical advances in the treatment of syphilis also stymied innovation within the facility. Despite a worrisome number of prostitutes found infected with syphilis in the initial year following the war (2.9% registered and 15.2% clandestine), the 1899 regulation offered hospital staff no explicit instructions relating to venereal disease treatment.[29] In light of

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[29] Dr. Eugenio Molinet, *Memoria Informe de la Sección Médica de la Higiene Especial correspondiente al año por el Jefe Médico Dr. Eugenio Molinet* (Havana: Imprenta de Francisco Xiqués, 1900), 16-17.

the massive contagious disease campaigns orchestrated by U.S. officials in Cuba, it seems incongruous that U.S. officials were so little concerned with the issue of syphilis. Certainly, the death rate of syphilitic patients paled in comparison to the annihilation wrought by yellow fever.[30] The relative indifference U.S. officials displayed toward the issue of syphilis also stemmed from the notion that syphilis was a domestic disease resulting primarily from illicit sexual activity with prostitutes whose impact on U.S. citizens (troops) was less immediate or direct than other contagious diseases such as yellow fever.[31]

A lack of medical advances in the treatment of syphilis forced Hygiene Hospital staff to continue relying on trial and error methods to treat their patients.[32] Treatment still

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[30] Of the 2,359 documented cases of syphilis treated in Havana hospitals in 1899, no deaths were reported. See Dr. Eugenio Molinet, *Memoria Informe de la Sección Médica de la Higiene Especial correspondiente al año por el Jefe Médico Dr. Eugenio Molinet* (Havana: Imprenta de Francisco Xiqués, 1900), 69.

[31] In her study of U.S. imperialism in Puerto Rico, Laura Briggs reflects on the incongruity of U.S. reactions (or relative lack thereof) to syphilitic infection, stating that "[i]n the U.S. as elsewhere, syphilis was consistently troped as a 'foreign' disease…Prostitution, considered the primary mechanism for the spread of venereal disease, was also constructed as a practice of foreigners." Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 38.

[32] Medical researchers discovered that syphilis was caused by *Treponema pallidum* in 1906, and only with this discovery did breakthroughs with the Wasserman Test and Salvarsan (606) advance syphilis treatment methods. See Mary Spongberg, *Feminizing Venereal Disease: The Body of the Prostitute in Nineteenth-Century Medical Discourse* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 100. For further discussion of the history of venereal disease treatment, see *No Magic Bullet: A Social History of Venereal Disease in the U.S. since 1880* (New York: Oxford, 1985), Theodor Rosebury, *Microbes and Morals: The Strange Story of Venereal Disease* (New York: Viking Press, 1971), Roger Davidson and Lesley A. Hall, *Sex, Sin, and Suffering: Venereal Disease and European Society since 1870* (New York: Routledge, 2001), and Katherine Elaine Bliss, "Between Risk and Confession: State and Popular Perspectives of Syphilis

typically included internal and external application of highly acidic mercury- or potassium-based compounds to the mouth and vaginal area, intense friction, scraping, and cauterization at the site of the sores, and even hysterectomies in the most severe cases. Solutions of "azul de metileno" were heated to a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius—this temperature representing the "maximum temperature the women have withstood"—and injected directly into a patient's vagina.[33] These highly invasive treatment methods, often administered on a daily basis, frequently left the women with open sores susceptible to severe infection, resulting in at least one death at the facility.[34] While some patients were given opium to curb their pain, Molinet himself acknowledged that the excruciatingly painful treatments conducted within the hospital lead some women to "employ a variety of daring means to escape, even attempting suicide, as happened [here] very recently."[35]

The first priority of hospital staff members was to attend to patients' physical ailments; however, both Molinet and Duque also hoped to promote the social and moral rehabilitation of the women within the facility. In order to obtain these results, hospital

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Infection in Revolutionary Mexico, in *Disease in the History of Latin America: From Malaria to AIDS, ed. Diego Armus* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 183-208.

[33] Dr. Matías Duque, *Memoria Informe de la Sección Médica de la Higiene Especial* (Havana: F. Xiqués, 1901), 39. The original Spanish reads: "maximum de temperatura que han resistido las mujeres."

[34] Dr. Matías Duque, *Memoria Informe de la Sección Médica de la Higiene Especial* (Havana: F. Xiqués, 1901), 43.

[35] Dr. Eugenio Molinet, *Memoria Informe de la Sección Médica de la Higiene Especial correspondiente al año por el Jefe Médico Dr. Eugenio Molinet* (Havana: Imprenta de Francisco Xiqués, 1900), 82. The original Spanish reads: "fugarse de él por medios aventurados y hasta atentar contra su vida como ha resultado muy recientemente en el hospital de la Habana." For a discussion of the medical use of opium to curb prostitutes' pain during syphilis treatment, see Dr. Matías Duque, *Memoria Informe de la Sección Médica de la Higiene Especial* (Havana: F. Xiqués, 1901), 38.

staff members recognized the need to de-emphasize the incarcerative aspects of life within a facility where "few things are agreeable."[36] In a 1900 report, Molinet argued that "these hospitals should never be prisons, as prostitution is not a crime; [rather] medical intervention should undergo a complete transformation divesting [this facility] of all punitive elements and recreating it as a charitable asylum."[37] The discipline of unruly patients within the facility was thus a sticky issue made more troubling by the apparent frequency of inter-patient violence. Attributed primarily to a certain innate "habitual agitation" resulting from their "natural condition [and] the type of life to which they dedicate themselves," the women's perceived predisposition toward erratic behavior was considered a social malady that hospital staff members could cure through social rehabilitation.[38]

Hospital staff members were eager to devise productive distractions to occupy the women during the long days, weeks, or even months spent within the facility.[39] In 1900,

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[36] Dr. Eugenio Molinet, *Memoria Informe de la Sección Médica de la Higiene Especial correspondiente al año por el Jefe Médico Dr. Eugenio Molinet* (Havana: Imprenta de Francisco Xiqués, 1900), 66. The original Spanish reads: "todo es poco agradable."

[37] Dr. Eugenio Molinet, *Memoria Informe de la Sección Médica de la Higiene Especial correspondiente al año por el Jefe Médico Dr. Eugenio Molinet* (Havana: Imprenta de Francisco Xiqués, 1900), 83. The original Spanish reads: "estos hospitales no deben ser jamás prisiones, pues la prostitución no es un crímen; la intervención médica debe sufrir una transformación completa despojándola en absoluto el carácter carcelario y dándole el de asilo benéfico."

[38] Dr. Eugenio Molinet, *Memoria Informe de la Sección Médica de la Higiene Especial correspondiente al año por el Jefe Médico Dr. Eugenio Molinet* (Havana: Imprenta de Francisco Xiqués, 1900), 65. The original Spanish reads: "nerviosismo habitual…natural condición por el género de vida a que se dedican."

Dr. Molinet proposed the creation of a system of manual labor (primarily needlework), as well as dedicated hours for reading and music appreciation. Exactly like Dr. Delgado had hoped decades earlier, Molinet hoped these activities would promote peace within the facility and inspire the women to "acquire new life habits."[40] Despite Molinet and Duque's lengthy ruminations on the benefits of a social rehabilitation program within the facility, no such program was ever operationalized.

New Powers and Old Feuds

Although U.S. authorities made remarkably few alterations to Spanish prostitution legislation or medical procedures in Cuba, they did make a significant change to the 1892 regulation relating to jurisdictional powers within the Special Hygiene Section. Jurisdiction over the Section would now pass from the office of the Civil Governor to Havana's Municipal Mayor.[41] This reform measure effectively defined the Special Hygiene Section as a "special institution without ties of dependency to the State" to be

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[39] According to Molinet's report, the average length of treatment for a prostitute within the Hygiene Hospital was 45-60 days, though some women remained as long as eight months. Dr. Eugenio Molinet, *Memoria Informe de la Sección Médica de la Higiene Especial correspondiente al año por el Jefe Médico Dr. Eugenio Molinet* (Havana: Imprenta de Francisco Xiqués, 1900), 66.

[40] Dr. Eugenio Molinet, *Memoria Informe de la Sección Médica de la Higiene Especial correspondiente al año por el Jefe Médico Dr. Eugenio Molinet* (Havana: Imprenta de Francisco Xiqués, 1900), 86. The original Spanish reads: "adquirir nuevos hábitos de vida."

[41] Ramón María Alfonso, *La prostitución en Cuba y especialmente en la Habana: Memoria de la Comisión de Higiene Especial de la Isla de Cuba elevada al Sr. Secretario de Gobernación* (Havana: P. Fernández, 1902), 16-17. The three physicians assigned to consult the Mayor were Dr. Emiliano Núñez de Villavicencio, Julio San Martín, and José Varela Zequeria.

administered by *local* (as opposed to regional or national) authorities.[42] In so doing, U.S. authorities avoided the moral implications of a more direct connection between prostitution regulation and the upper echelons of state government. Reflecting on this important administrative reform over two decades later, Dr. Matias Duque determined that "[t]he government of military intervention wished to disassociate itself from this public service, which was abhorrent to North American customs, and thus relegated its administration to municipal authorities."[43]

Motivated in large part by U.S. authorities' indifference on the issue of prostitution regulation, the decision to shift jurisdictional powers to the Municipal Mayor also resonated with a more general U.S. push to centralize—and thus "Americanize"—Spanish bureaucratic structures by concentrating authority within one governmental office. Like all Spanish bureaucracies, the Special Hygiene Section had historically operated within a series of overlapping spheres of influence. Provincial political authorities, members of the medical community, and law enforcement personnel all intervened regularly in the administration of the regulatory system. Under the new regulation, the Municipal Mayor would retain sole authority over all administrative and financial decisions—including the appointment of personnel—relating to the Special Hygiene Section. This concentration of power in the hands of the Mayor's office soon

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[42] See Article III of: Alcaldía Municipal, *Reglamento para el régimen de la prostitución en la ciudad de La Habana* (Havana: Imp. Avisador Comercial, 1899). The original Spanish reads: "institución especial, sin vínculos de dependencia del Estado."

[43] Dr. Matías Duque, *Medicina Cubana* X:7 (August 1925): 480. The original Spanish reads: "El gobierno de la intervención militar Americana no quiso rozarse mucho con ese servicio público, que repugnaba los usos y costumbres de Norte América. Y mandó pasar a las administraciones municipales de la Isla la dirección de esos servicios.'"

reignited long-held tensions between municipal and provincial authorities over the administration of the Special Hygiene Section.

Concerned with the loss of a traditional sphere of influence his office had wielded since 1877, Civil Governor Emilio Nuñez wrote to General Leonard Wood complaining that Mayor Miguel Gener was ill equipped to administer the regulatory system. Tensions between the two offices increased in July 1901 when Mayor Gener fired every member of the Special Hygiene Section—many of whom had been employed by the section for decades—and filled the posts with personal friends and allies with no related medical or administrative experience. Following his dismissal, Chief Officer and long-term Hygiene Section employee, Dr. Francisco Rivero, sent an outraged response to Governor Wood, stating:

> I have been employed in the aforementioned 'Sección de Higiene,' during the last 18 years, having obtained my first position, that of Medical Inspector, through competitive examination…[O]n the 27th of July last, I was dismissed by the present Mayor, Mr. Gener, without cause and without ever giving the reasons for such a radical and detrimental measure to my interests; appointing as my successor his former private secretary, Mr. Juan Francisco Delano, who is not a physician, without experience, and without knowledge of the serious hygienic, moral and social problems included in the prostitution regulations.[44]

Hoping to rectify the situation, the Secretary of the Department of State and Government, Dr. Diego Tamayo, conducted lengthy interviews with both parties and concluded that the nasty power struggle occurring between Mayor Gener and Governor Núñez was adversely affecting the administration of the regulatory system and each man's own office.[45] Eager to deter the administrative implosion of Havana's Special Hygiene

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[44] USNA/MGC, box 181, no. 2477, RG140, Letters Received (1899-1902).

[45] USNA/MGC, box 181, no. 2477, RG140, Letters Received (1899-1902). Members of the Special Hygiene Commission included

Section, Governor Wood convened a binational advisory committee in early October 1901 to reformulate the 1899 regulation. Five prominent figures within medicine, sanitation, charity, and immigration, formed a committee charged with ensuring that prostitution would be "subjected to well defined, uniform regulations in all towns of the Island, in order that its evil effects upon public health and morals be reduced to a minimum."[46] The Special Hygiene Commission thus embarked upon a five-month deliberative process intended not only to resolve tensions within Havana's political administration, but also to create a regulatory system applicable to the entire island. In February 1902, members of the Special Hygiene Commission presented General Wood with a three-part plan to increase state control over the regulatory system across the island.

The Final Act

The constellation of prostitution laws ratified by the occupying government in 1902 represented a final attempt to map the administrative procedures, geographic zones, and bodies that comprised Cuba's regulatory system prior to the withdrawal of U.S. military personnel from the island in May 1902. The first regulation ratified in 1902—the Special

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[46] See USNA/MGC, box 181, no. 2477, RG140, Letters Received (1899-1902) and Headquarters Department of Cuba, *Civil Orders and Circulars* (1901), 567. Commission members included Dr. Valery Harvard (Chief Surgeon), Commander Robert Keen (U.S. Medical Department and Superintendent Department of Charities), Dr. Francisco Menocal (Superintendent Department of Immigration), Dr. Francisco Rivero, and Dr. Avelino Barrena, and Dr. Ramón María Alfonso (members). See Headquarters Department of Cuba, *Civil Orders and Circulars* (1901), 567 and Ramón María Alfonso, *La prostitución en Cuba y especialmente en la Habana: Memoria de la Comisión de Higiene Especial de la Isla de Cuba elevada al Sr. Secretario de Gobernación* (Havana: P. Fernández, 1902), 17.

Hygiene Regulation for Havana—contained few significant deviations from the previous 1899 regulation. To deter child prostitution, Commission members raised from 15 to 18 years the legal age at which females could register with the Hygiene Section. Furthermore, they removed the category *ambulante* (streetwalker) from the approved fee schedule in order to force all prostitutes to acquire a permanent address. No specific orders concerning the internal administration of the Hygiene Hospital were added to the 1902 legislation.[47]

The second new prostitution law proposed by the Special Hygiene Commission—the General Special Hygiene Regulation for the Island of Cuba—outlined a plan to unify the regulatory system across the island.[48] To this end, the law revoked the powers granted to the Mayor in 1899 and created a five-member Commission—comprised of three physicians, an attorney, and an advisor—to oversee the general administration of the system.[49] Devoid of political officials, the commission's composition reflected U.S. authorities' desire to give the regulatory system an extra-political character as a means to both resolve the ongoing jurisdictional debate between provincial and municipal authorities and further distance the upper-echelons of state government from prostitution

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[47] "Reglamento Especial para el régimen de la prostitución en la Habana," *Gaceta de la Habana* LXIV: 50 (27 February 1902): 800-802.

[48] "Reglamento General para el servicio de la higiene de la prostitución ó higiene especial de la Isla de Cuba," *Gaceta de la Habana* LXIV: 50 (27 February 1902): 799-800.

[49] The first Hygiene Section Commission approved by U.S. General H. L. Scott in February 1902 was comprised of Dr. Carlos Finlay, Dr. Joaquín Dueñas, Dr. Miguel Sánchez Toledo, Ldo. Esteban González del Valle, and Sr. Antonio Fernández Criado. See "Reglamento General para el servicio de la higiene de la prostitución ó higiene especial de la Isla de Cuba," *Gaceta de la Habana* LXIV: 50 (27 February 1902): 799.

regulation. According to the 1902 General Regulation, Special Hygiene Sections were now mandatory in every population center on the island where "the Commission deems it necessary based on a consideration of the special circumstances surrounding that particular locale." Based on evidence of a significant local prostitution problem, the Commission authorized hygiene sections in Havana, Batabanó, Sagua la Grande, Caibarién, Santa Clara, Cienfuegos, Yaguajay, Puerto Príncipe, and Santiago de Cuba.[50] Each local hygiene section was required to submit monthly reports detailing the number of registered, clandestine, and ill prostitutes operating within the area, and to draft a local prostitution regulation in keeping with the general spirit of the Havana regulation. In order to allow for differences between local economies and relative prostitution presence, local Hygiene Section authorities were authorized to determine the monetary value of fees and fines charged to madams and prostitutes, the exact composition of section staff, and the procedure for assisting syphilitic prostitutes within their own province.

The final U.S.-sponsored prostitution regulation for Cuba appeared in print five months after the withdrawal of military personnel from the island. On 30 October 1902, the *Gaceta Oficial* featured a brief entry delineating the exact geographic parameters of

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[50] "Reglamento Especial para el servicio de la higiene de la prostitución ó higiene especial de la Isla de Cuba," *Gaceta de la Habana* LXIV: 50 (27 February 1902): 799. The original Spanish reads: "lo estime conveniente la Comisión por las circunstancias especiales que en ellas concurran" According to a map titled "Hygiene Services of the Interior of the Island" included within Dr. Ramón Alfonso's 1902 prostitution, U.S. officials dissolved preexising hygiene sections as a response to diminished local prostitution populations in Pinar del Río, Guanajay, Marianao, Matanzas, Cárdenas, and Colón. Futhermore, the map indicates that hygiene sections were "en estudio" for San Juan y Martínez, Santiago de las Vegas, Camajuaní, Cruces, Placetas, and Manzanillo. See Dr. Ramón M. Alfonso, *La prostitución en Cuba y especialmente en La Habana: Memoria de la Comisión de Higiene Especial* (Havana: Imprenta P. Fernández y Ca., 1902), 94.

Havana's tolerance zone.[51] The most clearly articulated and well-publicized description of the physical boundaries of the zone to date, the 1902 regulation did not create a new zone of tolerance in Havana. Rather, state officials endeavored to lay the veneer of state control over an area of the city already operating unofficially as a red-light district. Consisting of a patchwork of twelve city blocks woven around churches, government buildings, and businesses within Havana's San Isidro and Paula neighborhoods, the designated tolerance zone overlay the same congested corner of the city associated with prostitution since the 1850s **[Figure 5.5]**. Armed with a map of the officially sanctioned vice district, state authorities now hoped to exercise increased control over women's lives within this area. All brothels lying outside the strict geographic boundaries detailed within the new regulation were subject to immediate closure.

Ultimately, the limited reforms made to Cuba's existing regulatory system by U.S. authorities between 1899 and 1902 had little measurable impact on the practice of prostitution in Cuba. General Wood himself admitted in his 1901 civil report that "[t]he regulation of the social evil in the Island of Cuba has been maintained through means intended to be reformatory and repressive. Legislation here has been, as in all countries, fraught with many difficulties and corrupting influences have, as everywhere, been very

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[51] *Gaceta Oficial de la Republica de Cuba* I:105 (30 October 1902): 2877. According to the new legislation, the geographic parameters of the tolerance zone were as follows: "Desamparados en toda la extension. Egido desde Desamparados, hasta Paula. Las cuadras de las calles de San Ignacio, Cuba, Damas, y Habana, desde San Isidro hasta Desamparados. Compostela desde Fundición hasta Desamparados. Picota desde el Callejón de Conde hasta Fundición. Los callejones de O'Farrill y de Conde en toda su extension. Y el callejón de Bayano desde Conde hasta Paula."

strong."[52] Although the documentary record for this period as it relates to prostitution is generally patchy, it is nonetheless surprising that in a review of cases for the period 1898 to 1909 (the inclusive period of U.S. occupation and intervention in Cuba), only two cases were located where prostitutes were actually fined for unspecified infractions of the 1902 Havana regulation.[53] Second, no province outside Havana updated its existing prostitution regulation during the period. Instead, provincial authorities continued to operate—and loosely at that—according to regulations formulated under Spanish rule (see Chapter III). Third, state intent to give the tolerance zone enforceable boundaries did not translate into actual on-the-ground control. The congested labyrinth of narrow streets and alleyways that comprised the tolerance zone was hardly conducive to state surveillance. Furthermore, the limited residential space available within the zone led to overcrowding and skyrocketing rental rates. Fully aware that their tenants were bound to the tolerance zone, landlords split rental properties into ever-smaller units for which they charged astronomical prices. Faced with these limitations, prostitutes continued to employ a number of tried-and-true methods to expand their options, such as bribing local authorities and migrating frequently in order to continue living in unsanctioned sections

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[52] General Leonard Wood, *Civil Report of Brigidier General Leonard Wood* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), 23.

[53] In December 1905 Severina O'Farrill and Mercedes Gonzalez were each fined one peso for unspecified violations of Article 9 of the 1902 regulation, which details the nine specific responsibilities of prostitutes within the regulatory system. ANC/SP, leg. 73, no. 32 (1907), "Expediente relacionado con la multa impuesta a Mercedes Gonzalez M. por infracción de uno de los artículos del Reglamento de Higiene Especial" and ANC/SP, leg. 73, no. 31 (1905-1907), "Expediente relacionado con la multa impuesta a Severina O'Farrill, por infracción de uno de los artículos del Reglamento de Higiene Especial." To review exact content of Article 9 of the 1902 regulation, see *Gaceta de la Habana* LXIV: 50 (27 February 1902), "Reglamento Especial para el régimen de la prostitución en la Habana": 800-802.

of the city.[54] Cramped living quarters pushed prostitutes out into the streets and sidewalks of the tolerance zone, thus undermining authorities' intentions to contain prostitutes and reduce their visibility. Later critics of the measure declared that the designation of a specific tolerance zone only served to complicate the already precarious lives of many of Cuba's working prostitutes while simultaneously lining the pockets of Havana's greedy urban landlords and corrupt hygiene section officials. **[Figure 5.6]**

Conclusion

The period of U.S. intervention in Cuba was ultimately fraught with profound contradictions. Whereas the dramatic rupture of Spanish political and economic forms seemed to signal Cuba's advancement into modern nationhood, the limited attention occupying authorities gave to issues of social and moral reform tethered the island to its colonial past. The official sanction of prostitution in Cuba seemed jarringly out of synch with the island's new "modern" status, especially considering that U.S.-based anti-prostitution activity reached its apogee at precisely the same moment that the U.S. exercised its most direct influence in Cuba.[55] The disparity between policies and attitudes

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[54] Dr. Ramón María Alonso, *La reglamentación de la prostitución: Breves apuntes sobre como debe ser en Cuba* (Havana: Imprenta "El Siglo XX," 1912), 112-119.

[55] According to Ruth Rosen, plans to regulate prostitution in New York, Chicago, Pennsylvania, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Detroit, Minneapolis, San Francisco, and Douglas, Arizona in the late nineteenth century were either rejected or short-lived, as most Americans rejected the idea of state sanctioned prostitution as contrary to American moral standards. The rescinding of the British Contagious Disease Acts in 1886 undermined the legitimacy of regulation on international scale and paved the way for increased abolitionist activity within the U.S. during the Progressive Era (1900-1918). By 1918, U.S. reformers succeeded in enlisting the state to close down the previously tolerated red-light districts in most American cities. See Ruth Rosen, *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900-1918* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University

toward prostitution on the U.S. mainland and Cuba would become even more pronounced years later when—having extended U.S. citizenship to Puerto Ricans in 1917 (Jones Act)—U.S. officials moved quickly to suppress prostitution on the island, resulting in 1,197 arrests in the first four months of the campaign.[56] Reflecting on this disparity, Laura Briggs concludes that "[t]he U.S. had two kinds of prostitution policies: one for domestic areas and one for foreign territories and possessions…Medical inspection and licensing were U.S. colonial policy, whereas on the mainland, wholesale suppression and incarceration of prostitutes was the usual order of the day." [57] Discursively rendered as U.S. "citizens" (albeit second-class), Puerto Ricans were now subject to a range of social reforms intended to sanitize bodies, discipline behaviors, and otherwise promote the modern, nuclear family on the island.[58] In contrast, U.S. officials were little concerned with reshaping popular moral and social codes in Cuba, as Cubans were never constructed as U.S. citizens.

Press, 1982), xii and 11. See also Timothy Gilfoyle, *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790-1920* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 306-315.

[56] Eileen J. Suárez Findlay, *Imposing Decency: The Politics of Sexuality and Race in Puerto Rico, 1870-1920* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 178.

[57] Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 46-47.

[58] U.S. officials legalized both civil marriage (1899) and divorce (1902) as an attempt to promote modern, nuclear families in Puerto Rico. See Eileen J. Findlay, "Love in the Tropics: Marriage, Divorce, and the Construction of Benevolent Colonialism in Puerto Rico, 1898-1910," in *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations*, eds. Gilbert M. Joseph, Catherine C. LeGrand, and Ricardo D. Salvatore (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 149 and Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 44.

Following the withdrawal of U.S. military personnel in 1902, Cuba's regulatory system was subject to increased scrutiny by Cuban individuals and groups who questioned the larger connections between prostitution regulation and the future moral welfare of the Cuban social body. What was the root cause of Cuba's prolonged struggle with the issue of prostitution? What were the economic, political, social, and moral consequences of this struggle? How should the nation proceed on this issue in order to ensure progress in line with the world's modernizing nations? Significantly, some of the most critical opinions on this issue emerged from within the Special Hygiene Section itself. In a report published in 1902, Dr. Ramon María Alfonso offered a vision of the trajectory of Cuban prostitution as one intimately tied to Cuba's colonial status. According to his assessment, during the era of Spanish rule,

> the dark plague of prostitution took possession of the center of the metropolis like a mythological monster resting its head upon parks and promenades, exposing the astonished passerby to the moral miseries of the Colony. It extended its right-hand tentacle through the main commercial streets of the old colonial city, swallowing up the vitality, the riches, [and] the economic future of the Pearl of the Antilles. The left-hand tentacle extended over the new city, where creole families lived, thus bringing corruption and licentiousness to the very heart of our nascent society. This situation continued…until the end of the war when we found [prostitution] confined to a neighborhood at the far edge of the city, with its same monstrous physiognomy that has changed in form but not essence. No longer the hydra, [the beast of prostitution] has become the octopus, stealthily extending its clandestine tentacles toward centralized neighborhoods…defying the civilization of a Republic that has entered the world surrounded by all dangers, acclaimed by all voices, blessed by all hearts. [59]

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[59] Ramón María Alfonso, *La prostitución en Cuba y especialmente en la Habana: Memoria de la Comisión de Higiene Especial de la Isla de Cuba elevada al Sr. Secretario de Gobernación* (Havana: P. Fernández, 1902), 17-18. The original Spanish reads: "la prostitución se enseñoreaba de la ciudad, y…la sombría plaga de la prostitución ocupando el centro de la urbe, a manera de un mónstruo mitológico cuya cabeza descansara sobre los parques y paseos, como para mostrar al viajero asombrado, en toda su desnudez, las miserias morales de la Colonia, extendiendo su zarpa derecha sobre la ciudad vieja, por sus calles comerciales…como para absorver la savia, la riqueza, el porvenir económico de la perla antillana; la zarpa izquierda sobre la ciudad

According to Alonso, Cuba had thus far only succeeded in trading one colonial beast for another. The insidious and interconnected social plagues of colonialism and prostitution regulation—symbolized by the monstrous figure of the hydra-octopus—had reached their tentacles across Cuba (and especially Havana) bringing with them the disintegration of the nation. Alfonso's formulation of prostitution as a system of colonial exploitation undercut previous justifications for the regulatory system as a necessary outlet for innate male lust. If the roots of prostitution lay in history and politics rather than biology, could the problem not then be remedied by a national government committed to social and moral reform? Alfonso's report was thus a foreshadowing of nationalistic writings that emerged after 1902 and pushed the state agenda beyond just political stabilization and economic recovery toward issues of social regeneration. The continued state sanction of social vice proved a particularly sticky issue for state authorities, social reformers, and local citizens endeavoring to sketch out the social and moral parameters of Cuban national identity. With the dawn of the new Cuban Republic, social critics and reformers pressured state authorities to assure the progress of the nation by lopping off a tentacle of colonialism on the island: regulated prostitution.

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nueva…donde moraban las familias criollas, como para llevar la corrupción y el libertinaje al seno de la sociedad naciente…Bajo ese aspecto continuó…hasta que terminada la guerra la vemos recluída en un barrio extremo de la ciudad, con su misma fisonomía monstruosa, que ha cambiado de forma pero no de esencia, que ha dejado de ser la hydra para el pulpo, extendiendo sigilosamente sus tentáculos clandestinos hacia los barrios centrales…desafiando la civilización de una República que ha venido al mundo rodeada de todos los peligros, aclamada por todos los labios, bendecida por todos los corazones."

Figure 5.1: A Mosquito Brigade (Brigada de Mosquitos) distributing petroleum to local citizens as a means to eradicate mosquito larvae within the capital city (from Enrique Barnet, *Manual de práctica sanitaria* [Havana: n.p., 1905]).

Figure 5.2: A Disinfection Brigade (Brigada de Desinfección) hermetically sealing a residence where contagious disease was discovered (from Enrique Barnet, *Manual de práctica sanitaria* [Havana: n.p., 1905]).

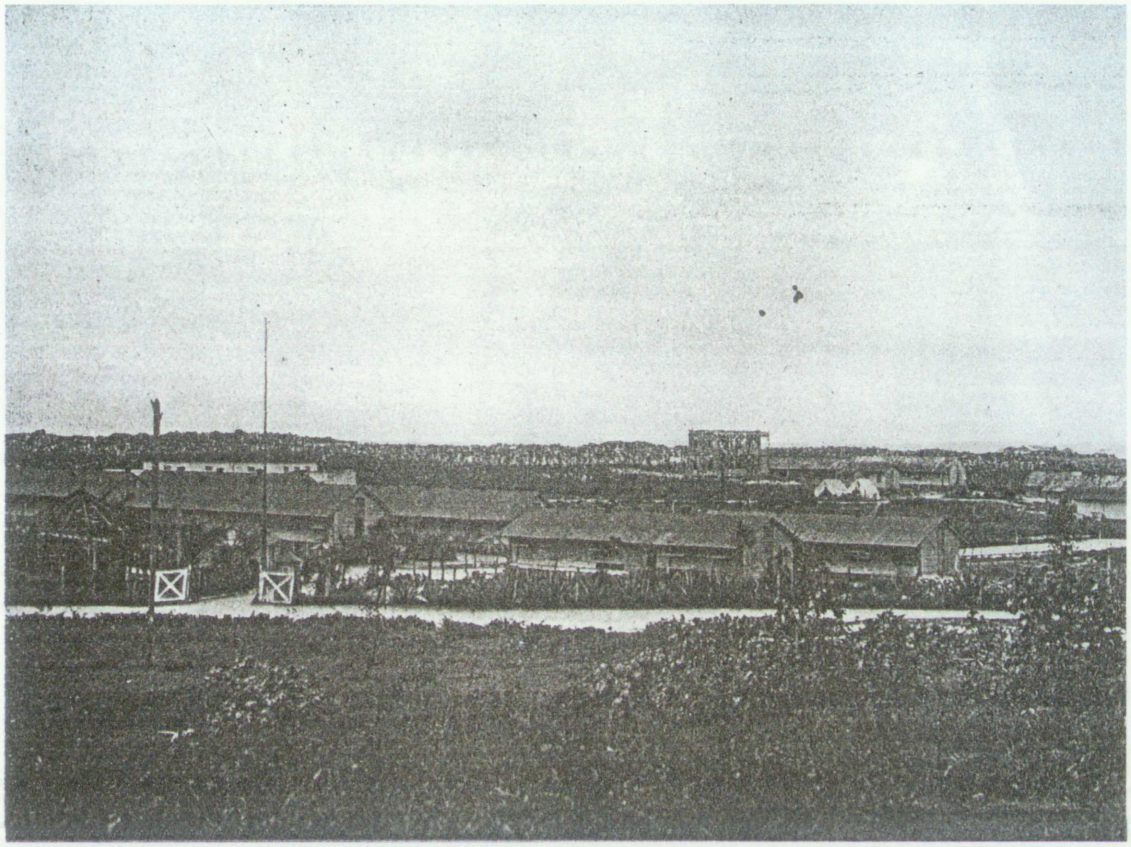

Figure 5.3: External view of the Department of Immigration at Tiscornia near Casablanca (from Enrique Barnet, *Manual de práctica sanitaria* [Havana: n.p., 1905]).

Figure 5.4: Sleeping quarters for quarantined immigrants at the Department of Immigration at Tiscornia (from Enrique Barnet, *Manual de práctica sanitaria* [Havana: n.p., 1905]).

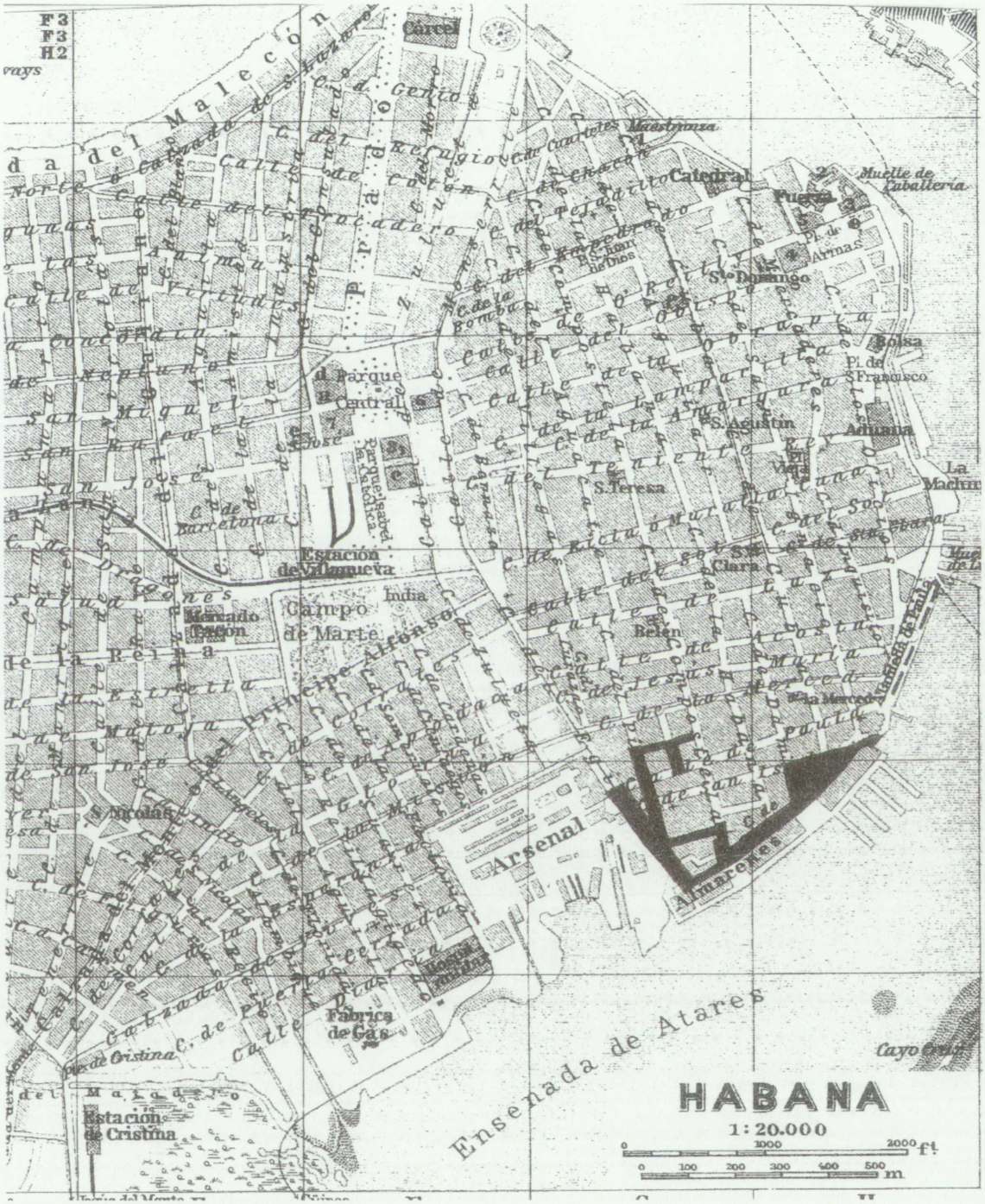

Figure 5.5: Map of Havana showing parameters of tolerance zone as delineated by U.S. officials on 30 October 1902. Author's collection.

Figure 5.6: View of San Isidro Street with prostitutes awaiting clients inside cramped accesorias, ca. 1910 (from Dulcila Cañizares, *San Isidro, 1910: Alberto Yarini y su época* (Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 2000)).

CHAPTER SIX

On the Road to Moral Progress: The New Republic, Social Regeneration, and the Demise of Regulated Prostitution in Cuba, 1902-1925

> The Americans outlawed cockfights, bullfights, and the lottery…Why then did they leave public prostitution? In the United States it does not exist, it is not permitted; nor is it permitted in other civilized countries.
>
> *Diario de la Marina* (1910)[1]

With the establishment of the Cuban republic in 1902, and the final withdrawal of U.S. troops from Cuba in 1909, widespread public concern about the lingering effects of foreign rule on the island prompted many Cubans to denounce the regulatory system as an anachronistic and dangerous vestige of colonial corruption and immorality that had no place in the new republic. Poorly administered, morally ambivalent, and highly exploitative, republican authorities cast the regulatory system as primarily an economic venture for Spanish and U.S. authorities. Consequently, abolishing the regulatory system was linked discursively to shedding the trappings of colonial status. Having come late to independence vis-à-vis the other countries of the Americas, Cubans felt out of step with a modernizing world on a number of fronts, and the continued regulation of prostitution in Cuba—when so many countries had already embraced deregulation or were already well into the process of doing so—only exacerbated feelings that Cuba was at risk of being left in the political, economic, social, and even moral dust of a world moving ever more

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[1] Joaquín N. Urumburú, "Actualidades," *Diario de la Marina* LXX: 275 (22 November 1910): 1. The original Spanish reads: "Los americanos suprimieron aquí los gallos y los toros y la lotería…¿Por qué habrán dejado la prostitución pública? En los Estados Unidos no existe, no es permitida; y en otras naciones civilizados tampoco."

rapidly toward "modernity." Adding fuel to this fire were growing levels of international fear, anxiety, and outrage about the so-called "White Slave Trade," known as the "Trata de Blancas" within the Spanish-speaking world. For Cubans to abolish regulated prostitution, however, they would have to reach a consensus about the relative benefits and risks of taking such dramatic action. What did Cuba stand to gain by abolishing regulated prostitution after so many decades? Conversely, what were the potential risks to Cuban society and national morality? The debates that swirled around the issue of prostitution regulation in the early twentieth-century became a way to mobilize various sectors of society in support of new social legislation aimed at repositioning Cuban society under a banner of republican citizenship, modernity, and national progress.

"Lo de San Isidro"

In the early years of the republic, apprehensions that regulated prostitution threatened to unravel the moral fiber of the Cuban people were fueled by heightened anxieties centered on the tolerance zone (barrio San Isidro). These concerns were driven by local residents' complaints about the location of the zone relative to honorable neighborhoods and by a set of specific events that prompted both local residents and government officials to view the zone as a den of vice, delinquency, and disorder rather than a contained, marginalized space where prostitutes could be isolated from the public view of Havana's honorable citizenry. As the city continued to grow over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the safe distance separating the tolerance zone from Havana's residential and commercial areas shrunk accordingly. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, urban working class families began to complain that the proximity of

the tolerance zone to their honorable neighborhoods impinged upon their daily lives and pressured city officials to relocate the zone to a more marginal area of the city.

Complaints published in local newspapers revealed that local families living in early twentieth-century Havana resented the state of disrepair, disorder, and abandonment of areas near the tolerance zone, especially those situated along the waterfront. Hoping to reclaim these marginalized urban spaces for recreational use, residents turned to the press as a means to voice their demands. On 23 November 1910, Havana's ultraconservative *Diario de la Marina* featured an article submitted by angry local citizens living in the working class neighborhoods known as San Francisco and Paula. The author of the article complained that the once famed bayside promenade known as the Alameda de Paula lying directly adjacent to the tolerance zone had become inhospitable to families wishing to stroll near the waterfront. Directing his criticism at the Secretary of Public Works, the author justified his complaint in the name of "public decorum" (decoro público) as well as the fact that "there is no park within this sector of the city where individuals, and especially children, can go to enjoy an open space given the fact that the boardwalk in question currently offers few attractions."[2] While the author of the article never explicitly blamed the proximity of the tolerance zone for the Alameda's declining appeal to working class Cuban families, the underlying meaning of the article was likely well understood by readers, as the proximity of the tolerance zone to the promenade had long been the source of public consternation (see Chapter 1).

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[2] n.a., "La Alameda de Paula," *Diario de la Marina* LXX:276 (23 November 1910): 5. The original Spanish reads: "no [existe] en esa parte de la ciudad ningún parque ni lugar donde sus habitantes y muy especialmente los niños, puedan gozar de alguna expansión dado que en las actuales circunstancias en que hoy se encuentra la referida alameda, son pocos los atractivos que en verdad ofrece."

In addition to complaints from local residents about the dilapidated physical infrastructure of areas lying near the tolerance zone, events occurring within the tolerance zone itself caused concern for state officials. Perhaps no other single event exposed the tolerance zone to public and state scrutiny more than the murder of Alberto Yarini (1882-1910). The most famous *guayabito* (Cuban pimp) in San Isidro, Yarini acquired a reputation as a gentleman-pimp and was well respected by residents of the tolerance zone. His popularity among the zone's prostitute population generated considerable jealousy amongst the *apaches* (French pimps). This tension finally came to a head on 21 November when Yarini was ambushed by a group of apaches, led by his archrival Louis Lotot, outside a brothel at #60 San Isidro Street. Targeted for allegedly stealing one of Lotot's prostitutes, Berta Fontaine, Yarini was shot and later died at a Havana hospital.[3]

Within hours of the attack, details of the scandalous occurrence—referenced only as "Lo de San Isidro"—made the front page of *Diario de la Marina*.[4] Playing on the sensationalism of the event, editor Joaquín Urumburú seized the opportunity to link the murder of Yarini to broader issues of state corruption and colonial disarray. Specifically targeting "those within filthy slums or the offices of the Hygiene Section who live off of [prostitution]" (los que de ella viven en los inmundos tugurios, o…en las oficinas de la

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[3] For a more detailed account of the events surrounding Alberto Yarini's death, see Dulcila Cañizares, *San Isidro, 1910: Alberto Yarini y su época* (Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 2000), and Mayra Beers, "Murder in San Isidro: Crime and Culture during the Second Cuban Republic," *Cuban Studies* 34 (2003): 97-129.

[4] See, for example, Joaquín N. Urumburú, "Actualidades," *Diario de la Marina* LXX: 275 (22 November 1910): 1, "En San Isidro: Los sucesos de anoche," *Diario de la Marina* LXX: 275 (22 November 1910): 5, and "Los sucesos: Lo de San Isidro," *Diario de la Marina* LXX: 276 (23 November 1910): 10.

Higiene), Urumburú made no attempt to hide his disdain for regulatory officials whom he viewed as nothing more than state sanctioned pimps. Furthermore, he encouraged his readers to question why prostitution was still regulated in Cuba when other countries, and especially the United States, had already moved toward deregulation, stating: "The Americans outlawed cockfights, bullfights, and the lottery…Why then did they leave public prostitution? In the United States it does not exist, it is not permitted; nor is it permitted in other civilized countries."[5] The implication was clear—the rules that applied to the colonizer did not apply to the colony. Urumburú thus entreated Cuba's republican legislators to consider "enormous shame [and] immense danger" (esa gran vergüenza, ese peligro inmenso) that regulated prostitution brought on Cuban society.[6]

The renewed scrutiny of Havana's tolerance zone that occurred in the early years of the republic was prompted not only by the sense of social decay and chaos inspired by the physical state of the tolerance zone and the sensational events surrounding the murder of Alberto Yarini, but also by concerns with the economic impact that the tolerance zone might have on the city's modernization process. Soon after the republic was founded, state officials began to consider the possibility of moving the outdated Villanueva Railroad Station from the center of the capital city closer to the port. With the growth and development of Havana over the course of the nineteenth century, the Villanueva Station was now insufficient for the capital's growing population and increased freight.

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[5] Urumburú, "Actualidades," 1. The original Spanish reads: "Los americanos suprimieron aquí los gallos y los toros y la lotería…¿Por qué habrán dejado la prostitución pública? En los Estados Unidos no existe, no es permitida; y en otras naciones civilizados tampoco."

[6] "Actualidades," *Diario de la Marina* LXX: 275 (22 November 1910): 1.

Inadequate and outdated, the station became "an embarrassment in the center of the city."[7] The British-owned freight company, Ferrocarriles Unidos, which had inherited the old Villanueva Station, thus began scouting for an appropriate new location for the station and decided that the land once occupied by the Spanish Navy, known as Arsenal, offered the possibility of expanded space and direct proximity to the port. Cuban President, José Miguel Gómez (1909-1913), encouraged Congress to approve the land swap not only for the benefits it would provide for public transportation, but also because the existing site of the Villanueva Station could provide a perfect, centralized location for a new presidential palace. Despite staunch resistance from U.S. shipping corporations, who feared that the new station would create a British monopoly in the port that would undermine U.S. economic primacy on the island, the Cuban Congress approved the swap on 10 July 1910 and by late December of that year the transfer was made official. The Arsenal land became the site of the capital's new train station, and the original site of the Villanueva Station eventually became the site of the National Capital during the regime of Gerardo Machado (1924-1933).[8]

Hailed as a triumph for both the development of Havana's urban topography, but also for Cuban economic development more broadly, there was still another problem to be resolved. The new site for the capital's train station lay not only in close proximity to the Bay of Havana, but also to the capital's well-entrenched tolerance zone. Once considered an ideal location for the marginalization of the city's urban demimonde, the

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[7] Oscar Zanetti and Alejandro García, *Sugar and Railroads: A Cuban History, 1837-1959* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 244.

[8] See Zanetti, *Sugar and Railroads*, 244-249 and Santalices, *Las calles de La Habana Intramuros*, 76.

San Isidro neighborhood was suddenly dangerously close to Havana's new symbol of progress. Upon exiting from the train station, arriving passengers would now be greeted by an unsavory view of the tolerance zone and its notorious residents. State officials thus decided that in order to promote the city's modernization, the tolerance zone should be relocated to an area farther removed from the city center.

On 27 December 1911, President Gómez's decision to relocate Havana's tolerance zone to "a location farther removed from the center of the city" (el lugar que necesariamente había de ser en las afueras de la población) appeared in the *Gaceta Oficial de la Republica de Cuba*. Declaring that the current tolerance zone was "located in too highly trafficked an area…and very close to the train station" (enclavada hoy en lugar demasiado transitado…y muy próxima a la estación ferroviaria), Gómez ordered that the zone be relocated in the name of the "beautification, hygiene, and progress" (embellecimiento, higiene, y progreso) of the capital city.[9] State authorities specified an area lying between Pérez, Arango, Juan Alonso and Rosa Enríquez Streeets in the Luyanó neighborhood for the relocated tolerance zone. The location was considered ideal not only because the neighborhood was located at the far eastern edge of the capital city—and thus far from Havana's expanding commercial and residential zone—but also because it was "removed from churches, schools, and commercial centers [and boasted] wide, straight streets that would facilitate surveillance" in those areas.[10]

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[9] Secretaría de Gobernación, "Decreto #1158," *Gaceta Oficial de la Republica de Cuba* XX: 151 (27 December 1911): 6653-6654.

[10] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "apartado de las Iglesias y Colegios y de los Centros Comerciales [y] con calles rectas y amplias que faciliten la vigilancia."

The proposed relocation of the tolerance zone to the Luyanó neighborhood caused considerable controversy. The same day that the relocation decree was published in the *Gaceta Oficial*, the prominent Havana attorney Pedro Herrera Sotolongo, composed an exasperated letter denouncing the move and admonishing President Gómez to "guarantee the moral progress of Cuban society" (garantizar el progreso moral de la sociedad cubana) by abolishing regulated prostitution in Cuba once and for all. Several days later, Herrera composed yet another letter to the President enumerating a number of specific reasons why relocating the tolerance zone would lead only to "an appreciable delay and a grave hindrance" (un sensible retraso y un grave entorpedimiento) in Cuba's road to moral progress.[11]

Herrera argued that the proposed relocation of the tolerance zone would stifle economic growth in the Luyanó neighborhood and unfairly impact honorable families "who are accustomed to living in a nice part of the city" (que se han acomodado a vivir en una parte sana de la capital). Specifically, he was concerned that decent working class residents returning home from work in the city center would be forced to ride on public transportation with "the sinful and degenerate nighthawks who search out such pleasures" (los viciosos y degenerados noctámbulos que frecuentan esos placeres). He further argued that by removing the tolerance zone even farther from the city center, state officials ensured a diminished level of state vigilance and oversight into prostitutes' lives and activities. Even if the relocation effort was successful—and he expressed considerable doubt that the "transient population" (población flotante) comprising the tolerance zone

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[11] The content of both letters was reprinted in, Pedro Herrera Sotolongo, *Defensa de los derechos de la mujer* (Havana: s.n., 1912), 18-25.

could in fact be extricated from San Isidro—he feared that the new tolerance zone would have to offer even more licencious "attractions" (atractivos) in order to ensure that clients would make the trip out to Luyanó. Finally, Herrera viewed the decree as an invitation for local landlords to establish exorbitant rents in the area, so as to exploit the mandatory nature of the relocation and thus further victimize prostitutes. As we will discuss further below, Herrera believed that the true solution to the tolerance zone problem was simply to abolish regulated prostitution altogether and allow prostitutes to live wherever they pleased.[12]

In the end, it is difficult to ascertain which of the various social, political, or commercial concerns and considerations influenced President Gómez's ultimate decistion to rescind his order to relocate the tolerance zone to the Luyanó neighborhood. Whatever the causes, the proposed move never materialized. On 4 October 1912, and citing "reasons of public interest and general convenience" (razones de interés público y conveniencia general), Gómez overturned his previous order to relocate the tolerance zone and instead granted the Compañía de Fomento y Urbanización de la Habana permission to develop the Luyanó neighborhood as a residential area.[13]

The combined pressures of an expanding urban population and foreign and national commercial interests prompted a profound re-imagining of Havana's urban landscape in the early decades of the twentieth century that mirrored radical changes that occurred in the mid-nineteenth century with the tearing down of the city wall (Chapter I). As Cuba was no longer a colonial nation, city and state authorities would need to

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Secretaría de Gobernación, "Decreto #883," *Gaceta Oficial de la Republica de Cuba* XI: 83 (4 October 1912): 4014.

reexamine the space (both geographic and symbolic) of the capital city of their modernizing republic. While urban families expressed disdain for the location of the tolerance zone, the symbolic meaning of the area as a site of vice and disorder also plagued authorities. Widespread knowledge about the continued failings of the regulatory system as a method of exerting state control over the practice of prostitution permitted contemporary newspaper editors to simply shorthand references to unsavory incidents occurring within the zone as "lo de San Isidro." Sensational articles featuring murdered pimps chronicled a tale of disorder, vice, and immorality that reflected poorly on the ability of capital city authorities to exercise control over the practice of prostitution and undermined a vision of Cuba as a modern nation. While the ability of state authorities to relocate the tolerance zone farther from the city center was ultimately thwarted by competing notions of what Havana's socio-spatial topography should look like, the early twentieth-century controversy about the location of the tolerance zone was an important component of a broader debate about the legitimacy of regulated prostitution within the context of Cuba's modernization process more generally.

The Balmory Case

Contemporary connections drawn between the new ideals of republican citizenship in Cuba and the need to deregulate prostitution came to a head in September 1911 in an unusual Supreme Court case involving an ill prostitute who refused to be taken to the Hygiene Hospital. On 8 June 1911, Hygiene Officer Apolinar García was charged with escorting Victorina Balmory y Riestra to the Hygiene Hospital following a positive pelvic exam result at the dispensary that determined she was infected with gonorrhea. In route to

the hospital, however, Balmory escaped from García. According to court testimony, Balmory claimed she fled because she was being both forcibly detained and denied the basic right—as guaranteed by the 1902 *Reglamento General* and *Reglamento Especial*—to return home to gather some personal items before proceeding to the hospital. Leveling a counter charge of negligence against García (he was relieved of his duties that same day), Balmory hired José María Leanés y Pérez to represent her in court.

The defense strategy hinged on the ability to prove that "because Victorina Balmory's rights have not been respected…nor was she offered any personal protections against illegal and unjustifiable abuses" (no se ha ofrecido ni tenido a Victorina Balmory en el pleno respecto de sus derechos…ni se le ha ofrecido protección para su persona contra abusos ilegales e injustificados), García had not only violated her rights as guaranteed under regulatory legislation but also, and more importantly, as guaranteed by Cuba's new Republican Constitution. In order to prove his case, Leanés y Pérez proceeded to poke sizable holes in the 1902 regulations as both unconstitutional and discriminatory towards women. Arguing that "the Special Regulation establishes inexplicable disparities that prejudice against women, and that no legal precept justifies" (se ha creado una reglamentación especial en la cual se establecen diferencias inexplicables en perjucio de la mujer, que ningún precepto justifca), and that furthermore the legislation was "made more odious still by the fact that it pertains only to the most vulnerable women" (resulta tanto más odiosa, cuanto que solo a las débiles mujeres se refiere), Leanés y Pérez went to considerable lengths to highlight various articles of the 1902 legislation that directly undermined and contradicted the constitutional rights of citizens. In so doing, Leanés y Pérez took the rather revolutionary stance that Balmory, as

a prostitute, was guaranteed protection against the kind of "deprivation of freedoms" (privaciónes de libertad) for which García, and the Hygiene Section more broadly, stood accused.

Ultimately, Balmory lost her case. The Supreme Court upheld Chapter G, Article 12, of the 1902 Special Hygiene Regulation—which authorized authorities to forcibly remand to the Hygiene Hospital any prostitute (registered or clandestine) found infected with venereal disease—on the grounds that the specified law was "of a general nature and of public interest" (de carácter general e interés público). In short, the Supreme Court declared that where prostitutes were concerned, the 1902 regulation held precedence over the Republican Constitution, thus reinforcing the idea that prostitutes did not fall under the protective umbrella of constitutional guarantees extended to other citizens. Finally, the Supreme Court ruled that the 1902 regulation would stand as law until legally overturned or modified.[14]

The shock waves caused by the Balmory case were felt far outside the Supreme Court. Various segments within society already aligned (and aligning) with a burgeoning national and international abolition movement, adopted the Balmory verdict as a rallying cry for the end of regulation as a corrupt and inhumane system that denied basic constitutional rights to prostitutes. Taking their (albeit ultimately unsuccessful) strategy from Leanés y Pérez, these critics condemned the 1902 regulation as both

[14] The Supreme Court decision on the Balmory case was published in the *Gaceta Oficial* on 23 September 1911. See *Gaceta Oficial* X: 73 (23 September 1911): 3237-3240.

unconstitutional and without any real authority.[15] Proponents of continued regulation also used the Balmory case to frame their defense of the need for regulation and the soundness of the 1902 legislation. Did a "regulation" hold the same authority as a law? Was the 1902 regulation even valid anymore, now that the U.S. intervention government had officially withdrawn from Cuba? Where should the Republic stand on the issue of prostitution regulation? The big question in Cuba thus became: to regulate or not to regulate?

To Regulate or Not to Regulate?

In the wake of the highly publicized Balmory case and the ensuing debates over the constitutionality of the 1902 regulation, sectors of society most concerned with the issue of prostitution regulation chose their sides. The ensuing debate about the relevance of regulated prostitution in the republic prompted the publication of several lengthy tomes wherein authors—many of whom had direct and long-standing ties to the regulatory system—debated the various pros and cons of deregulation. The sheer size of these tomes was something not seen in Cuba since the publication of Céspedes' best-selling text in the late 1880s (Chapter IV), and testifies to the salience of the issue for contemporary Cuban society. The range of responses on the issue of prostitution deregulation produced during the period 1911-1913 are perhaps best exemplified by the work of Dr. Matías Duque, Dr. Ramón María Alfonso, and prominent Havana attorney Pedro Herrera Sotolongo. Each of the three texts presents a different opinion on two central (and related) questions: What

[15] Various court documents and official state correspondence relating to the Balmory case were reproduced in Dr. Matías Duque, *La prostitución, sus causas, sus males, su hygiene* (Havana: Imprenta y Papelería de Rambla, Bouza y Co., 1914), 312-324.

stance should the Cuban Republic take on the prostitution issue? How relevant are colonial institutions and neocolonial legislation in a new Republican setting? While perhaps motivated to some degree by a desire to provide for their own job security as employees of the Special Hygiene Section, Drs. Duque and Alfonso conceded that corruption and other problems plagued the regulatory system, but continued to champion regulation as the best guarantor of public health and social order. Conversely, Herrera called for the immediate abolition of the regulatory system as a means to set the Cuban nation on the road to moral progress.

In 1913, Dr. Matías Duque composed a 300-page response to the debates swirling around the regulatory system in Cuba, which he later published under the title *Prositution: Causes, Impact, and Prevention* (*La prostitución: sus causas, sus males, su hygiene*).[16] In the preface to his tome, Duque justifies his endeavor, stating that: "Because the Cuban state is in the process of attempting to abolish prostitution, I am going to say something that eleven years of experience [working as an employee] in the Special Hygiene Service has taught me."[17] Duque's book represents not only a careful articulation of his own opinions on the question of deregulation, but the author took tremendous strides to dissect many of the key debates that had shaped the legislative parameters of the regulatory system since its inception in 1873.

Duque's primary motivation for establishing a detailed social and legal history of

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[16] Dr. Matías Duque, *La prostitución, sus causas, sus males, su higiene* (Havana: Imprenta y Papelería de Rambla, Bouza y Co., 1914).

[17] Duque, *La prostitución*, 6. The original Spanish reads: "[C]omo en estos momentos se trata de abolir por el Estado cubano la reglamentación de la prostitución…voy a decir algo que la experiencia de once años en el Servicio de la Sección de Higiene Especial me hizo adquirir."

prostitution in Cuba was to gather evidence for his claim that Spain had established a number of exploitative systems—slavery and regulated prostitution being the two primary examples—that left "an enormous stain on Cuban society" (una mancha enorme para la cultura de la sociedad cubana).[18] Furthermore, if Spanish colonial authorities had established a corrupt and exploitative regulatory system, subsequent governments (namely the U.S.) had done little to correct the problems of the past. Duque stated that "the prostitution regulation service is as defective and corrupt today as it was when it was administred by municipal authorities in Havana [under Spain]."[19]

Although riddled with significant administrative problems, the answer was not merely to dismantle the entire regulatory system. Instead, Duque proposed a wide-ranging set of reforms that he hoped would bring new rigor to the existing regulatory system and also modernize those aspects of the system that now seemed backward or too overtly exploitative. In other words, his goal was to revamp the regulatory system in a way that would bring it into line with new republican ideals of independence and individual rights while simultaneously buttressing the system to allow for continued state oversight into issues of public health and venereal disease. His opinion on the matter was quite clear:

> If the current formulation of the prostitution regulation service is not suitable for obtaining the desired results, due to defects embedded within the law that governs its operation, why should we not then modify the components of said law according to knowledge gleaned from our experience? Why, if in addition to the

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[18] Duque, *La prostitución*, 89.

[19] Duque, *La prostitución*, 90. The original Spanish reads: "[h]oy, el servicio de la reglamentación de la prostitución sigue siendo tan malo y tan vicioso como cuando lo regía el Municipio habanero."

> defects imbedded within this law there have also been incidences of misapplication of said law, are those procedures not reformed? Furthermore, if these misapplications of the law are the result of deficiencies of character, morality, or intelligence on the part of those who are charged with directing this service, why are they not then replaced? We are not treating the root causes, but merely the effects.[20]

To these ends, Duque proposed a new twelve-point reform strategy that centered on ways to expand state control over a wider range of Cuban bodies—both male and female, as well as prostitute and non-prostitute—in order to combat the effects of venereal disease on Cuba's modernizing population.

According to Duque, the key to securing progress within the arena of public health was to ratify state policies directed at examination, treatment, and education on the devastating physical effects of venereal disease on the Cuban population. He argued that the goal of society should be to not only target prostitutes as carriers and promoters of venereal disease, but to establish a system that would bring all of Cuban society under an umbrella of state-promoted public health policy. Under Duque's plan, the regulatory system would remain intact, but would be augmented by an array of new policies that would require all workers, wet nurses, military personnel, and circus performers (all mentioned specifically) to seek regular pelvic exams. All individuals would be required to declare themselves ill if infected with venereal disease and failure to do so could result

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[20] Duque, La prostitución, 264. The original Spanish reads: "Si el servicio de la reglamentación de la prostitución no se presta en la forma precisa y necesaria para obtener un buen resultado, debido a defectos de la ley que lo regula, ¿por qué no se modifica la ley actual, en los puntos aquellos que la experiencia ha señalado que debe ser reformado? ¿Por qué, si al lado de esos defectos de la ley han existido o existen causas de mal procedimiento en la aplicación de la ley, no se reforman esos procedimientos; y si esos procedimientos dependen de la insuficiencia del character, de la moral o de la mentalidad de los encargados de aplicarlos y dirigir esos servicios, por qué no se va contra ellos, sustiyéndolos, y no que se va contra el sistema? No se trata la causa, sino los efectos."

in criminal charges if that individual were to infect someone else (even homicide in fatal cases!). Although clear on the punitive elements of his reformed regulatory system, Duque also proposed reforms intended to give Cubans greater access to health care, including free health clinics and venereal hospitals and access to information regarding the physical effects of venereal disease via public seminars, advertisements posted on buses and trains, and public museum exhibits. Public service messages regarding the physical effects of venereal disease were to be accompanied by vivid illustrations that, "without overstepping the bounds of morality and decency, would demonstrate the horrors [and] fears of these human disgraces" (sin rebasar el terreno de la moral y de la decencia, mostraran en ellas el horror [y] el miedo, a esas desgracias humanas.)[21]

In order to prove his central contention that venereal disease in general, and not merely prostitution, was the true threat to the Cuban social body, Duque gathered and presented data from each of the city's public hospitals showing rising numbers of venereal disease cases being treated in those various facilities. He also pointed to data suggesting that the total number of registered prostitutes residing in the capital city for the period 1911-1913 (550 total) represented a "horrific quantity if we consider the number of sexual encounters any one single prostitute may have" (cantidad horradora si se recuerda el número de veces que una mujer meretriz ejerce el coito con los que demandan de ella esa function).[22] Even more dangerous was the clandestine population, which he speculated to total five times the number of registered prostitutes, whose clientele could surely number in the thousands. The intention of drawing on this data was

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[21] Duque, *La prostitución*, 279.

[22] Duque, *La prostitución*, 302.

clear: Duque hoped to make the point that now was surely *not* the time to consider deregulation.[23]

One of Duque's esteemed colleagues within the Cuban medical community, Dr. Ramón María Alfonso, was likewise concerned with the ineffectual and corrupt nature of the regulatory system. Like Duque, he called not for the abolition of the entire system, but rather a radical restructuring of the regulatory apparatus that would do away with the most exploitative and morally vacuous elements of the existing system, namely the tolerance zone and the elaborate system of fees imposed upon registered prostitutes. As a physician, Alfonso was highly concerned with the propagation of venereal disease within Cuban society and proposed that the medical service component of the regulatory system, now financed by the state rather than the prostitutes themselves, should remain intact.

While Alfonso's vision for Cuba's revamped regulatory system was shaped by his abhorrence of the economically exploitative nature of existing prostitution policies, Alfonso refused to accept a formulation of prostitutes as victims and even cited the much-publicized Balmory case as evidence of prostitutes' culpability. After studying the events of the case, Alfonso concluded that the real joke was on those Cubans who would choose to portray prostitutes as victims of external exploitative forces. Having served her sentence at the hygiene hospital, where she was ostensibly cured of her illness, Balmory simply returned to her life of vice and mocked those who fell for her elaborate ploy to evade hospitalization. In the same way that Alfonso believed prostitutes capable of manipulating the regulatory system to secure their own ends; he also refused to view prostitutes arriving to the city as victims of lies by foreign procurers. In his writings,

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[23] Ibid.

Alfonso distinguished between European and Cuban models of the white slave trade. In the former, poor, uneducated young girls were tricked into traveling abroad only to fall prey to in-country pimps and madams who proceeded to lock them into a life of sexual servitude through debt, lies, and violence. Contrastingly, the Cuban model was predicated largely on inter-provincial circulation of registered and clandestine prostitutes, not on the importation of unwilling victims drawn from the rural villages of Europe. Not only were the women fully aware of the true intent of their journey, but the parents of the girls were as well. This was not a formulation of the prostitute as victim, but rather as a willing participant equally invested in the bottom line (his formulation) of prostitution—to earn a living.[24]

Having elaborated the complicity of all parties involved in prostitution, Alfonso then turned his attention to other problems with the regulatory system, including: rampant prostitute resistance and manipulation of the system (trading cartillas, washing away the signs of venereal disease, evasion via flight or migration), the ruinous physical state and internal social disorder of the Hygiene Hospital, inept state employees, the difficulties of gathering corroborating evidence to substantiate grievances filed against unruly prostitutes, and the continued jurisdictional debates between state authorities over the location and policing of Havana's tolerance zone. Alfonso argued that clandestine prostitutes were especially dangerous for society because they could easily be confused with honorable women because they did not carry hygiene cards, ninety percent were

[24] Alfonso, *La reglamentación,* 18.

infected with venereal disease, and they were often protected by wealthy clients and greedy landlords who would intervene on their behalf in the event of their arrest.[25]

Alfonso was also critical of inexperienced, corrupt, lax, and ineffectual state employees (especially members of the Hygiene Police) who further undermined the central tenets of regulatory policy. Having achieved their posts via personal ties and nepotism rather than special training and aptitude, these employees assumed their duties "as a temporary gig, because they have no better options, and they are willing to take advantage of whatever situation presents itself" (como una estación de paso, porque no les ofrece cosa major de momento, y se aprovechan de lo que pueden).[26] Finally, Alfonso argued that even when local citizens did file grievances against clandestine prostitutes, they most often did so anonymously so as to avoid entanglements with the justice system (líos con la justicia), family embarrassment (no quieren que su nombre aparezca en esta clase de asuntos), or acts of revenge by powerful pimps or clients (no quieren…á que le den un testarazo al doblar la esquina), thus making it extremely difficult to gather corroborating evidence to substantiate the complaint.

With regard to the tolerance zone, Alfonso's primary concern was that the forced enclosure of registered prostitutes within a specific zone failed to address the most pressing issue related to prostitution—clandestinity. He further claimed that forcing all registered prostitutes to live in one circumscribed area had created a subculture of parasitic landlords (parásitos industriales) who imposed exorbitant rents on the women, knowing that they would not be able to protest. The result was that landlords divided and

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[25] Alfonso, *La reglamentación,* 60.

[26] Alfonso, *La reglamentación,* 57.

subdivided their already small properties into tiny, almost unlivable spaces, in order to maximize the number of women living within their buildings. After paying these exploitative rents, the prostitutes were then further exploited by their pimp (guayabito) and the local Hygiene agent who came for their respective portions of the "daily harvest" (cosecha diaria). The depiction of corrupt landlords, pimps, and Hygiene Section officials as beneficiaries of a system intended to foster state control and public order further highlighted the deficiencies of regulatory policy and bolstered Alfonso's reformist argument.

After nearly one hundred and fifty pages of detailed analysis concerning the failures of the existing regulatory system, Alfonso finally arrived at the central point of his discussion—the need for reform. In his own words, "the solution…is not to dismantle regulation, but rather to profoundly modify it and adapt it to current customs" ([l]a cuestión…no está en suprimir la Reglamentación, sino en modificarla profundamente adaptándola á las costumbres actuales).[27] Recognizing that most European nations were already in the process of embracing deregulation, Alfonso conceded that the "current Cuban prostitution regulation has many defects, and is in many ways incompatible with our new progressive legal culture, and instead serves to bolster anachronistic practices that have disappeared in countries far less civilized than our own."[28] Of particular concern, was the elaborate system of fines and fees imposed upon prostitutes by the state

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[27] Alfonso, *La reglamentación,* 149.

[28] Alfonso, *La reglamentación,* 153. The original Spanish reads: "[l]a Reglamentación cubana actual tiene muchos lunares; en algunos aspectos es hasta incompatible con el estado de Derecho á que hemos llegado a peca de anacrónica manteniendo practices que han desparecido ya en países no tan civilizados como el nuestro."

as a means to generate the revenue necessary to support the vast institutional framework required by full regulation. As long as the state charged prostitutes a fee to work, Alfonso argued that "the state will always appear as an entity that benefits financially from prostitution, and this 'official pimping' will gravely affect the prestige [of the state], as it will be compared to other parasites living off [prostitution]."[29]

In Alfonso's opinion, the state should abolish the Hygiene Section and Hygiene Police (relying instead on regular police forces to do their job), and thus eliminate a huge financial burden on the state. Furthermore, the tolerance zone should be disassembled, allowing prostitutes to disseminate throughout the city (except near schools and churches) rather than live in one concentrated area that only served to breed higher levels of vice, corruption, and exploitation to the detriment of all individuals living in proximity to the zone. These measures, he argued, would serve to reduce prostitution regulation in Cuba to its proper parameters: "sanitary and financed by the State" (sanitaria, y costeada por el Estado).[30] Finally, Alfonso reminded his readers that punitive legislation was no guarantor of public morality. In order to effect real change in society authorities should address the core causes of prostitution by paying greater attention to women's economic and social needs.

If Duque and Alfonso believed that the republic should continue to embrace (an ableit vastly reformulated) regulation, the prominent Havana attorney Pedro Herrera

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[29] Alfonso, *La reglamentación,* 154. The original Spanish reads: siempre aparecerá el Estado como una entidad que saca dinero de la prostitución—en provecho de quien sea—y este 'proxenitismo oficial' afecta hondamente su prestigio, colocándose casi al nivel de los otros parásitos que de ella conviven."

[30] Alfonso, *La reglamentación,* 158.

Sotolongo argued the opposite view in his 1911 publication titled *A Defense of Women's Rights* (*Defensa de los derechos de la mujer*).[31] Staunchly nationalistic, Herrera used his book as a platform to poke holes in the entire regulatory system, presenting it as an ineffectual and highly corrupt system that only succeeded in further exploiting women via "repugnant and unquantifiably abusive precepts" (preceptos tan odiosos y abusos incalificables).[32] At its core, Herrera's discussion cast the regulatory system as completely contrary to the goals of republican statehood. In his words,

> There exists no legal justification for this class of service and even the Republican Constitution is absolutely contrary to it, to the extreme that such a system becomes absurd within the context of a democratic nation....To support the continued existence of this regulation, and not rally for its complete derrogation, is not only to contribute to the immorality that this law propagates, but also to deny one of the greatest responsibilities facing the Republic and History.[33]

His position was clear: the regulatory system was completely at odds with the goals of a modern Cuban republic and should be abolished outright. He decried the rising numbers of minors who were granted licenses by the Hygiene Section (without presenting any real evidence of this practice), labeled the Dispensary a "detention center" (lugar de arresto), and denounced the autonomy with which the Hygiene Section operated, permitting those

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[31] Pedro Herrera Sotolongo, *Defensa de los derechos de la mujer* (Havana: s.n., 1912).

[32] Herrera, *Defensa*, 5.

[33] Herrera, *Defensa*, 6-7. The original Spanish reads: "Ninguna razón de orden legal, robustece la reglamentación de esta clase de servicios, y la misma Constitución de la República es contraria en absolute a ello, al extreme de ser absurdo el sistema dentro de un país democrático…Propender á que esta reglamentación quede en vigor, y no cooperar á su completa derogación, sería no solo contribuir á que la inmoralidad se propague, sino contraer las más grandes responsabilidades ante la República y ante la Historia."

authorities to impose upon prostitutes arbitrary fines and fees "not authorized by any law" (no autorizadas por ninguna Ley).

The model for change and progress, Herrera claimed, were those European countries—including England, Spain, France, Austria, Germany, and Belgium—currently mobilizing against the white slave trade and embracing deregulation. Herrera applauded the efforts of "all the civilized nations of the world which, thanks to the efforts of societies and committees for the suppression of the white slave trade, have taken a step toward progress and, by ending regulated prostitution, have ceased to support this shameful commerce."[34] For Republican authorities to embrace deregulation would not only "guarantee the moral progress of Cuban society" (garantizar el progreso moral de la sociedad cubana), but it was also the only action that was "just, honorable, and patriotic" (justo, honrado, y patriótico).[35] Reminding these authorities of their duties, Herrera stated that "in a democratic nation…it is impossible to remain indifferent when faced with the spectacle of a social ill that, instead of being treated, is bolstered and exploited by the state or by institutions created by the state."[36] Herrera argued that Cuba could not be a truly modern, progressive, democratic Republic if it clung to exploitative, corrupt, and immoral colonial institutions.

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[34] Herrera, Defensa, 19. The original Spanish reads: "todas las naciones del mundo culto, donde debido á los esfuerzos de las sociedades y comités de la suppression de la trata de blancas, se ha llegado á dar un paso de progreso y á suprimir la reglamentación, dejando de proteger este indigno comercio."

[35] Herrera, *Defensa*, 19-20.

[36] Herrera, *Defensa*, 28. The original Spanish reads: "En un país democrático…no es posible permanecer indiferente, ante el espectáculo que ofrece un mal social, que en lugar de ser atendido, es fomentado y explotado por el Estado ó por instituciones creadas por él."

Echoing an earlier medicalized language utilized in support of the regulationist cause in the 1860s and 1870s (see Chapter II)—which posited that prostitution was a "social cancer" (cancer social) in need of a cure—Herrera claimed that the corrupt and exploitative Hygiene Section was, in fact, the cancer that should be cut from the Cuban body politic.[37] Furthermore, he challenged the previous notion that modernity and regulation went hand in hand, instead pointing out that if modern European nations were embracing deregulation, then "it is a grave error to suppose that…prostitution is a modern necessity."[38] Herrera further claimed "the ends achieved through this social cancer, are neither appreciable nor moral…prostitution is not necessary nor does it fill any void in current society."[39] If "almost every civilized nation [had] enacted massive reforms to its [prostitution] legislation," then "it was not possible for Cuba to remain stationary."[40] These statements played on Cubans' sense of inferiority relative to the modernizing nations of Europe and Latin America (having come late to independence) as well as on the psychic wounds inflicted by the powerful disillusionment of a truncated independence process due to U.S. intervention. To claim that Cuba was stagnant, and out of step with

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[37] Herrera, *Defensa*, 46.

[38] Herrera, *Defensa*, 43. The original Spanish reads: "[e]s un gravísimo error el suponer que…la prostitución y que es una necesidad moderna."

[39] Herrera, *Defensa*, 27. The original Spanish reads: "Los fines que llena este cancer social, no son apreciables ni morales…la prostitución no es necesaria ni llena ningún vacío en la actual sociedad."

[40] Herrera, *Defensa*, 35, 45. The original Spanish reads: "casi todas las legislaciones de naciones cultas han introducido trascendentales reformas de este orden en su legislación…no es posible que Cuba permanezca estacionada."

the rest of the world, played powerfully on this sense of insecurity, and Herrera was knowingly picking at a wound not yet healed.

Herrera also connected his arguments to an emerging anti-white slave trade movement by recasting the prostitute as a victim of circumstances in need of protection by the state. Revealing his inherently sexist views on the position of women (generally) within society, Herrera reminded his readers that "woman is a fragile being" (la mujeres un ser débil), and that "within this group of women there are mothers, spouses, sisters, and daughters [who] feel and suffer more than men because they are ultimately [made of] pure feeling [and] pure passion."[41] This kind of imagery and language recast the Cuban prostitute as an innocent victim in need of protection (not the aggressive, morally corrupt whore of popular imagination), and, most radically, as a republican citizen and potential future mother. In order to punctuate this final assessment of the perils faced by Cuban women, and the promise that the rehabilitation of the Cuban prostitute had for the Cuban nation, Herrera ended his discussion with a final reminder that "the dignity of a nation is reflected in the respect shown for women by its citizens" (la dignidad de una nación, se conoce por el respecto que la mujer le merece á sus habitantes).[42] In short, Herrera offered a substantial justification for the deregulation of prostitution that linked the future of the Cuban prostitute to the future of the Cuban nation.

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[41] Herrera, *Defensa*, 46. The original Spanish reads: "entre ese grupo de mujeres, hay madres, esposas, hermanas, é hijas [quienes] sienten y sufren con mayor intensidad que el hombre, porque ellas, al fin, son todo sentimiento, todo pasión."

[42] Herrera, *Defensa*, 47.

To address widespread issues of corruption, abuse, and general ineffectualness, Herrera proposed that state authorities shift their energies away from regulation and begin to develop a system whereby prostitution and venereal disease would be eradicated from Cuban society. The solution he proposed was to lift the burden of punitive legislation off of poor women's backs and instead establish a system of supportive institutions designed to grant them opportunities to improve their economic circumstances, thus thwarting the appeal of prostitution as a survival strategy. To this end, Herrera proposed that state officials establish training facilities where ex-prostitutes could acquire job skills.[43] He also proposed the creation of an extensive network of free public health clinics where both men and women could come for examination and treatment of venereal diseases, and the creation of safe houses where women could find temporary shelter in times of economic distress. Although Herrera's plan called for the decriminalization of prostitution, public solicitation and scams intended to victimize, corrupt, or otherwise trick women into prostitution would remain criminal offenses. In many senses, Herrera's proposal called for a return to the system under tolerance in which only public (visible) manifestations of prostitution were punishable by law (see Chapter I). In this sense, Cuban public opinion on the issue of prostitution had come full circle.

[43] Herrera, *Defensa*, 36.

Dismantling Regulation

On 23 October 1913, President Menocal published Decree #964 in the *Gaceta Oficial*, thus ending forty years of regulated prostitution in Cuba.[44] Citing the abolition of regulated prostitution as "a social necessity, which has prompted the move toward deregulation in the most progressive nations" (una necesidad social, motivo por el que ha sido suprimido en las naciones más progresistas), the decree offered an extensive list of justifications for the decision. In general, the decree declared that regulated prostitution had secured no real benefits for Cuban society and had, in fact, simply "promoted pimping, corrupted women, and discredited public administration" (fomentado proxenitismo, envileciendo a la mujer y desacreditando la administración pública). The decree further declared that the mandatory bi-weekly pelvic exam offered only "a false sanitary guarantee" (una falsa garantía sanitaria) and that tolerance zones established across the island had become "centers of vice and crime where disgraced women are wickedly exploited by those who, supported by the State, profit from this ignoble commerce and contribute nothing to public morality or hygiene."[45] Furthermore, the decree stated that the tolerance zone offered foreign visitors "an embarrassing spectacle

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[44] Secretaría de Sanidad y Beneficiencia, "Decreto #964," *Gaceta Oficial de la Isla de Cuba* (25 October 1913): 5453-5454. Portions of the 1913 regulation were subsequently reprinted in various books dedicated to the study of criminality and law enforcement in Havana. See, for example, Rafael Roche, *La policia y sus misterios* (Havana: s.n., 1914), 344-345.

[45] Secretaría de Sanidad y Beneficiencia, "Decreto #964," *Gaceta Oficial de la Isla de Cuba* (25 October 1913): 5453. The original Spanish reads: "centros de vicio y de crímenes, donde se explota inícuamente a la mujer infamada por cuantos hacen granjería de ese innoble comercio, amparados por el Estado, sin utilidad alguna para la moral y la hygiene."

that belies our culture and honor" (un espectáculo bochornoso, que desdice de nuestra cultura y honorabilidad).[46]

According to Menocal, "the regulatory sysem…is incompatible with our wholesome morality, with the concepts of equality and human dignity and with the spirit of freedom that governs our nation" (el régimen de la prostitución reglamentada…es incompatible con la sana moral, con el concepto de la igualdad y dignidad humanas y con el espíritu de libertad que rige la vida de nuestro pueblo). In short, the regulation of prostitution was considered dramatically out of synch with Cuba's new status as a modern, progressive republic; a republic committed to "the legal equality of all citizens, without distinction of sex, guaranteeing all women and men the same protection of their person and possessions" (la igualdad juridical a todos los habitantes, sin distinción de sexos, dispensando a hombres y mujeres la misma protección en sus personas y en sus bienes). Delivering a final blow to regulation, President Menocal declared that Cuba's Executive Powers, as "guardian also of justice, liberty, and the rights of the people" (guardián también de la justicia, de la liberated y del derecho del pueblo) should no longer permit "the continuation of an arbitrary system and stands as an affront to morality and restricts the rights of citizens, without benefit of any kind" (la continuación de un régimen arbitario que afrenta la moral y restringe los derechos del ciudadano, sin beneficio de ningún orden). Under the republic then, even prostitutes—once considered the vectors of physical and moral degeneration of the nation—would share in the rights and benefits of full citizenship, provided that their work remained discreet.

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[46] Ibid.

Having thus fully delineated the moral imperatives undergirding the move to deregulate, President Menocal concluded the decree by systematically disassembling the entire institutional framework of Cuba's regulatory system. While continuing to punish "the public exercise of prostitution" (el ejercicio público de la prostitución), as well as acts of "public scandal originating from licentiousness or relating to the corruption of minors" (escándalo público originando por el libertinaje y cuantos hechos se refieran a la corrupción de menores), authorities were forbidden to establish or maintain registries, impose or gather any form of tax or fee, or obligate prostitutes to live in fixed zones within the city.[47] Offering no concrete instructions or specific plan, President Menocal granted local law enforcement officials a mere two months to dismantle Havana's existing tolerance zone. Although Menocal's decree made no explicit mention of proper procedures for closing the hygiene hospital, it seems plausible that if patients receiving treatment at the facility were expelled they were absorbed into one of the city's several

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[47] In the months following the deregulation of prostitution in Cuba, many of the claims made about the corruption of the Special Hygiene Section were substantiated, though never punished. On 17 March 1914, just five months after the ratification of Decree #964, officials of the Secretaría de Sanidad y Beneficiencia filed criminal charges against officials of the now-defunct Special Hygiene Service. Citing evidence of "irregularities " (inexactidudes) located during a review of the section's records, the Secretaría accused Special Hygiene Section officials of illegal exaction of fines, bribery, malfeasance, and fraud. Of specific concern was evidence located in Volume XI of the records maintained by the Department of Fines (Negociado de Multas) that suggested that section officials had routinely doubled fined prostitutes, accepted bribes from madams operating illegal brothels, and paid salaries to non-existent employees. Despite the specificity and seriousness of these accusations, the case sat in court for almost three months until it was finally closed on 8 June 1914 due to insufficient evidence. ANC/AH, leg. 634, no. 9 (Sala Primera de lo Criminal, 1914), "Rollo de causa seguida por Exacciones ilegales, cohecho, prevaricación y Fraude." See also, ANC/AH, leg. 63, no. 1 (1917), "Cohecho denunciado por el vigilante de policia 574 Pedro Pujadas."

civil hospitals.[48] Having swept away the trappings of the regulatory apparatus, state energies would now be redirected toward promoting public health more broadly.

While republican authorities understood that abolishing the regulatory system would not eradicate prostitution, by 1913, they were no longer willing to tolerate a system whereby the state profited from an industry deemed morally corrupt and exploitative (i.e. state-sanctioned vice). Ultimately, progressive moral reformers in Cuba won the ear and support of Cuban legislators by casting deregulation as progressive, nationalistic, and morally upright. If abolishing the regulatory system was seen as a first important step toward asserting Cuba's new republican status, then the second important step was to establish a new public health system centered less on isolating and extracting revenue from diseased prostitutes than on investing in the physical, social, and moral health of the republican social body generally.

The dawn of the Cuban republic thus witnessed a profound reorientation regarding public health strategies to combat venereal disease. To dismantle the regulatory system was also to sweep away an entire medical complex centered on the notion that the disciplining and sanitizing of prostitutes bodies was a sufficient response to the dangers of venereal disease. No longer able to rely on sanitation cards, mandatory pelvic exams, and a hygiene hospital, medical authorities in Cuba would have to devise a more expansive medical complex that could address the issue of venereal disease at a national level. Thus, republican officials designed a public health campaign centered on the free clinic and a mass education campaign, a revised divorce legislation intended to punish

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[48] While this hypothesis seems plausible, only a more in-depth study of post-1913 civil hospital records housed within the National Archives and/or the Academy of Sciences could determine the fate of venereal disease patients under treatment at the hygiene hospital.

infecting spouses, and stricter immigration procedures with the intention of promoting a healthier (biologically and morally) Cuban body politic.

Regenerating the Republic

With the dissolution of the Special Hygiene Section in 1913, the Secretaría de Sanidad y Beneficiencia (under the direction of Dr. Enrique Núñez) was charged with overseeing national imperatives to combat the spread of venereal disease in Cuba. Towns across the island with populations over 10,000 residents would now feature free clinics and hospitals—funded in part by remaining Hygiene Section funds—where both male and female patients could be tested and treated for venereal disease. By reframing venereal disease as a public health issue rather than merely a by-product of prostitution, the 1913 decree dismantled long-standing associations between prostitutes' bodies as the sole purveyors of venereal disease and national moral decay. The focus was instead placed squarely on the need for detection and treatment of venereal disease across the Cuban population, regardless of gender, race, or occupation.

By the 1920s, members of the Cuban medical community embraced the issue of venereal disease propagation as the republic's next major socio-medical project since the eradication of yellow fever at the turn of the century. Driving this shift in state health policy were members of the medical community—many of whom were previous employees of the Special Hygiene Section—who argued that the mere abolition of the regulatory system was not sufficient action to promote national public health or, by extension, public morality. Members of the medical community thus encouraged state authorities to adopt strict nation-wide measures to promote the detection, treatment, and prevention of venereal disease. To be sure, prostitution was still considered by most state

authorities and medical practitioners as the primary locus of venereal disease; yet, prostitutes were no longer viewed as the *only* culprits. As Dr. Matías Duque stated, "prostitution is, without question, the greatest source of venereal disease, but it is not the only one, and legislators and public hygienists should not ignore the other sources of these ills."[49] New divorce legislation, public health clinics, and mass disease eradication campaigns provided a means to pull the lower classes into the orbit of state-sanctioned medical practice. While the introduction of Salvarsan in 1905 did not ultimately provide a definitive cure for syphilis as was initially hoped, its introduction did justify the professionalization of venereal disease treatment.[50] By the 1920s state health regulations considered any individual (regardless of gender or occupation) as a potential transmitter of venereal disease and, thus, venereal disease supplanted prostitution as the focus of socio-medical anxieties regarding issues of the social body and national progress.

In his two-volume memoirs published between 1918 and 1920, Juan Santos Fernández (former member of the Special Hygiene Commission) conceded that the Hygiene Section "was nothing more than a veiled attempt to profit from vice, without benefit of any kind for morality or public health" (no fue nada más que una manera

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[49] Dr. Matías Duque, "Informe al Dr. E. Borrell," *Medicina Cubana* VII: 8 (August 1924): 271. The original Spanish reads: "[l]a prostitución es, sin discusión, la fuente de propagación más grande de los males venéreos, pero esa no es la única y por lo tanto, no deben el legislador y el higienista olvidar las otras fuentes de propagación de dichos males."

[50] Donna J. Guy, *White Slavery and Mother Alive and Dead: The Troubled Meeting of Sex, Gender, Public Health, and Progress in Latin America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 20. For a broad social history of venereal disease treatment, see Alan Brandt, *No Magic Bullet: A Social History of Venereal Disease in the United States since 1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

velada de lucrar con el vicio, sin ventajas para la moral ni para la salud pública).[51] Yet, he also noted that despite the promised social advances provided by the abolition of regulation,

> now more than ever, [the issue] is under discussion, being as the the so-called Hygiene Section, and even the zone where prostitutes were isolated to a certain degree, have been dissolved, resulting in increased scandal and shame. I have witnessed evidence to suggest that here, as in other nations, the difficulties have not been overcome.[52]

The social impact of deregulated prostitution had, according to many members of the Cuban medical community, only raised the number of venereal disease cases witnessed in Havana's public and private hospitals. In an August 1925 letter addressed to Secretary of Government Alfredo Zayas Bazán, and published in the Cuban medical journal *Medicina Cubana,* Matías Duque stated:

> Since 1913 we have continuously debated amongst ourselves the moral implications of the question of which scientific practices should govern [our approach to the prostitution issue], so as to avoid the kinds of problems that could rise arise with deregulation; however, the truth is that nothing has been done to prevent—or at least limit—venereal diseases.[53]

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[51] Juan Santos Fernández, *Recuerdos de mi vida*, Tomo I (Havana: Imprenta Lloredo, 1918-1920), 124.

[52] Juan Santos Fernández, *Recuerdos de mi vida*, Tomo II (Havana: Imprenta Lloredo, 1918-1920), 65. The original Spanish reads: "ahora al través de tanto tiempo, está como nunca sobre el tapete, puesto que se ha disuelto la llamada Sección de Higiene y hasta la *zona* en que en estos últimos tiempos recluyeron de cierto modo a las prostitutas, para mayor escándalo y vergüenza. He podido palpar aún más de modo evidente que aquí, como en todas partes, no se han vencido las dificultades."

[53] Dr. Matías Duque was the editor of the periodical *Medicina Cubana*. Matías Duque, "Estudios sobre enfermedades venereas," *Medicina Cubana* X:7 (August 1925): 483. The original Spanish reads: "Desde 1913 se ha discutido mucho entre nosotros que práctica científica debía regir, desde el punto de vista moral, para evitar los males que podían sobrevenir con la abolición de la reglamentación de la prostitución sin haber creado medidas llenas de ciencia higiénica y repletas de moral; pero en verdad nada se ha hecho para evitar—o limitar por lo menos—los males venéreos."

As evidence to substantiate his claim regarding the link between the deregulation of prostitution and increased venereal disease, Duque cited the 2,423 cases of venereal disease treated within Havana's public and private hospitals in 1913 (the year prostitution was deregulated) as a warning to society. Though failing to include any comparative statistics for earlier periods, or any sense of how many of the cited cases may have been repeat treatments of the same patient, Duque considered the "enormous quantity" (enorme cantidad) of venereal disease cases treated within the city as clear evidence of the need for state action.[54]

Duque's somewhat sensationalist article resonated with rising levels of concern with the spread of contagious diseases within Cuba. Reacting to these concerns in July of 1914, President Menocal ratified specific legislation regarding the prevention of venereal disease. The updated Sanitary Ordinances (Ordenanzas Sanitarias) required medical practitioners to report all cases of venereal disease treated within their clinics and hospitals, as well as to report all cases of such infections "when the patient is involved in industries or commerces that by their very nature could contribute to the propagation of said diseases" (cuando los enfermos se dediquen a industrias o comercios que por su naturaleza, pueden contribuir a la propagación de las citadas enfermedades). Although the legislation did not mention prostitution specifically (it was, after all, not supposed to be a problem after abolition), the intention of this particular article of the ordinances was clearly to target infected prostitutes. The ordinances also criminalized the involuntary or willful transmission of venereal disease to a third party; the refusal to seek treatment for

[54] Ibid.

infection; the refusal to observe physical seclusion and sexual abstinence during treatment; the advertisement, promotion, or administration of non-state sanctioned venereal disease treatments (i.e. herbs or other popular remedies); and failure to secure proper medical clearance prior to contracting marriage.[55]

A second, and highly controversial, republican response to venereal disease centered on the issue of disease propagation between spouses. The Cuban Divorce Law of 1918 (Article 3) enumerated thirteen justifications for divorce. One such justification was finding one's spouse infected with venereal disease contracted after marriage, as it was assumed that this was irrefutable evidence of adultery. Members of the medical community criticized the legislation arguing that it was extremely difficult to determine how (and when) the disease was actually acquired. As evidence to support this assertion, Julio de la Torre published an article titled "Peculiar Cause for Divorce" (Extraña causa de divorcio) in the September 1920 edition of *Revista de Medicina Cubana,* citing a case of a seventy-year-old woman found infected with venereal disease after "kissing her son passionately following an extended separation" (besando a su hijo, apasionadamente

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[55] Original text of 6 July 1914 *Ordenanzas Sanitarias* (D.P. #674) reproduced in Gilberto Mosquera y Pozo, *Legislación Sanitaria de Cuba* (Havana: Imp. Compañía Editora de Libros y Folletos), 1940), esp. 141-143. The 1914 "Ordenanzas Sanitarias" were later supplemented within the 1936 *Código de Defensa Social.* Article 454 of the chapter titled "Delitos de Propagación de Epidemias y de Contagio Venéreo," maintained the earlier legislation regarding the willful, purposeful, or knowing transmission of venereal disease to a third party as a criminal offense, but added that in the case where the disease was passed between spouses, charges could only be brought by the "offended" spouse. Furthermore, an infected wet nurse who knowingly infected a child was subject to one year in prison and a fine of 200 pesos. Original text of 1936 *Código de Defensa Social* reproduced in Mosquera y Pozo, *Legislación Sanitaria*, esp. 369-370.

despúes de una larga separación).[56] According to de la Torre, such cases of "innocent acquisition" (adquisición inocente) complicated authority's ability to enforce that particular article of the 1918 divorce law, and made unconstitutional the withholding of inheritance or financial rights from an infecting spouse.[57] Despite these concerns on the part of the medical community, the transmission of venereal disease between spouses was included within Cuba's revised divorce law of 1930 alongside adultery, abuse, alcoholism, abandonment, insanity, and forced prostitution.[58]

The final republican response to venereal disease in the Cuban population centered on establishing a series free public venereal disease clinics in the capital city. Throughout the 1920s, Havana's Department of Municipal Sanitation established Centers for Venereal Profilaxis (Centros de Profilaxis Venerea) within working-class neighborhoods outside the city center (Cerro, San Leopoldo, etc.) Symbolically, the dispensary located on Compostela Street in the barrio San Isidro that once housed the Special Hygiene Section was converted into a free venereal disease clinic in 1922. According to a report published by the director of the treatment center, Dr. Eduadro

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[56] Julio de la Torre, "Extraña causa de divorcio," *Revista de Medicina Cubana* III: 26 (September 1920): 179.

[57] Ibid.

[58] The full text and jurisprudence for Cuba's *Ley de Divorcio* of 1930 can be found in Dr. Raúl López Castillo, *El divorcio* (Havana: Molina y Ca., 1932). For specific information regarding the articles concerning forced prostitution (occurring when a husband attempted to prostitute his wife or children for personal financial gain) and venereal disease (when a spouse infected his or her spouse "después de la celebración del matrimonio y fuera del mismo") as legal grounds for divorce, see pages 45-49 and 68-70, respectively. According to López, Mexico, Honduras, Venezuela, Argentina, Spain, and Ecuador all ratified divorce laws that declared forced prostitution as legal grounds for divorce. Cuba was, however, the only country to declare the transmission of venereal disease between spouses to be legal grounds for divorce. See López, *El divorcio*, 22.

Lebredo, patients convening at the clinic received free, confidential diagnosis and treatment from 8 a.m. to 12 a.m. every day of the week. In recognition of the "popular prejudice, which relegates venereal diseases to the realm of a *secret*" (prejuicio popular de considerer las enfermedades venéreas como *secretas*), the clinic offered separate departments for men and women. Encouraged by the success of the clinic, Lebredo reported that "the utility of the Dispensary as a necessary measure of social profilaxis has been proven by the continually rising number of infected individuals who convene there" (la utilidad del Dispensario se ha comprobado con el aumento creciente del número de enfermos que se inscriben, demostración de que ha correspondiendo su acción a una necesidad de profilaxis social). Between July and December 1922, the physicians at the clinic reported treating 855 individuals (653 men and 202 women) infected with venereal disease, although Lebredo made no attempt to explain the pronounced gender disparity within the patient pool.[59]

These clinics functioned not only as free treatment centers for individuals infected with venereal disease, but they also distributed information concerning disease prevention, organized public health conferences where attendees could learn to recognize the signs of infection, and screened public health films discussing the impacts of venereal disease on both the individual and society as a whole.[60] Clinic personnel posted and

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[59] Eduardo Lebredo, *Informe dirigido al Sr. Secretario de Sanidad y Beneficiéncia sobre los servicios de Profilaxis Venérea (Semestre Julio-Diciembre 1922)* (Havana: Imprenta y Papelería "La Moderna Poesía," 1923), 5-9.

[60] It is worth mentioning here, that Mexican public health officials utilized similar methods to carry out a public anti-venereal disease campaign during the 1930s. Although no connection has been drawn between the Cuban and Mexican cases, it seems likely that Mexican public health officials were familiar with the work of their Cuban medical colleagues. For a discussion of Mexico's anti-venereal disease campaign, see Katherine

distributed public health notices stating: "SYPHILIS IS AN EXTREMELY GRAVE ILLNESS" (La sífilis es una enfermedad muy grave), "TREAT YOUR SYPHILIS" (Trate su sifilis), "SYPHILIS CANNOT BE TREATED BY FOLK HEALERS, NOR BY WITCH DOCTORS, NOR BY HOME REMEDIES" (No se cure con curanderos, ni con brujos, ni con medicinas caseras), and "YOUR PHYSICIAN CAN TREAT YOU" (Cúrese con su medico). Written in concise, simple language, these health notices targeted members of the literate working class (films helped reach a non-literate audience) and served to propagandize the state's new push to modernize and professionalize the treatment of venereal disease. **[Figure 6.1]**

Public health posters bearing slogans that denigrated traditional herbal remedies for syphilis treatment supported visually the existing legislation criminalizing non-professional medical cures for venereal disease. **[Figure 6.2]** Some posters utilized a testimonial approach and focused on the (real or fictionalized) experiences of patients who, having followed state-prescribed medical procedures, now enjoyed the benefits of a full cure. These posters contained testimony such as: "I GOT SYPHILIS AND WENT TO THE DOCTOR TO RECEIVE SCIENTIFIC TREATMENT AND NOW I AM DOING GREAT—I AM CURED. WHAT HAPPINESS!" (Me enfermé de sífilis, caudí al médico, me curé científicamente, estoy muy bien, estoy curado. ¡Cuánto felicidad!). Conversely, the notices informed the public that those individuals who chose to resort to popular herbal remedies for their venereal ailments risked serious health impairments such as paralysis (which would impact their ability to work): "I GOT SYPHILIS AND

Elaine Bliss, "Between Risk and Confession: State and Popular Perspectives of Syphilis Infection in Revolutionary Mexico," in *From Malaria to AIDA: Disease in the History of Modern Latin America*, ed. Diego Armus (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

INSTEAD OF GOING TO THE DOCTOR I WENT TO A FOLK HEALER WHO GAVE ME SOME HOME REMEDIES AND—WHAT A DISGRACE! LOOK AT ME—I AM PARALYSED, A SAD INVALID. IF ONLY I HAD GONE TO THE DOCTOR!" (Me enfermé de sífilis, no acudí al medico, fui al curandero, me recetó medicinas caseras, y ¡oh desgracia mía! Miren como estoy; soy un paralítico, un triste inválido. ¡Ah, si me hubiera visto con el medico!). The discouragement of popular cures for venereal disease treatment (herbs, santerismo, home remedies) by state medical personnel carried implicit racial and class implications. Alarmist slogans warned members of the working-class that they were especially susceptible to venereal disease while also perpetuating much of the misinformation still circulating about disease transmission. Posters warned members of the Cuban working-class that public restrooms, public transportation, and even an exchange of money or a friendly handshake carried the potential for disease transfer. These posters proclaimed:

> THE *POISON* OF SYPHILIS CAN BE TRANSFERRED VIA CONTACT WITH A GLASS OF WATER IN A CAFÉ, A RESTAURANT, OR A FAMILY MEMBER'S HOUSE; A PUBLIC TOILET; A DENTIST'S OR DOCTOR'S HAND; A PIECE OF CUTLERY AT A RESTAURANT; A HANDSHAKE; A PUBLIC TRANSPORT OR EVEN THE VERY CHANGE YOU RECEIVE AFTER PAYING YOUR PASSAGE.[61]

Other public health notices addressed the issue of the "secret" nature of venereal disease, so as to combat the widespread fear of public embarrassment, which clinic physicians worried would keep individuals from seeking treatment. Dr. Matías Duque

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[61] Dr. Matías Duque, "Las enfermedades venéreas combatidas por nuestro Municipio," *Medicina Cubana* VII: 1 (January 1924): 37-38. The original Spanish reads: "El *veneno* de la sífilis puede ser trasportado en un vaso de agua en un café, de un restaurante o de una casa de familia; en un inodoro público, en la mano de un dentista, en la mano de un médico, en un cubierto de cualquier restaurante; en un apretón de manos, en la transferencia de un tranvía y hasta en el mismo dinero de un vuelto."

himself addressed the need to combat the stigma associated with venereal disease, stating that "[b]efore [WWI], notions of chastity, honor, and modesty made it impermissible to mention or discuss (except within the medical field) the words syphilis, gonorrhea, prostitution, or venereal disease. To speak publicly of these pathological states was considered a show of indecency and a lack of social graces."[62] He countered this earlier approach to the issue, stating that "infection with syphilis is not a dishonor, [nor] is it shameful; [rather] syphilis is a disease like any other and as such should be treated in the same way as any other disease" ([l]a sífilis no es una deshonra; no es una vergüenza; la sífilis es una enfermedad; es un dolor como otro cualquiera, y por lo tanto debe ser curada en la misma forma en que se cure, cualquiera otra enfermedad).[63] In order to exert broad state control over medicine and public health, medical authorities would also need to bring the issue of venereal disease out of the bedroom and onto the national stage. To do so, medical authorities would have to combat well-entrenched stereotypes that linked venereal disease almost exclusively with (illicit) sexual contact. Posters implicating a handshake or a public toilet in the disease propagation process, however erroneous, were

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[62] Dr. Matías Duque, "Informe al Dr. E. Borrell," *Medicina Cubana* VII: 8 (August 1924): 270. The original Spanish reads: "Antes de la guerra de Europa (WWI) la castidad, la honestidad y el pudor, no permitían nombrar ni escribir sino en el terreno médico, las palabras sífilis, blenorragia, prostitución, y males venéreos. Era una falta de urbanidad y de decencia, hablar en público de esos estados patológicos."

[63] Dr. Matías Duque, "Las enfermedades venéreas combatidas por nuestro Municipio," *Medicina Cubana* VII: 1 (January 1924): 37-38. The original Spanish reads: "El *veneno* de la sífilis puede ser trasportado en un vaso de agua en un café, de un restaurante o de una casa de familia; en un inodoro público, en la mano de un dentista, en la mano de un médico, en un cubierto de cualquier restaurante; en un apretón de manos, en la transferencia de un tranvía y hasta en el mismo dinero de un vuelto."

intended to help de-sexualize, and thus de-stigmatize, venereal disease as a means to promote a national public health campaign.

During the August 1925 League of Nations tour of Havana, Dr. Matías Duque delivered a speech enumerating Cuba's responses to the prostitution issue. After reviewing the history of Spanish and U.S. responses to regulated prostitution on the island, Duque heralded the establishment of free public venereal clinics in Havana as not only a powerful effort to combat venereal disease, but also as a symbol of Cuba's modernity. [64] The following year, Dr. Duque dedicated the Third Center of Venereal Disease Treatment located in Havana's barrio San Leopoldo to Secretary of State, and future President of the Republic, Alfredo Zayas Bazán. During his speech, Duque enthusiastically applauded the efforts of the republican government to "reestablish public morality by impeding the practice of immoral behaviors and by trying to establish a better future for the people of Cuba by drawing on all available resources to raise the social and moral status of unfortunate women who, due to the brutal greed of men, have tumbled to the lowest rung of society."[65]

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[64] Dr. Matías Duque, "Estudios sobre enfermedades venereas," *Medicina Cubana* X: 7 (August 1925): 484.

[65] Dr. Matías Duque, "Profilaxis de las Enfermedades Venereas," *Medicina Cubana* XI: 9 (September 1926): 663. The original Spanish reads: "reestablecer la moral pública impidiendo la práctica de males costumbres y trata de establecer un mejor porvenir a los habitantes de nuestra Cuba, ayudando por todos los medios a su alcance, a levantar el nivel moral y social de infelices mujeres que el egoismo brutal de los hombres las han hecho rodar hasta el peldaño más bajo de la vida."

Casting out the Undesirables

As members of Cuba's medical community endeavored to combat the effects of venereal disease on Cuba throughout the 1910s and 1920s, other members of society and state government turned their attention to yet another issue relating to prostitution—the so-called "Trata de Blancas" or white slave trade. Although certainly some the most authoritative voices within the prostitution debate raging in early twentieth-century Cuba, Duque, Alfonso, and Herrera had not been the only ones with opinions on the subject. In Cuba, many sectors of society were tuning into a growing international conversation on the evils of trafficking women and children for prostitution. The poetic image of the innocent child preyed upon by morally-corrupt pimps became the inspiration for journalists and other writers hoping to draw attention to the abolitionist cause—or at least tap into a hot topic of contemporary debate sure to sell books and newspapers.

One such source produced in Cuba in 1913—the same year that prostitution was deregulated on the island—was Pedro García and Felipe Velasco's *Rogues and Prostitutes* (*Pícaros y Rameras*).[66] An absorbing mixture of journalism and fiction, the book featured chapters bearing such enticing titles as "The Sinner" (La Pecadora), "French Pimps" (Comerciantes Franceses), and "The Horde" (La Horda). The authors painted a dramatic picture of life within Cuba's urban underground where prostitutes emerged as the victims of male lust, official corruption, and unfortunate life circumstances. The staunchly abolitionist position of the authors was made clear from the outset: "Men of science who claim that prostitution is necessary are lying…[and]

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[66] Pedro M. García and Felipe Velasco, *Pícaros y Rameras* (Havana: Imprenta "La Prueba," 1913).

legislation that champions this commerce as a means of preventing even greater evils within expanding urban populations is erroneous."[67]

The theme of victimization runs strongly throughout the various chapters, as do references to seduction and abandonment. In the opening chapter to the book, the authors describe the arrival of a young girl into the port of Havana:

> The young woman appears to be Spanish [and] perhaps she is a poor wretch who has emigrated from her miserable village, fleeing the public scorn she would face for the product of an affair with her rapacious seducer. Poor Maruxa! Who knows if she has just abandoned the fruit of her affections at Hospital #1 and now, ashamed of herself, wonders aimlessly through the streets of the city in search of a precipe, an abyss.[68]

Abandoned by her seducer and forced to abort her child (and her youthful innocence), the fictionalized Maruxa embodies the tragic victim of the Trata de Blancas—the face of the innocent child-prostitute who wanders aimlessly through the mean streets of Havana's tolerance zone "like a sheep far from the flock, with no North star to guide her, proceeding down an uncertain path toward luck or misfortune" (como oveja fuera del redil, sin norte ni guía, sin saber su suerte o su infortunio).[69] Led to the slaughter by an

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[67] García and Velasco, *Pícaros y Rameras*, 19. The original Spanish reads: "Mienten los hombres de ciencias que aconsejan la necesidad del Mercado de rameras… [y] Son erróneas las leyes que abogan la necesidad de ese Mercado, como medio de evitar mayores perjuicios en los pueblos de crecido vecinaje."

[68] García and Velasco, *Pícaros y Rameras*, 9-10. The original Spanish reads: "La mujer, por su aspecto, parece española, es joven; quizá alguna desgraciada que emigró de su miserable aldea, huyendo al que decir de las gentes cuando se enteraran de los resultados de sus amores, con el "rapaz" que la sedujo. ¡Pobre Maruxa! Quién sabe si hace poco que abandonó el Hospital Número 1, dejando allí perdido el fruto de su cariño, y ahora, avergonzada de sí misma, errante por las calles de la ciudad, va buscando el despeñadero, el abismo."

[69] García and Velasco, *Pícaros y Rameras*, 13.

exploitative and abusive lover, Maruxa will be swept up in a vicious cycle of desperation and vice that, the authors imply, will lead to her total ruin.

Even more tragic than Maruxa, however, is the principle protagonist of the final chapter of the book titled "The Sinner" (La Pecadora). The protagonist-sinner bears the ironic and symbolic name of Esperanza. Whether the name signifies lost hope or the promise of redemption is left to the reader to decide, but the circumstances in which she finds herself are nothing short of tragic. Orphaned at a young age, the beautiful Esperanza becomes the victim of her female neighbor's consuming jealousy and the object of desire of her deceased father's male friends and relatives. Left to contend with a cruel world that would see to her ruin, Esperanza spends her nights wandering aimlessly through the streets of Havana where she is eventually raped by three drunken (and presumably foreign) sailors and left for dead. Discovered by a policeman, Esperanza is remitted to a reformatory for wayward girls, where she is further corrupted by the young female inmates residing therein. According to Esperanza, "[t]he Mothers taught me good things [and] the pupils taught me bad things" (Las Madres me enseñaron cosas buenas. Las educandas cosas malas).[70] Following years of correction, Esperanza is permitted to leave the reformatory only to find that work as a domestic servant exposed her to even greater levels of sexual abuse than she had encountered as a prostitute. Adrift within the "world of men" (el camino de los hombres), Esperanza resigns herself to life in the tolerance zone, but plots a desperate act of revenge against the rapists whose violent actions had relegated her to a life of prostitution. Vowing to murder them all, Esperanza

[70] García and Velasco, *Pícaros y Rameras*, 77.

proclaims: "It is my only hope!" (¡Es mi única esperanza!)[71] The authors conclude their tragic story with a warning to society: "If the cadaver of a sailor is one day discovered atop this disgraced woman's bed, the world that prostituted her will declare it a crime resulting from the unbridled vice that grips a prostitute. Poor Esperanza! Unfortunate sinner!"[72]

An innocent victim of circumstances now converted into a corrupt soul, Esperanza's hope for a future free of vice is crushed by the vicious cycle of crime and desperation of which she is now a part. Her youthful beauty and innocence devoured by a society that abandoned her and exploited her in her hour of need, Esperanza was lost to Cuban society. By stating that "the world that prostituted her" was really to blame for her violent actions and tragic life, the authors implicate all of Cuban society in the tragic outcome of Esperanza's story. Furthermore, by giving the image of the prostitute the face of a beautiful young girl who is victimized by circumstances, the authors give their abolitionist stance a powerful emotional underpinning that could mobilize people in defense of the cause. That the story bears a double meaning seems clear, Esperanza becomes the symbol not only of the tragic life of prostitutes in Cuba, but also of Cuban society itself. The social and moral redemption offered by the abolition of regulated prostitution offers the hope that Cuba might free itself of the vicious cycle of vice, exploitation, and desperation that have brought Esperanza to ruin.

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[71] García and Velasco, *Pícaros y Rameras*, 79.

[72] García and Velasco, *Pícaros y Rameras*, 79. The original Spanish reads: "Si algún día aparece el cadaver de un marinero sobre la cama de esa desgraciada mujer, el mundo, que la prostituyó, dirá que es un crimen originando por el desenfrenado vicio, que arrastra a una ramera. ¡Pobre Esperanza! ¡Infeliz pecadora!"

The particular combination of journalism and sentimentalism that characterized García and Velasco's book gave the image of the prostitute-victim a Cuban face and identity that removed her (at least partially) from the realm of fiction. The authors' goal to humanize the Cuban prostitute by recasting her as a victim of circumstances resonated with similar contemporary portrayals of prostitutes circulating outside of Cuba. Emotionally charged literature centered on the tragic life of the innocent-girl-turned-prostitute appeared throughout Europe, the United States, and the Americas during the early twentieth century. For example, in his 1911 text titled *The White Slave Trade in Spain*, Spanish abolitionist Miguel Cossío y Gómez Acebo referred repeatedly to prostitutes as "young virgins" (jovenes virgenes), "poor girls" (las pobres niñas), "abandoned young girls" (abandonadas jóvenes), "underage girls" (niñas menores), and "the poor working girls" (la[s] pobre obrera[s]).[73] The use of a language of victimization was a powerful rallying cry for those sectors within the international community hoping to mobilize broad support in favor of both deregulation and anti-trafficking legislation. If the prostitute was not a morally corrupt criminal, but rather an innocent (even virginal) child in need of help and protection, then perhaps she could be saved.

By the early 1920s, pressures placed by international anti-white slavery campaigns upon state governments across the globe to ratify anti-trafficking legislation reached a fever pitch.[74] The end of World War I brought increased international attention

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[73] See, for example, Manuel de Cossío y Gómez Acebo, *La Trata de Blancas en España: Ventajas de las Instituciones Represoras y sus resulatados* (Madrid: Imp. de la Suc. de M. Minuesa de los Ríos, 1911), 8-9.

[74] For more information regarding international anxieties surrounding the "white slave trade," see Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*; Gilfoyle, *City of Eros*; Guy, *Sex and Danger*; White, *Comforts of Home*; and Bliss, *Compromised Positions*.

to the question to the fate of female (primarily European) immigrants, and prompted the formation of a League of Nations committee in 1921 charged with examining the global issue of the international traffic in women and children.[75] While the committee's focus within the Americas centered primarily on South American countries with high levels of European immigration (especially Argentina and Brazil), League inspectors did visit Cuba.[76] In April 1923, under the combined pressures of national protest and international scrutiny, President Alfredo Zayas (1920-1924) ratified the International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic of Women and Children of 1921.[77] President Zayas did not, however, immediately establish a national anti-trafficking law for Cuba. For two years following ratification of the conference, various groups and individuals within Cuba with ties to the international anti-trafficking movement centered primarily in Europe and the United States dedicated tremendous energy to lobby the republican government to adopt white slave trade legislation. This concerted effort on the part of Cuban feminists and members of the medical community, amongst others, eventually bore fruit in 1925 when President Zayas ratified Cuba's first national anti-trafficking legislation.[78] No mere facsimile of European (British) models of white slave trade

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[75] Guy, *White Slavery*, 26-32.

[76] Ibid, 29.

[77] President Alfredo Zayas, "Decreto No. 553," *Gaceta Oficial de la República de Cuba* XXI: 98 (28 April 1923): 9273.

[78] President Alfredo Zayas, "Decreto No. 384," *Gaceta Oficial de la República de Cuba* XXIII: 63 (18 March 1925): 5921-5922.

legislation, the resulting Cuban legislation was a fusion of new international prostitution legislation with national immigration policies geared toward casting out "undesirables."[79]

Following Cuba's ratification of the international conference in 1923, various sectors of the Cuban population mobilized to lobby for the ratification of a national anti-trafficking law. Cuba's First National Women's Conference, held in Havana in 1923, provided a public forum for many of these proponents for ratification of national white slave trade legislation to articulate their demands. Cuban women with strong ties to the international anti-trafficking and temperance movements in the United States and Europe, such as Hortensia Lamar, spoke out on the main issues related to the subject and offered a range of suggested state responses. Prominent Cuban women's organizations in touch with developments in Europe, such as the National Suffragette Party (Partido Nacional Sufragista), leveled complaints within their newspaper *El sufragista* against Cuba's slow progress toward a solution to the national prostitution issue.[80]

The President of the "Club Femenino de Cuba," Hortensia Lamar, delivered a rousing speech, titled "The Fight against Prostitution and the White Slave Trade" (Lucha contra la prostitución y la Trata de Blancas), at the First National Women's Congress, which centered on the "the infected chancre of prostitution" (infecta chancra de la prostitución).[81] Lamar began her speech by stating in unequivocal terms that

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[79] *Gaceta Oficial de la República de Cuba* XXI: 98 (28 April 1923): 9273.

[80] For a more thorough discussion of events relating to the First National Women's Congress of 1923, see K. Lynn Stoner, *From the House to the Streets: The Cuban Woman's Movement for Legal Reform, 1898-1940* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 59-65.

[81] Hortensia Lamar, "Lucha contra la prostitución y la trata de blancas," *Revista Bimestre Cubana* 18: 2 (March-April 1923): 130.

> every moral conscience enlightened by the culture of science energetically and thoroughly reproaches and rebukes, without concession, the *necessity* of this ulcer, as is so erroneously argued by many, and [instead] is preoccupied with finding a method of eradication, considering it an unavoidable duty of human solidarity to contribute to the fight to defeat an evil.[82]

Lamar then proceeded to give a laundry list of the causes of prostitution in society: misery, poor living conditions, lack of education, lack of child care, pornographic films and literature, seduction by immoral employers, and drugs.[83] Lamar scolded women who harshly judged their "unfortunate sister" (infeliz hermana) who had fallen into a life of prostitution as well as legislators who were more concerned with acquiring personal wealth and power than attending to the needs of their countrymen.

Like many other Cubans writing on the issue of the white slave trade at this time, Lamar declared that in order to address the issue of prostitution in Cuba, republican legislators would need to first address the issue of undesirable immigration because "the number of Jamaican and Haitian prostitutes [arriving in Cuba] has grown at an inconceivably appalling rate" (aumentó de manera considerable y en terminos de una asquerosidad inconcebible, el ejercicio de la prostitución, especialmente la jamaiquina y haitiana).[84] Lamar thus defined prostitution as an immigration issue first and foremost and believed that prostitution could only be truly eradicated by enacting a comprehensive

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[82] Lamar, "Lucha contra la prostitución," 130. The original Spanish reads: "[t]oda conciencia moral ilustrada por la cultura científica, reprueba y rechaza, enérgica, totalmente, sin concesiones, la *necesidad* de esa úlcera, como aun erróneamente sostienen muchos, y se preocupan de los remedios para extirparla, considerando un deber de solidaridad humana, ineludible, contribuir de alguna manera a la lucha por vencer el mal."

[83] Lamar, "Lucha contra la prostitución," 130-131.

[84] Lamar, "Lucha contra la prostitución," 134.

socio-medical program of "social profilaxis" (profilaxis social). This program required ratifying the necessary immigration legislation, closing all brothels, and imprisoning all individuals engaged in, or associated with, prostitution. Lamar also called for stricter drug laws, as she viewed narcotics and prostitution as linked vices that must be eradicated like a disease. As for new immigration legislation, Lamar was quick to blame European immigrants for Cuban prostitution, stating that of the prostitutes and pimps working in Cuba "almost all of these wicked individuals are of foreign origin, mostly from France, and they have not been expelled from this country because they have received Cuban resident visas" ([c]asi todos estos malvados son de nacionalidad extranjera, en su mayoría franceses, que no han podido ser expulsados porque han adquirido carta de ciudadanía cubana).[85] Ultimately, the primary solution to the prostitution issue, Lamar argued, was for Cuba to join the rest of the civilized world and ratify an anti-trafficking, white slave trade, law.[86]

In August 1923, Cuban suffragette, Amalia E. Mallen de Ostolaza, published a scathing commentary in *El sufragista* about the state of white slave trade legislation

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[85] Lamar, "Lucha contra la prostitución," 136.

[86] Lamar, "Lucha contra la prostitución," 139. Lamar's speech on the "Lucha contra las drogas heroícas" presented at the First National Congress of Cuban Women, was also published in *Revista Bimestre Cubana* Hortensia, see: Lamar, "Lucha contra las drogas heroícas," *Revista Bimestre Cubana* 18: 3 (May-June 1923): 214-219. Other speeches from the First National Women's Congress published within the *Revista Bimestre Cubana* include: Junta Cubana de Renovación Nacional, "Manifiesto a los Cubanos," *Revista Bimestre Cubana* XVIII:2 (March-April 1923): 85-99; Dulce María Borrero de Lujan, "La mujer, responsable indirecta de la degeneración progresiva del alma cubana," *Revista Bimestre Cubana* XVIII: 2 (March-April 1923): 110-119; Juan del Morro, "Las aspiraciones de la mujer cubana," *Revista Bimestre Cubana* XVIII:2 (March-April 1923): 100-109; and Pilar Morlon de Menéndez, "El Primer Congreso Nacional de Mujeres," *Revista Bimestre Cubana* (March-April 1923): 120-127.

stating: "Much has been said about this issue, but until now little has been done" (Sobre este asunto se ha hablado mucho; pero hasta ahora se ha hecho poco en concreto).[87] The answer to Cuba's prostitution woes was clear, Mallen de Ostolaza declared: "What are the causes of prostitution? Lust, seduction, and misery. What is the remedy for lust? Education and charity. What is [the remedy] for seduction? Education. How do we avoid misery? Work."[88] The National Suffragette Party thus placed greater emphasis on the need for broad social programs aimed at combating the economic and social forces that made prostitution a potential solution for lower-class women already living in Cuba rather than on the adoption of legislation aimed at hindering the arrival of European women (and potential prostitutes) to the island. The emphasis was placed on creating citizens of formerly disenfranchised lower-class Cuban women, as only by educating lower-class Cuban women "as citizens" (como ciudadanas) could "the torch of civilization illuminate completely the spaces occupied by prostitution" (la antorcha de la civilización illumine por completo el espacio en que caiga por tierra la prostitución). Reflective of the kind of class-based, gender-specific, nationalism fostered by upper and upper-middle-class Cuban women, these published articles were as much about educating upper-class women about their moral duties to society as they were about speaking to the need to implement social reforms that would aid lower-class women in Cuba.

Cuba's medical community also engaged with immigration issues as they related to public morality and health. Having successfully wiped out the most pressing physical

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[87] Amalia Mallen de Ostoloza, "La prostitución, sus causas y sus remedios," *El sufragista* II: 6 (August 1923): 3.

[88] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "¿Cuáles son las causas de la prostitución? El lujo, la seducción y la miseria. ¿Qué remedio tenemos para el lujo? Educación y caridad. ¿Cuál para la seducción? La educación. ¿Cómo evitaríamos la miseria? Con el trabajo."

diseases affecting the nation at the outset of the century (namely yellow fever), Cuba's medical community turned its attention toward the moral afflictions ravaging their hard-won republic.[89] Members of Cuba's esteemed Academy of Sciences, like Jorge Le-Roy y Cassá, blamed the island's perceived social, moral, and economic decline on lax immigration laws ratified under President Mario G. Menocal (1912-1920), which permitted increased numbers of Chinese immigrants to enter Cuba. Le-Roy y Cassá accused Menocal of attempting to "yellow" (amarillear) Cuba and drew racist associations between Chinese immigrants and homosexuality, opium dens, and other "immoral activities" (elementos de inmoralidad).[90]

While Le-Roy y Cassá lambasted Chinese arrivals to Cuba as "undesirable" and "unsanitary" immigration, other members of the Academy of Sciences, such as Dr. A. Agramonte responded to Le-Roy y Cassá's ideas by suggesting that while the Cuban government was required to "permit the entrance of a certain class of immigrants…because we need agricultural workers" (dar entrada a cierta clase de inmigrantes…porque se necesitan brazos para nuestras faenas agrícolas), republican authorities would also need to foster a system of "hygienic" immigration whereby diseased immigrants were quarantined and treated prior to being released into society.[91] Le-Roy y Cassá refused to budge on the issue, firmly restating his belief that "we need to

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[89] Jorge Le-Roy y Cassá, *Inmigración anti-sanitaria; leído en la Academia de Ciencias Médicas, Físicas, y Naturales de La Habana; Sesión del 14 de diciembre de 1923* (Havana: Dorrbecker, 1929), 6.

[90] Le-Roy y Cassá, *Inmigración anti-sanitaria*, 11.

[91] Le-Roy y Cassá, *Inmigración anti-sanitaria*, 32, 36.

attract desirable immigrants—meaning white immigrants—in order to improve our ethnic conditions" (necesitamos atraer una inmigración conveniente—que es la blanca—a fin de mejorar nuestras condiciones étnicas).[92] Other authors similarly drew parallels between increased Chinese immigration to Cuba and rising levels of criminality and moral laxity. Citing questionable evidence undoubtedly intended to mobilize social fears of moral corruption via Chinese immigration, these authors made tenuous claims such as: "aside from Asia, which is the region that produces it, Cuba consumes the most opium in the world" (aparte del Asia, que es el país que lo produce, Cuba es el país del mundo que más opio consume).[93]

Echoing the sentiments of Lamar, the prominent Cuban social reformer Rafael Abreu similarly proclaimed in a speech titled "Social Gangrene" (Gangrena Social) delivered to the members of the Eureka Masonic Lodge in 1924 that he was convinced that Cuba "would not be a completely civilized or socially balanced country as long as women were not permitted to occupy their proper place in society" (tengo la convicción que no estaremos perfectamente civilizado ni estará la sociedad en equilibrio, mientras la mujer no ocupe el lugar que le corresponde como individuo social).[94] After giving a lengthy description of the means by which Cuba's painful period of colonial rule under Spain and its agonizing path toward independence via prolonged warfare caused, in large part, Cuba's current prostitution woes, Abreu proclaimed that "if physical and moral

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[92] Le-Roy y Cassá, *Inmigración anti-sanitaria*, 38.

[93] n.a."En los últimos cuatro años llegaron 18,005 hispanos, 12,055 asiáticos, y más de 30,000 antillanos: Social y sanitariamente esos inmigrantes son una amenaza para la República," *Heraldo de Cuba* (December 1922).

[94] Rafael G. Abreu, *Gangrena social: Conferencia ante la Logia "Eureka," Octubre 7 de 1925* (Havana: Imprenta Julio Arroyo, 1925), 5.

progress are considered primary components of civilization, no one can deny the fact that prostitution should be diminished" (si entre los factores de civilización está el progreso moral y físico, no habrá quien pretenda negar que la prostitución puede ser disminuído).[95] He likewise blamed economic hardship caused by insufficient salaries and competition from men within professions once dominated by women, pressures from pimps and madams, seduction, public dances (escuelitas de baile), pornographic theaters, public bathing houses, the publication of crimes and popular cures for curing "secret diseases (enfermedades secretas) such as syphilis within public newspapers, palm readers and psychics, and a generalized "passion for luxury" (pasión de lujo) as the primary causes of prostitution in Cuba. Like Lamar and others, Abreu proclaimed that

> prostitution will decrease when strict laws are ratified to punish pimping; when the international traffic of women, known as the *white slave trade*, is terminated; when female laborers receive higher salaries; when laws exist to combat vagrancy; when there are formal censorship procedures for film and theater; when public dances are better regulated;…in a word, when women are no longer exploited; when her economic situation is improved; [and] when her moral education is brought into line with her sex…because it is undeniable that customs improve when the light of civilization is allowed to spread across society.[96]

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[95] Abreu, *Gangrena social*, 33.

[96] Abreu, *Gangrena social*, 51. The original Spanish reads: "disminuirá la prostitución cuando se dicten leyes tendientes a castigar con severidad el proxentisimo en general; cuando no exista el tráfico internacional con el nombre de *trata de blancas*; cuando no exista el salario de la mujer obrera, y el sueldo de la empleada en muchas compañías y empresas; cuando exista una ley para combatir el vago de oficio; cuando tengamos una censura formal para el cinematográfico y teatros; cuando los bailes públicos estén major reglamentados…en una palabra cuando la mujer no sea explotada; cuando su condición económica mejore; cuando su educación moral sea la que corresponde a su sexo…porque es indiscutible que las costumbres mejoran a medida que los resplandores de la civilización se difunden en las sociedades." Emphasis in original.

According to Abreu's formulation, social reform intended to address issues of moral decline generally and prostitution specifically would set the Cuban nation on its path toward true republican progress and civilization and the prostitute-citizen could occupy her due place within this new national blueprint. Abreu declared that

> we must acknowledge that just because a woman is a prostitute does not mean that she ceases to be a free citizen with the right to freedom of action, provided that [those actions] do not harm a third party. The Constitution guarantees…that all women, be they honorable or prostitute, are equal before the law.[97]

Here, the once marginalized, ostracized, and demonized Cuban prostitute is reconstructed as a citizen worthy of protection and invested with all the rights and privileges guaranteed by Cuba's Republican Constitution. The progressive course of action would be to reform society in ways that provided for a general social, economic, and moral uplift that would eliminate prostitution as an option for women.

Under President Alfredo Zayas, Cuba finally ratified national anti-trafficking legislation in March of 1925.[98] Reflecting a national conversation between various sectors of society over the previous several years, the 1925 anti-trafficking law fused new prostitution legislation with broader immigration legislation intended to grant the republican government the authority to cast out any foreigner deemed "undesirable."

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[97] Abreu, *Gangrena social*, 52-53. The original Spanish reads: "[d]ebe tenerse presente que la mujer no por ser prostituida, deja de ser un ciudadano libre, con derecho a que se respecte en la libertad de sus actos, siempre que éstos no causen perjuicio a un tercero. La Constitución garantiza, en sus preceptos, que todas las mujeres son iguales ante la ley, así la honesta como la meretriz."

[98] President Alfredo Zayas, "Decreto No. 384," *Gaceta Oficial de la República de Cuba* XXIII: 63 (18 March 1925): 5921-5922. For a compilation of Cuba's twentieth-century immigration legislation (including the "Trata de Blancas" law), see Arturo Navia y Montero, *Leyes de Inmigración de la República de Cuba: Sus reglamentos y demás disposiciones complementarias de las mismas, dictadas hasta la fecha, que se encuentran vigentes* (Havana: Carasa y Compañía, 1930).

Under the new legislation, Cuba' s Department of Immigration, established during the U.S military intervention in 1899, became the Department of Immigration and Trata de Blancas. The legislation gave state authorities the ability to detain, incarcerate, and/or deport any foreigner found guilty of transporting (directly or indirectly) a female for the purposes of prostitution or paying or receiving rent on any residence for the purposes of using it as a brothel or other immoral institution. According to the law, authorities could also refuse entry into the country to any woman found traveling alone or any female minor (under 21 years of age) traveling without the supervision of a parent or authorized guardian. To avoid tangling with immigration officials, married women traveling to Cuba were required to carry proof of their marital status.

On the general immigration front, the legislation granted Cuban immigration officials broad powers to detain or deport any individual considered "likely to become a public burden" (susceptible de convertirse en carga pública) (Article 7).[99] Artists, gypsies, suspected vagabonds (trotamundos), clandestine travelers, undocumented Chinese laborers, convicted criminals, individuals over sixty years of age, and the physically or mentally ill were collectively labeled as potential public burdens and were likely to encounter difficulties when attempting to disembark in Havana (Articles 7-12).[100] The Comisionado de Inmigración (established in 1904) would administer a system

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[99] Zayas, "Decreto No. 384," 5922.

[100] Ibid. According to Dr. Francisco Hernández y Alvarez, any individual unable to meet the basic requirements for entrance into the city, which included documented proof of employment, proof of having purchased his/her own passage aboard the ship, and the ability to pay a thirty-peso immigration tax—risked detention by immigration authorities. Physically ill immigrants were often remanded to Havana's infection disease hospital known as "Las Animas" or (in cases of trachoma) forced to exit the country, while mentally ill immigrants were remitted to the Hospital Nacional "General Calixto

of immigration registration and identification intended to help track immigration into and out of Cuba's ports (Article 13).[101] Finally, in the ultimate fusion of prostitution control and immigration policy, the Comisionado de Inmigración was granted ultimate authority to "receive and obtain information regarding the prostitution of foreign women and children, exercise supervision over the same throughout the initial five years of their residence in Cuba, gather full background information [on each individual], and maintain detailed files on all issues relating to the 'White Slave Trade'" (Article 15).[102]

The great irony of Cuba's 1925 anti-trafficking legislation is that in spite of all the energies devoted to lobbying for its ratification, immigration officials stationed in the port of Havana detained remarkably few prostitutes. The difficulties of proving that a woman entering the country was, in fact, a prostitute undoubtedly complicated the work of immigration officials. More of an issue, perhaps, was the fact that prostitutes were actually a low priority relative to other types of immigrants that were perceived to pose a more immediate and profound threat to national identity, security, and progress, such as stowaways, undocumented Chinese laborers, and individuals infected with communicable diseases such as trachoma. According to published immigration statistics, of the 126,597

García." See Dr. Francisco Hernández y Alvarez, *Desenvolvimiento del Departamento de Inmigración y Trata de Blancas en Cuba* (Havana: Imprenta Fernández Castro & Co., 1925).

[101] Ibid. For a discussion of the immigration registration process and hygienic procedures conducted within the Tiscornia Detention Center, see Dr. Francisco Hernández y Alvarez, *Desenvolvimiento del Departamento de Inmigración y Trata de Blancas en Cuba* (Havana: Imprenta Fernández Castro & Co., 1925), 5-7.

[102] Ibid. The original Spanish reads: "recibir y obtener informaciones respecto a la prostitución de mujeres y menores extranjeros, ejercer supervisión sobre los mismos durante su permanencia en Cuba, dentro de los cinco años de su llegada; establecer su identidad y recibir declaraciones de los mismos [y] mantener un archivo documentando con los datos y antecedentes relacionados con estos asuntos de la 'Trata de Blancas.'"

immigrants arriving at the port of Havana in 1924, 740 were turned away. Of these 740 rejected immigrants, the majority (15%) were labeled stowaways (polizones), while trachomatosos (13%), deserting crew members (tripulantes desertores) (8%), and those deemed a potential public burden (carga pública) (4%) comprised the other major groups turned away. Only 2 (.3%) of the immigrants turned away that year were labeled prostitutes. The following year (following passage of Cuba's anti-trafficking legislation), the relative percentages were similar for each group, with stowaways (30%), deserting crew members (20%), and trachomatosos (19%) comprising the majority of rejected immigrants. Again, only 2 women were turned away at the port as prostitutes.[103]

The ratification of new legislation on marriage, public health, and international immigration in early republican Cuba essentially unhitched the historically related (and often coterminous) issues of prostitution and venereal disease and absorbed them both into a larger legal framework aimed at not merely disciplining the prostitute body but on defining, shaping, curing, and otherwise regenerating the Cuban social body. Ultimately, these measures helped republican authorities justify a more expansive incursion of the state into the lives and bodies of the nation by casting venereal disease prevention and eradication as a national public health project. Through a combination of the adoption of deregulation policy, a revised divorce law, the advent of new public health clinics, and new immigration legislation, republican authorities found a new national formula to eradicate prostitution and venereal disease, placate international and national moral reformers, sweep away the final trappings of colonial status, and set Cuba on the path to

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[103] Dr. Francisco Hernández y Alvarez, *Desenvolvimiento del Departamento de Inmigración y Trata de Blancas en Cuba* (Havana: Fernández Castro & Co., 1925), 10-11.

moral progress. These measures also allowed republican authorities to cast themselves as progressive and fiercely nationalistic. Whereas Spain and the United States had been indifferent on moral issues on the island, the Cuban republic was fiercely concerned.

Conclusion

In his influential study of the formation of Cuban national identity, Louis Pérez, Jr. states that as Cubans endeavored to shape a new, republican identity for themselves following years of colonial intervention and exploitation, "[nothing] could be more pernicious to the proposition of a separate nationality than to permit disparities [suggesting that to be] Cuban was backward, behind, and beyond the pale of civilization."[104] By 1902, Cuba had, with the aid of the U.S. intervention government, rid the island of serious physical diseases like yellow fever and malaria. Following the withdrawal of U.S. military personnel, however, many Cubans eager to re-define Cuba as an independent, modern, and progressive nation focused their energies on ridding the island of a range of social and moral diseases that lay latent within the Cuban social body. According to the nationalistic formulation of republican social reformers, grave social ills such as prostitution were not endemic to Cuban society, but rather virulent imports that could be exterminated with progressive social legislation. In order to set Cuba on the road to social and moral progress, republican authorities would need to regenerate, rather than marginalize, all sectors of Cuban society, including those previously deemed unsalvageable. As we saw in this chapter, prostitutes figured prominently within these

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[104] Louis Pérez Jr., *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 163.

burgeoning republican discourses of social and moral regeneration. By the second decade of the twentieth century, the Cuban prostitute had been recast less as a thing to be feared and punished than to be rescued, empathized with, and protected. In a very real sense, she becomes a symbol of the prostituted Cuban nation and the unlikely embodiment of the hopes of a republic based in a new, progressive, moral national status.

While a burgeoning international abolitionist movement, centered primarily in Europe and the United States, certainly gave increased justification for the adoption of abolitionist legislation in Cuba, deregulation and the adoption of anti-trafficking legislation also served broader nationalistic goals centered on purifying the national body politic of social, moral, and epidemiological infections. Advocates of deregulation in Cuba argued that widespread prostitution was less the byproduct of an inherent moral decrepitude on the part of the Cuban population than of the island's historic exploitation at the hands of Spain and the United States. By linking prostitution to colonialism, social reformers, physicians, women's rights advocates, and republican authorities won powerful support for their cause. To be sure, the abolition of regulated prostitution in 1913, and the subsequent ratification of anti-trafficking legislation in 1925, did not eradicate prostitution in Cuba. However, the rejection of the regulatory system as an imposed system of exploitation foisted upon Cuba by immoral, backward, and exploitative colonial authorities resonated widely during a period when throwing off the political and economic chains of colonialism served as a rallying cry for the forging of a new independent nation.

Figure 6.1: Anti-venereal disease poster depicting an exotic Cuban female offering a startled U.S. soldier-client a skull inscribed with the Spanish word for venereal disease (venereo) (published in *Revista de Medicina Cubana* III: 25 (August 1920): 152).

No más sífilis

Cura radical de la sífilis más rebelde en 30 días, sin molestias para el enfermo por su fácil régimen curativo con el extracto

VEGETAL ORIENTAL AFRICANO

Muy recomendado ante los resultados obtenidos por el doctor Juan Muller, especialista en enfermedades sifilíticas y exmédico de **La Covadonga** del **Centro Asturiano**.

SU COSTO MUY BARATO

Para informes: Depósito principal: **Obispo** 57, esquina á Aguiar, peletería "El Paseo". dc. 29.

Figure 6.2: Advertisement published in a Havana newspaper offering an inexpensive cure for syphilis based on Eastern African herbs (from *El Mundo* X: 3164 (15 December 1909): 11).

CONCLUSION

Between 1900 and 1920, Havana more than doubled in size as the capital's booming urban population continued to establish residences and businesses in areas removed from the boundaries of the old colonial city.[1] As the commercial center of the city shifted from areas lying near the port into neighborhoods lying farther inland, urban sexual geographies shifted accordingly. Freed from the confines of the tolerance zone after deregulation, prostitutes in Havana moved into new areas of the city, predictably favoring neighborhoods boasting the greatest density of restaurants, cafes, bars, businesses, and potential clientele. To this effect, the bustling barrio Colón—lying between two of the city's major boulevards (Galiano and Monserrate) and featuring many popular department stores and entertainment venues—became Havana's new unofficial red-light district; a reputation that it maintained well into the late 1950s.[2] The pervasive and well-established nature of prostitution in mid-twentieth-century Havana spurred author Pedro Emilio to dolefully reference in a 1951 book, provocatively titled *The Truth about the Barrio Colón* (*La verdad sobre el Barrio de Colón*), the "uncontainable, dynamic, and elusive" spread of "trench prostitution" in that neighborhood.[3]

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[1] Enrique J. Montoulieu y de la Torre, "El crecimiento de La Habana y su regularización. Discurso de ingreso en la Academia de Ciencias, abril 18, 1923," *Anales de la Academia de Ciencias* 59 (1923): 490-520.

[2] According to the chapter titled "Clasificación de Barrios a los Efectos de Triubutación," contained within a 1924 Havana police handbook, the barrio Colón was bounded by the streets Trocadero, Galiano, San Rafael, and Monserrate. See Francisco Duque, *Policia urbana* (Havana: n.p., 1924), 105.

[3] Pedro Emilio Castro, *La verdad sobre el Barrio de Colón* (Havana: Imprenta Muralla, 1951), 13. The original Spanish reads: "la floración incontenible de la propia prostitución…y con carácter dinámica y huidizo (lo que podríamos llamar 'prostitución de trinchera')."

Ultimately, deregulation and the ratification of new anti-trafficking legislation in the early decades of the twentieth century announced globally the position of the new, modernizing Cuban republic on the issue of state sanctioned vice but did little to resolve continuing tensions relating to the actual practice of prostitution on the island. As we saw throughout this study, the ratification of state prostitution legislation gave the veneer of resolution to an issue still very much in dispute. As the legal, moral, social, and spatial relationship of prostitution to the Cuban state shifted after the 1920s, a new (if familiar) set of social conflicts erupted within the capital city. For example, a group of merchants filed an official complaint with Havana's Chief of Police in early March 1937 against a group of prostitutes who regularly solicited clientele at the busy corner of Galiano and San Rafael Streets (barrio Colón). Claiming that "there are now numerous brothels inhabited by women of ill repute whose sole mission it is to call out to and pester the families who came to shop in the city's best shops, which lie along these streets" (exisen ya varias casas donde residen mujeres de mal vivir, cuya misión es la de llamar y molestar…a las familias que van a realizar compras en las tiendas de mayor importancia localizadas en esas calles), the merchants called on police officials to "take appropriate action to halt the spread of prostitution in those streets" (a fin de que se tomen las medidas necesarias para evitar que la prostitución continúe extendiéndose por las mencionadas calles).[4]

Much more than a concern with public order, this complaint filed by a group of disgruntled urban merchants resulted from a collision between two sets of laborers

[4] ANC/SP, leg. 50, no. 28 (1937), "Comunicación mecanografiada referente a solicitud de ayuda de los comerciantes de Galiano y San Rafael, contra la prostitución en esas calles."

(prostitutes and merchants) operating within the same urban space (barrio Colón) and sharing the same basic goal (to make a living), but who ultimately occupied distinct positions on the social spectrum. Echoing a language utilized by merchants operating within the walled colonial city almost one hundred years earlier, these twentieth-century merchants operating within Havana's new commercial center similarly feared that the unsavory spectacle of prostitutes openly soliciting clientele along major commercial boulevards would discourage honorable families from patronizing their businesses. For their part, prostitutes were simply operating within the urban areas most likely to produce clients. While public solicitation remained a punishable offense, the mere physical presence of prostitutes within commercial districts was not, in fact, illegal.

Decades of widespread public debate on the issue of public prostitution in Cuba had shaped, reshaped, and ultimately dismantled a vast disciplinary complex centered on the control of prostitutes' bodies, lives, and labors. Ultimately, however, the case cited above reflects ongoing tensions surrounding the impact of prostitution on urban space, connections drawn between bodies, sexuality, and contagion (moral or physical), and conflicting definitions of honor and citizenship. As the social, political, economic, and even spatial landscape of Cuba continued to shift in profound ways over the course of the twentieth century, Cubans would continue to grapple with the issue of prostitution. While infamous tales of sun, sand, and sex—or even revolutionary night schools for former prostitutes—may resonate more widely with students of Cuban history, these more recent incarnations of the prostitution issue must to positioned within the context of Cuba's much longer history of negotiating the parameters of prostitution, modernity, citizenship, and nationhood.

Negotiating Prostitution, Desiring Nation

This study of Cuban prostitution is firmly grounded in a desire to understand the untidy dynamics of nation-building in a colonial and postcolonial setting. Unlike many other European and Latin American countries, prostitution regulation in Cuba during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries was essentially a colonial project implemented first by Spain and then bolstered by military authorities during the U.S. intervention. To state that Cuba's regulatory system was a colonial project is not, however, to imply that it was not a *negotiated* project. While I accept that macrostructural economic and political forces influenced the "parameters of the possible" with regard to mechanisms of state control, throughout this study I have approached the subject of prostitution regulation as a negotiated process shaped by powerful local social dynamics.

In this study I have demonstrated that while power acted powerfully upon prostitute bodies (as a focus of state anxiety), the results were never perfect or totalizing. The contours of prostitution policy in Cuba between 1840 and 1920 were repeatedly drawn and redrawn according to international, national, and local, exigencies, priorities, and forces. The prostitute body was itself a shifting site of meaning, where definitions of family, gender relations, sex, disease, public health, progress, citizenship, modernity, and nation were repeatedly tested, contested, and reformulated. State power over prostitutes' lives, labor, and bodies was highly contingent and the terms of negotiation between the various actors involved in shaping Cuba's prostitution regulation policy (state officials, local citizens, and prostitutes, etc.) changed over time. Between 1840 and 1920, both what was at stake in the regulation of prostitution and the tools available to contest state power changed in the face of dramatic changes wrought by extended warfare, mass

immigration, shifting political alliances, and the variable influence of European patterns of social, political, economic, and medical thought and policy on the issue of prostitution. In other words, just as Cuba's political, economic, and social situation was not static or inert during the period under study, nor was Cuba's regulatory policy. Rather, Cuba's regulatory policy shifted in accordance with broader economic, political, and social changes on the island as a whole.

This study also demonstrates the importance of mapping histories of prostitution that take into account the very real impact that prostitutes lives and labors, patterns of resistance and accommodation, and visibility and invisibility had on the form and function of the regulatory system. More than a matter of simply listing the types of resistance employed by prostitutes, it is imperative that we trace how such patterns of resistance and accommodation shaped the parameters of the regulatory system in tangible ways. As seen throughout this study, prostitutes exploited available spaces of resistance over time, forcing colonial authorities to re-imagine and redefine aspects of the regulatory apparatus that hindered their ability to secure an income. Even the spatial parameters of the regulatory system (embodied most saliently by the tolerance zone) were negotiated, as prostitutes resisted frequently geographic fixity in order to avoid the burdens of state fees, fines, geographic containment, surveillance, and examination. Ultimately, state agendas of control and individual and collective forms of resistance exercised by prostitutes in Cuba were constituted mutually; one was constantly adjusted to thwart the goals and actions of the other.

While debates surrounding the issue of regulated prostitution in Cuba between 1840 and 1920 were always explicitly grounded in language and ideas about sexuality,

prostitution, disease, and social control, they were also *implicitly* about much more. At no time during Cuba's history was this statement truer than during the early republican period. Following the final withdrawal of U.S. personnel from the island in 1909, a wide array of Cuban citizens began to link the issue of regulated prostitution to questions of national moral wellbeing, independence, modernity, and progress. In wrestling with the issues of how to deal with the presence of prostitution in Cuba, republican authorities simultaneously shaped the social and moral parameters of republican *cubanidad* (Cuban national identity), which they believed could only be drawn by resolving the long-standing tensions surrounding the regulatory system. In a very real sense, the contentious issue of deregulation served as a moral compass by which republican authorities could begin to chart the future course of the Cuban republic. In order for republican Cuba to take its place amongst the modernizing nations of the world, the vast disciplinary complex (tolerance zone, regulations, medical facilities, and police force) designed by Spain and bolstered by the United States to exert state control over prostitutes' lives and labors had to be dismantled. Republican officials endeavored to replace regulated prostitution (as a colonial institution) with a new set of institutions that would promote the distinctly republican ideals of independence, modernity, progress, and moral forthrightness. In short, the continued regulation of prostitution was defined as antithetical to Cuba's political, economic, social, and moral progress.

The existing international abolitionist movement, centered primarily in Europe and the United States certainly gave increased justification for the adoption of abolitionist legislation in Cuba. The push toward deregulation and the adoption of anti-trafficking legislation on the island, however, also served broader nationalistic goals centered on

purifying the national body politic of social, moral, and epidemiological infections. Advocates of deregulation in Cuba argued that widespread prostitution was the result not of any inherent moral weakness or degeneration on the part of Cuban women, but rather on the inherent exploitative nature of the colonial project of which Cuba had been subject, first at the hands of Spain and later of the U.S., for centuries. By linking prostitution to colonialism, social reformers, physicians, women's rights advocates, and republican authorities won powerful support for their cause. The rejection of the regulatory system as an imposed system of exploitation foisted upon Cuba by immoral, backward, and exploitative colonial authorities resonated widely during a period when throwing off the political and economic chains of colonialism served as a rallying cry for the forging of a new independent nation. For her part, the Cuban prostitute was recast less as the byproduct of any inherent moral decrepitude on the part of the Cuban population than of the island's historic exploitation at the hands of Spain and the U.S. The Cuban prostitute thus becomes less a thing to be feared and punished than to be rescued, empathized with, and protected. In a very real sense, she becomes a symbol of the prostituted Cuban nation and the unlikely embodiment of the hopes of a republic based in a new, progressive, moral national status.

In redefining the relationship of the state to prostitutes' bodies, Cuban social reformers, medical community members, and national policy makers also redefined prostitutes' relationship to the Cuban body politic. Progressive republican social reformers and policy makers determined to push Cuba into the twentieth century thus recast Cuban prostitutes as future wives and mothers—as ultimately salvageable—and as victims of a particular set of historical events, circumstances, and processes whereby

Cuba's most vulnerable sector (young, poor, females) became, like the island as a whole, the victims of an exploitative colonial system designed to extract resources (material, human, and even sexual) from the island. The resulting construction of the Cuban prostitute as "victim" was the product of a specific discursive moment, in this case the transition from colony to republic. Under the republic it became imperative to address the perceived moral ambivalences displayed by Spanish and U.S. colonial authorities. The republican state would play a role as a social and moral purifier and as the protector of the Cuban prostitute rather than as a pimp or exploiter as had Spanish and U.S. predecessors. To be sure, Cuban prostitutes were still subject to state scrutiny, but the justification for such state fixations had shifted. Redefined within the context of a republican state concerned with prostitutes as members of the Cuban social body, these measures were cast as protective rather than punitive or exploitative. The essential shift was from a state agenda defined by disciplinary motivations to one defined by rehabilitative goals.

Conclusion

This dissertation is, at its heart, a gender history of Cuba's transition from a colony to a republic. Throughout this study, I argue that heated, ongoing debates on the issue of prostitution in Cuba provided a forum within which an array of Cubans—including physicians, policy makers, women's rights activists, local residents, business owners, and even prostitutes themselves—could work through complex issues of public morality, urbanity, citizenship, modernity, progress, and national identity. The prostitute body itself (both physical and symbolic) became a site of meaning, a contested social terrain, upon

which the social and moral parameters of Cuban national identity were worked out. Although this study ends in the mid-1920s with the development of a new set of republican responses to the intersecting issues of public health, family, and immigration, the cases cited at the outset of this conclusion demonstrate that Cuban citizens and state officials continued to grapple with the issue of prostitution well into the revolutionary period. That debates about the impact of prostituion on Cuban society extended beyond the tenure of the regulatory system reinforces the need for the continued development of methodologies that will allow historians of gender, sexuality, and nation-building to investigate the discursive, legislative, and spatial parameters of prostitution in a non-regulated context. This difficult work has important implications not only for the study of prostitution, but also for the development of our understanding of the highly contingent, contested, and negotiated nature of state projects, be they imperial or national.

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