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An Exploration of American and Canadian Tourist Destination Images of Cuba  
by

Culum Richard Canally

Master of Science, Arizona State University, 2004

Bachelor of Science, Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania, 2001

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

Doctor of Philosophy

Wilfrid Laurier University

2010

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## ABSTRACT

Tourism in Cuba is thriving. Since 1991 the island has quickly become one of the top Caribbean tourist destinations. As a result tourism researchers have recently turned their attention towards investigating many facets of tourism on the island. However one omission in this growing corpus of research is the effect that politics has had on Cuba's tourist destination image (TDI). In this study I explore how politics influences the evolution of tourist destination image. I also demonstrate that a critical constructivist paradigm can be used as an alternative to traditional positivist/postpositivist ways of researching tourist destination image. Finally I utilize the unique, politically charged, situation of Cuba, the US, and Canada as a case study to illustrate the above objectives. To accomplish this I critique the body of TDI literature to demonstrate that the over reliance on positivist and postpositivist approaches has narrowed how TDI is conceptualized. I then present the findings of my study as a means of addressing the deficiencies in the current literature. The way I approach my study as a critical constructivist demonstrates an alternative way of knowing and researching tourist destination image. This approach broadens the scope of acceptable areas of exploration, which is particularly important when the subject of the study, Canadians' and Americans' image of Cuba, presents fertile material for the investigation of how politics influence people's TDI. As a means of operationalizing a critical constructivist epistemology I interviewed 20 Canadian and 22 American tourists to the Caribbean using a semi-structured interview designed to elicit their images of Cuba. I then used a qualitative frame analysis approach incorporating Creed, Langstraat, and Scully's (2002) signature matrix in order to scrutinize these interviews for organizing narratives that would suggest unifying frames. Both groups of interviewees were found to have a dominant framing of images related to Cuba. I present a critical exploration of these frames by examining their unifying logics, the implicit assumptions made by those who proffer it, the contradictions both within the frame and between the frame and the discourse that nurtures it, and reflect on the significance of my embeddedness within the culture I am investigating.

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Lindsay Woodside who has been there to celebrate all the milestones, encourage me through the mental blocks, and read everything I had written on the subject of Cuba. She has brought clarity and inspiration to both this project and my life.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The goal of this research is to begin a dialog about the nature of tourist destination image (TDI). By approaching this research from a critical constructivist standpoint I hope to offer an alternative conceptualization of the construct of TDI. The subject of this research will be the American and Canadian image of Cuba. As I illustrate in this paper Canada and the United States (US) maintain divergent public policies and public discourses towards Cuba. These differing approaches result in a unique case study which allows me to demonstrate that a TDI is neither a static nor a homogeneous construct. More importantly the subject of Cuba compels me to examine the political dimensions of TDI. Along the way I will demonstrate how critical constructivist TDI research can be emancipatory. By conducting tourist research for tourists instead of tourism practitioners or tourism academics, research has the potential to contextualize the practices that veil unequal power relations.

Throughout this study I relied on a set of research objectives that guided the methods I used as well as the information with which I chose to engage. These objectives are: a) to explore how politics influences the evolution of tourist destination image; b) to demonstrate that a critical constructivist paradigm can be used as an alternative to traditional positivist/postpositivist ways of researching tourist destination image; c) and to utilize the unique, politically charged, situation of Cuba, the US, and Canada as a case study to illustrate the above objectives.

The fundamental purpose for this research cannot be summarized in a series of discrete questions or objectives. Rather the drive behind my study is a gestalt of questions and objectives that form what I will loosely term a case study. Each question I ask or research objective I propose forms an integral part of this case. For instance, I could not explore how politics influences TDI without simultaneously relying on a critical constructivist paradigm to allow new methods of exploration like frame analysis. Furthermore, neither of these two research objectives would have given me the motivation to sustain my research if I had not wanted to answer why Canadians and Americans seem to have divergent images of Cuba.

There has been a recent flurry of research pertaining to tourism in Cuba (Kirk, 2007; Padilla, 2007; Sanchez & Adams, 2007; Bailey, 2008; Wilkinson, 2008). In addition, new studies “measuring” TDI are continually added to the corpus of tourism literature. Despite the marked increase of interest in studying Cuba as a tourist destination and the increasingly innovative ways of investigating TDI, no tourism researcher has examined the image that Canadians (largest consumers of Cuban tourism) and Americans (largest consumers of tourism in the Caribbean) have of the island (Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2004). To date there have been a couple of longitudinal analyses of opinion polls (Fisk, 1999; Mayer, 2001), and a rather insightful, yet brief, conference presentation about university students’ pre and post trip perceptions of Cuba (Chomsky, 1998) that have obliquely explored the topic. However, there is no

research that has taken advantage of Cuba's unique political situation to examine the TDI that North Americans have of Cuba.

In this thesis I will argue that this oversight is due, in large part, to the performative nature of traditional positivist/postpositivist<sup>1</sup> TDI research. It was clear from the start of this research project that the current, widely used methods for examining tourist destination image (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & Mangalolu, 2001; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993) would be inadequate for exploring Americans' and Canadians' TDI of Cuba because these methods leave no room for the examination of the historical, political, economic, and social context that make Cuba an intriguing case study. In Chapter 2 I will review and critique what I term traditional TDI research. I will demonstrate that the audience for this type of research has been and continues to be tourism practitioners. I argue that research that delivers for this audience, by virtue of its aim to make tourism more profitable, is ensconced in a positivist approach. Consequently the epistemology and methodology of these traditional TDI studies are reductionist. I will demonstrate how this, coupled with an audience of tourism practitioners hampers a thicker understanding of the construct of TDI. In addition to this critique I will reveal how researching TDI from as a social construct can reframe its dominant conception. As Berger and Luckman (1966, p. 61) illustrate in their seminal work on social construction, "Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man (*sic*) is a social product." The notion that humans

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<sup>1</sup> I acknowledge that these are not synonymous terms however I combine them here to describe traditional TDI research that has done little to address the linguistic shift in social science research.

create their social world (and that humans cannot exist without society) gave rise to the idea that things cannot be removed from the institutions that create their meanings. Thus, objective facts are only objective facts between those individuals, groups, and institutions that create and reinforce them. Their work describes a significant ontological and epistemological shift from the dominant positivist notion that an objective reality exists independent of human cognition. After the section in which I critique traditional postpositivist TDI research I will discuss in greater detail the differences between TDI research underpinned by a social constructivist paradigm, a positivist paradigm, and a postpositivist paradigm. Also, I will detail my own critical constructivist paradigm, an adapted permutation of a constructivist paradigm, and discuss how it drives my interest in illuminating power relations in the construction of meaning.

The focus of Chapter 3 will be to illustrate why Cuba presents an ideal case for the exploration of the social construction of TDI. I will explore the Canada-Cuba and US-Cuba diplomatic relationships in order to document the importance of small and big P politics in forming and informing TDI. In addition an examination of how these political relations excessively influence the dominant Canadian and American discourses on Cuba is offered. I will show that through public policy the elite political interests in the United States maintain inordinate power in defining Cuba in the US. I will then show how the dominant Canadian discourse on Cuba is influenced by its government's and business' continuing economic relationship with the island. These relationships have allowed Canadians residents to travel to Cuba for all-inclusive vacations for four decades. In turn

this has allowed tourism practitioners to portray the island as a hedonistic playground for First World tourists.

Chapter 4, Methods, elaborates on the frame analysis as a method for exploring the social construction of TDI. In this chapter I describe how I operationalized the frame analysis to explore two groups of North American's TDI of Cuba. This chapter is followed by the Analysis and Discussion chapter, Chapter 5, in which I use frame analysis method to demonstrate the plasticity of Americans' and Canadians' TDI of Cuba. I will accomplish this by showing how participants in my study evinced a dominant framing of Cuba and how they contested this framing. I will also demonstrate the influence of discourse by illuminating some of the silences and contradictions within the dominant framing of Cuba. In Chapter 6 I summarize the findings of my research. In addition I illustrate the contribution that this study makes to the corpus of tourism research.

## CHAPTER 2: TOURIST DESTINATION IMAGE: TRADITIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTUALIZATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

### **I. Introduction**

Within this thesis I will be using Phillimore and Goodson's (2004) definitions of the constructs of positivist, postpositivist, and constructivist. I acknowledge that there is debate within other disciplines about these constructs but for the purpose of brevity I will define and discuss these constructs as they relate to the field of tourism studies. Phillimore and Goodson (2004) document the need for more researchers to take a qualitative approach to the study of tourism. In *Qualitative Research in Tourism* they show that tourism research has been slow to adopt new ontological, epistemological and methodological stances that many argue are needed to address the perceived deficiencies of positivist research approaches. They define a qualitative approach to tourism research as the application of one or many qualitative techniques where the ontology, epistemology, and methodology of the researcher focuses on the creation of knowledge from a constructivist/interpretivist frame.

These authors' examination of the methodologies of published tourism research since 1996 indicates that, when qualitative methods are used, the ontological and epistemological standpoint of the researcher is often rooted in what Denzin and Lincoln (1998) refer to as the traditional period of qualitative research. The first-moment, or traditional period, in qualitative research is associated with both positivist and

postpositivist approaches where the qualitative researcher produces “valid, reliable, and objective interpretation” and the “other” is “alien, foreign and strange” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 13). Also, Denzin and Lincoln (1998, p. 9) provide a concise explanation of the epistemic differences of positivist and postpositivist research. They assert that:

In the positivist [epistemology] it is contended that there is a reality out there to be studied, captured, and understood whereas postpositivists argue that reality can never be fully apprehended only approximated... Postpositivism relies on multiple methods as a way of capturing as much reality as possible.

Traditional research is portrayed as value free and neutral. This approach has also been criticized as precluding the necessity for researcher reflexivity, thereby masking the inherent bias in all research. By contrast, constructivist research presumes the inability of the researcher to devise research tools and techniques that are objective and free from human bias. Instead, this research asserts that the only realities that exist are the realities that groups of people construct amongst themselves. Constructivist researchers not only examine how people construct their realities, they also recognize that their situatedness impacts these realities as well as their interpretation of said realities.

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) delineate five moments in qualitative research. They trace the dominant phases of qualitative research temporally, based on paradigm shifts in ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies in the social sciences. They conclude their typology by stating that the qualitative researcher has entered a fifth moment. The fifth moment recognizes the “dual crisis” of representation and legitimation in the social sciences while aiming for a social critique and the production of small scale theories that address local problems and specific situations (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 21).

Jamal and Hollinshead (2001a) describe the need for, and nature of, fifth-moment research in the field of tourism studies. They call on tourism researchers to enter this “forbidden zone” of fifth-moment qualitative research in order to find “new ways of theorizing, investigating and understanding human/societal experience, activities and actions” as well as discovering “new ways of interpreting and expressing the polyphony, multi-vocality, textuality and situatedness of participants in a qualitative research inquiry (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001a, p. 78).” The call to understand the “text and context” of the issue being examined is particularly important in the case of tourist destination image where the focus has been on creating an efficient and effective instrument for measuring TDI in order to help destination marketers (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001a).

While there are numerous studies that focus on the importance of image formation, all but a few possess what Tribe (2004), building upon Lyotard’s (1984) notion of performative research, describes as performativity, whereby “the aim of knowledge production becomes not an impartial uncovering of the truth but a search for truths which are useful in terms of marketability and efficiency.” What results from performativity is a corpus of tourism literature that relies heavily on positivist, quantitative research, as well as what Holliday (2002) refers to as naturalist qualitative research, which often belies the essential contextualization necessary to understand tourism phenomena.

When it comes to the investigation of tourist destination image, a blind spot within the academic literature is the bias towards the business of tourism, which focuses almost completely on the function of image as a destination marketing tool (Tribe, 2008).

What these researchers neglect when they study TDI from a positivist/postpositivist perspective is an understanding of how societal influences shape image as well as the role TDI plays in people's construction of the world around them.

Hollinshead (2004, p. 65) notes that tourism "has been found to be a most significant people-maker, place-maker, and past-maker as various groups use its articulations to identify or culturally invent themselves." This hints strongly towards the importance of TDI, yet very little effort has been undertaken to explore the social construction of a destination. Traditional TDI researchers are opting instead to create effective measurement tools as a way of exploring the construct (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a; 1999b; Chon, 1992; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Gartner, 1986; 1989; 1993; Gunn, 1972; Hankinson, 2004; Hanlan & Kelly, 2005; Hunt, 1975).

In this chapter I will provide a substantive critique of what I term traditional tourist destination image research, asserting that, while academic research on tourists' consumer behavior is important, academic tourism researchers should also recognize that tourists and people in host destinations can benefit from TDI research. What I refer to as traditional TDI research are those studies, conducted by tourism academics as a social scientific endeavor, which dominate the body of TDI literature and emanate from a positivist/postpositivist epistemology and employ reductionist methodologies to acquire results for an audience comprised almost exclusively of tourist practitioners (i.e. destination management organizations, tourism markets, national and local tourism boards) (Gallarza, Saura, & Garcia, 2002; Pike, 2002; Tasci, Gartner, & Cavusgil, 2007). The term "traditional" to connote this type of research is borrowed from Denzin and

Lincoln (1998) and Phillipmore and Goodson (2004). In these texts the traditional phase of research connotes not only a time period (beginning in the early 1900s) but also the particular research paradigms that dominated the works produced during the time period when “the social sciences became distinguished as separate systems of discourse” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 14). Phillipmore and Goodson interpret this phase in tourism research to include those studies that:

...have a tendency to quantify qualitative data to present a positivist interpretation of the finding;...[are] underpinned by positivist modes of thinking which attempt to provide predictive, analytical and explanatory tools based on generalisations which are then applied to broad populations; ... [are] based on predetermined rigid research agendas...[which are] frequently used by those focusing on economics, marketing or management in survey and structured interviewing; [and] lack accountability and transparency about the research process [that] presents the researcher as ‘powerful/knowing’ amongst other qualities (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004, pp. 10-12).

I argue that these traditional TDI studies narrowly define tourism as a commercial practice which precludes the emancipatory power of TDI research. In the following chapter I will demonstrate how current practices in TDI research are situated squarely in the traditional phase and are inadequate for understanding political and social dimensions of TDI.

In addition, by framing TDI knowledge as the sole domain of tourism practitioners, traditional TDI researchers (and the editors who publish them) produce a dominant discourse within which ethical and epistemological assumptions are rarely scrutinized. This leads researchers to reinforce stereotypical place myths, which privilege tourism practitioners often more so than the tourists’ understanding of place and the hosts’ ability to determine their own projected TDI.

As an alternative to traditional TDI research, I propose that researchers should examine the phenomenon of TDI from a critical constructivist paradigm. After critiquing traditional TDI literature, I will discuss current research that acknowledges other ways of knowing TDI. Finally I demonstrate how a frame analysis can be a useful systematic technique for exploring TDI that situates TDI formation both as a cognitive function of the tourist and as a social construction.

## **II. Defining the term and construct of TDI**

Several traditional TDI researchers have acknowledged that the origins of the current methods of measuring TDI were developed by adapting and fine-tuning the methods originally used by market researchers to determine the image of products, brands, and corporations (Lawson & Baud-Bovy, 1977; Crompton, 1979; Dichter, 1985; Gartner, 1986; Gunn, 1972; Hunt, 1975; Mayo, 1975). These methods framed tourism as a 'product' or 'brand' with similar attributes to the more static and centrally-manipulated products, brands, and corporations.

The concept of TDI has traditionally been studied as a psychological phenomenon (Gallarza et al., 2002; Pike, 2002; White, 2004, 2005). Earlier studies of TDI borrowed methods and principles from marketing and branding research (Crompton, 1979; Gunn, 1972; Hunt, 1975; Mayo, 1975). Tracing the origins of TDI research back even further shows that marketing and branding researchers in turn borrowed their methods and principles from early cognitive psychology literature of the 1930s (White, 2004). Recently, researchers have been returning to these roots to refocus and reposition the

study of TDI (Reilly, 1990; Dann, 1995; Litvin & Goh, 2002; Beerli & Martin, 2004b; Jenkins, 2004; Ryan & Cave, 2005; White, 2004, 2005). These researchers have re-examined fields such as cognitive psychology to determine more appropriate techniques for studying personal meaning and construction of TDI. Therefore many of the studies reviewed in the following sections focus on the personal construction of image as relating to the field of tourism studies.

#### *History of the definition of tourist destination image*

The definitions of tourist destination image are as disparate as the studies that focus on the construct (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Gallarza et al., 2002; Pike, 2002). Jenkins (1999) notes that, due to the subjective nature of TDI, a single commonly accepted definition is difficult to produce. Echtner and Ritchie (1991) trace the origins of destination image to literature pertaining to marketing. In particular, studies on product (brand), store, and corporate image became the inspiration for the earliest studies of TDI (Lawson & Baud-Bovy, 1977; Crompton, 1979; Dichter, 1985; Gartner, 1986; Gunn, 1972; Hunt, 1975; Mayo, 1975). From this corpus of marketing literature came the early definitions of TDI. Though these definitions were often vague and designed to suit the immediate needs of the research, most had elements similar to the definitions currently used in the field of destination image research (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Gallarza et al., 2002). What most of the old and new definitions share is the understanding that image is more than just knowledge of a place; it is the holistic feeling about all the known attributes of a destination.

The focus on tourist destination image (TDI) began in earnest in the 1970s specifically with the work of Gunn (1972), Hunt (1975), Mayo (1975), and Crompton (1979). From these works came a nascent understanding that tourism image, in many ways, varied distinctively from the image of product, store, or corporation. The most notable difference was the customer's inability to experience the product before the purchase. This is due to what Urry (1990) refers to as spatial fixity. As part of the vacation experience, tourists consume a 'place' as much as they consume the tangible products of the place. Urry (1990) cites this as a dilemma for tourists who want to be assured that they know what they are buying before their trip. The marketing of TDI was created, in part, to fill this void brought on by the inability to experience a destination before purchasing a vacation.

The marketing focus pervades both the conceptual and operational definitions of TDI. This is possibly due to the perceived predictive capabilities of the reductionist techniques used in positivist/postpositivist research that pervade the field. The reductionist approaches best serve interests of tourism businesses by identifying only the most salient areas where investment is most likely to increase profit. This is an example of Tribe's (2008) concept of performative research.

Since traditional TDI research was born (and remains ensconced) in the positivist epistemology the operational definitions most often used by researchers focus on a) the purchaser or seller of a tourism product, and b) those discrete attributes that are measurable. In an effort to discover a well defined and delimited truth traditional TDI researchers limit the operational definition of TDI to only measurable attributes. By

focusing only on these measurable attributes researchers can often overlook broader societal influences on TDI. Thus, concepts such as social and political discourse are all but absent from the operational and theoretical definitions of TDI. The following is a review and critique of contemporary uses of the definitions of TDI in scholarly/performative research.

### **III. Definitions of TDI in tourism research**

Crompton's (1979) study of the image American students possessed of Mexico resulted in one of the first and most commonly accepted definitions of tourist destination image used in the literature today (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Gallarza et al., 2002). Crompton (1979) defined destination image as "the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions one has of a destination." This concise definition captures the basic, agreed upon elements of the construct of image, yet Jenkins (1999) feels that Lawson and Baud-Bovy's (1977) definition is more accurate because it does not preclude the social element of image. Lawson and Baud-Bovy (1977, p. 17) define image as "the expression of all objective knowledge, impressions, prejudice, imaginations, and emotional thoughts an individual or group might have of a particular place."

Both Gallarza et al. (2002) and Echtner and Ritchie (1991) include in their literature reviews of destination image a table of definitions used by previous researchers in the field of marketing and tourism research. Of the 23 definitions listed in the two tables, only one (Dichter, 1985) is present in both tables, reinforcing the notion that definitions of TDI remain diverse. Table 2.1 below illustrates the chronological sequence

of the definitions of TDI. Also noted in the table are studies that borrow definitions from past research. This extensive list of definitions demonstrates Jacobsen & Dann's (2003, p. 27) assertion that "although several image concepts have been employed, no consensus has yet emerged as to which are the most useful."

Table 2.1 Definitions of Tourist Destination Image

| Author(s)                         | Date | Definition  |
|-----------------------------------|------|---|
| Lawson & Baud-Bovy                | 1977 | "[T]he expression of all objective knowledge, impressions, prejudices, imaginations and emotional thoughts with which a person or group judges a particular object or place."   |
| Crompton                          | 1979 | "The sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination"   |
| Dichter                           | 1985 | "The concept of 'image' can be applied to political candidates, a product, a country. It describes not individual traits or qualities but the total impression an entity makes on the minds of others"  |
| Gartner                           | 1986 | "[a] function of brand (political entity) and the tourists' and sellers' perception of the attributes of activities or attractions available within a destination area."  |
| Reilly                            | 1990 | "[Image] describes not individual traits or qualities but the total impression an entity makes on the minds of others..."   |
| Echtner & Ritchie*                | 1991 | List definitions from marketing and tourism literature  |
| Dann                              | 1996 | "An abstract concept incorporating the influences of past promotion, reputation and peer evaluation of alternatives. Image connotes the expectation of the user"  |
| Bramwell & Rawding                | 1996 | "Projected place images can be conceived as the ideas and impressions of a place that are available for people's consideration."  |
| Baloglu & Brinberg <sup>2,3</sup> | 1997 | a) "The sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination"<br>b) "The concept of 'image' can be applied to political candidates, a product, a country. It describes not individual traits or qualities but the total impression an entity makes on the minds of others" |
| Choi, Chan, & Wu <sup>2</sup>     | 1999 | "[A] destination's image consists of peoples' beliefs, ideas, or impressions about a place."  |
| Jenkins <sup>1</sup>              | 1999 | "[T]he expression of all objective knowledge, impressions, prejudices, imaginations, and emotional thoughts an individual or group might have of a particular place"  |
| Schneider & Sonmez <sup>2</sup>   | 1999 | "[Image is] the sum of beliefs, impressions, ideas, and perceptions that people hold of objects, behaviors, and events"   |
| Coshall                           | 2000 | "Images reflect the individual's perceptions of the characteristics of destinations"  |
| Bigne, Sanchez, & Sanchez         | 2001 | "[An] individual's overall perception or total set of impressions of a place" or "as the mental portrayal of a destination"   |
| Beerli & Martin                   | 2004 | "[A] mental picture formed by a set of attributes that define the destination in its various dimensions"  |

<sup>1</sup> Lawson and Baud Bovy, 1977

<sup>2</sup> Crompton, 1979

<sup>3</sup> Dichter, 1985

\* No single definition was selected

Although this list of TDI definitions is extensive many of the basic assumptions of the definitions are problematic. The use of the terms *destination* and *tourist* can be exclusive to only those that have the means to travel. By subscribing to this definition, those without the means to travel are precluded from studies of TDI. Also, the host's contribution to the social construction of TDI is ignored. Additionally, places that may be destinations for "deviant" tourists, such as Cuba for Americans, are ignored because Cuba is perceived to be a non-destination for Americans. Therefore in this research I have operationalized tourist destination image as analogous to place image. From the above list of conceptual definitions, the one created by Lawson & Baud-Bovy (1977) and proffered by Jenkins' (1999, p. 1) comes closest to fitting the way that I have conceived TDI in this paper. "[T]he expression of all objective knowledge, impressions, prejudices, imaginations and emotional thoughts with which a person or group judges a particular object or place (Jenkins, 1999, p. 1)." While I take issue with their term "objective knowledge" the spirit of the definition is inclusive rather than exclusive. Instead of using exclusionary terms such as "tourist" and "destination" I opt to use the broader categories of "person or group" and "object or place" so as not to preclude the constructs of hosts and non-destinations.

By opening the definition of TDI I endeavour to broaden the scope of TDI research to include emancipatory studies that are undertaken for an audience of tourists, prospective tourists, hosts, and other people or groups that are affected by the construction and manipulation of information about a place. Not focusing on tourists as

an audience for TDI research, traditional TDI research reinforces a discourse that privileges the supply, or industry, side of tourism. While the term emancipatory is often applied to research focusing on historically disadvantaged groups, I feel that within the scope of TDI literature the tourist has been marginalized. For this study I view research that purposely addresses the tourist as the audience to be emancipatory. While there are volumes of research that inform tourism practitioners in constructing and refining their TDI, very little research has focused on helping tourists understand how their image is influenced by political and economic machinations. With this study I will address this gap in TDI research.

By exploring TDI as a gestalt that is formed and informed both as a personal cognitive function and through socially constructed discourses I hope to redefine the practice of TDI research. To examine not just the individual but the individual in context presents a radical departure from the traditionally accepted practices of researching tourist destination image. In the following section I will review and critique these traditional practices with the aim of building a case for using frame analysis as a systematic method for exploring TDI from a social constructivist epistemology. The definition of the construct used in most traditional TDI research is a corollary of their performative methodologies. A critique of the performative role of traditional TDI research is offered next.

#### *Performative role of traditional TDI research*

In an acknowledgement of the limitation of positivist TDI research, Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993) heralded the mixed methods technique for examining TDI which

has since become orthodox practice in traditional TDI studies (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Chen, 2001; Choi, Chan, & Wu, 1999; Hunter & Suh, 2007). Traditional tourist destination image studies have implemented various combinations of the quantitative and qualitative elicitation and data analysis techniques. To gather their qualitative data some researchers use questionnaires with open ended questions (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999), others use semi-structured interviews and/or focus groups (San Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque, 2008), whilst others use a combination of all of these methods to create a comprehensive analysis of TDI (Chaudhary, 2000; Bonn, Joseph, & Dai, 2005).

Within this type of research there is disagreement about who should participate in the qualitative data collection phase. Various researchers have queried tourism 'experts', tourism industry professionals, the tourists themselves, or a combination of the aforementioned using qualitative techniques (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; 1993; Leisen, 2001; Beerli & Martin, 2004a; San Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque, 2008). There is also debate about when and how the qualitative portion of the research should be utilized in a TDI study. Some researchers believe that it should be used solely at the beginning of the study to guide the researchers in creating a comprehensive list of attributes from which quantitative measurement scales can be created. Other researchers feel that qualitative techniques should accompany and be an equal part of the data collection and analysis in an effort to ascertain the complexity and richness of TDI (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Pearlman & Melnik, 2008). Others feel that some combination of these techniques is the best way to use qualitative data in a traditional study of TDI (San Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque, 2008). From the various ways that

researchers have implemented qualitative techniques it is evident that the privileging of one technique over another appears to be a contested issue. Nonetheless, most of these researchers are firmly ensconced in a positivist/postpositivist epistemic community, therefore the use of qualitative methods in these examinations of TDI perpetuate the idea that the construct is reducible and formed in a contextual vacuum.

San Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque's (2008) study of tourists' TDI of Cantabria, Spain represents a striking example of the continuation of the performative epistemology taken by previous traditional TDI researchers. As an illustrative example I will demonstrate how San Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque (2008) utilized a mixed methods technique for "measuring" the TDI phenomenon in their study in order to frame their research project and its results in a way that reinforces the images and interests of a group of elite tourism professionals and experts over those of the tourist or the people of the host destination.

Using the passive, unreflexive, 'researcher as knower/expert' voice to obscure the patrons of their research, San Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque (2008) present what appears to be this unproblematic footnote:

The experts' choice process was carried out according to Kuzel (1992), who established that qualitative sampling strategies are concerned with reflecting the variety within the phenomena being examined. With this in mind, several experts from the main sectors of the tourism industry were selected: Public Administration (experts involved in the management and promotion of the tourist destination), accommodation sector (a hotel manager) and travel agencies sector (the chairman of a national association of travel agencies). The purpose of this qualitative technique was to contrast the opinions from individuals with wide knowledge about the *reality* of the tourist destination. The interviews were semi-structured, the most employed method in qualitative research (Bryman, 2006). A noneconomic incentive was used to stimulate the experts' participation in these interviews. *More concretely, the experts were informed that they would receive data from the quantitative research, which could be useful in their decision-*

*making processes....* (San Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque, 2008, pp. 267-268)  
[emphasis added]

As well as this description:

...two focus groups were set up, one with travel agents and another with travellers of different groups of gender, age and occupation (San Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque, 2008, p. 268)

San Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque (2008) acknowledged that it was important to hear the voices of people who have actual experience with the meanings of the place they are studying yet instead of relying on residents whose lives may be adversely affected by tourists, they chose to ask those “experts” that have an economic motive to project stereotypical images of place to attract a larger array of customers (tourists). In addition, they inform the tourism practitioners/experts that they will produce knowledge that *could be of value to them*.

The effect of tourism marketing material producing a “hermeneutical circle” whereby marketing material produces signifiers for signs of a destination that tourists consume and reproduce when on vacation has been well documented (Adams, 2004; Jenkins, 2004). These studies demonstrate how this can produce a tunnel vision type tourist gaze by channeling tourist to consume certain “sites” or experiences. Given the power of a particular image to maneuver tourists to certain signs (sites) while in a destination it is important that traditional TDI researchers critically scrutinize their use of tourism practitioners in the development and implementation of surveys (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). One could envision a scenario in which this research practice becomes a self-referential loop whereby tourism marketers collaborate with researchers to conduct “objective” and “non-biased” findings pertaining to the TDI of a certain area. The

marketers and other “tourism professionals” and “experts” create a survey instrument that is designed to reinforce the TDI of a destination that suits their economic and/or ideological interests. Then, like in San Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque’s (2008) study, the surveys are distributed to those tourists or potential tourists that the marketers deem relevant (see block quote below). Their findings can then either reinforce a destination marketing organization’s case to direct local/national tax revenue to bolster the significance of those destination attributes, which were found to be significant by a select group of tourists; or support an agenda of tourism businesses to gentrify areas, displace people, or build tourism specific infrastructure that favors their businesses. At the same time as it is performing these functions, it is further silencing any local voices that might contest the meanings and/or practices of tourists visiting their home. This can create a self-referential loop where tourism, and the interests of tourists, dominate civil society (Dann, 1996; Echtner & Prasad, 2003; Jenkins, 2004). The following passage from San Martin and Rodriguez del Bosque (2008) illustrates how the researchers’ use of industry professionals can steer research in a direction that favors tourism businesses to the possible exclusion of other area residents.

Secondly, the in-depth interviews with experts from the tourism industry were very useful to design the sampling. More concretely, knowledge about the reality of the destination acquired by these experts over time allowed the researchers to identify the socio-demographic profiles of international and national tourists, the most interesting tourist attractions in order to localize these tourists, as well as the most favourable time period for data collection. (San Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque, 2008, p. 268)

I must point out that while I single out San Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque’s (2008) study to illustrate how traditional TDI research can potentially perform for the

interest of tourism businesses and silence or marginalize local non-tourist interpretations of place, the use of tourism practitioners or marketing material in the constructions and implementation of TDI surveys and questionnaires is a widely utilized, and seldom criticized technique in traditional TDI research. (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 Traditional TDI researchers' use of tourism practitioners

| Author(s)                         | Year  | Use of tourism practitioners to focus TDI research   |
|-----------------------------------|-------|--|
| Beerli & Martin                   | 2004b | "To check the validity of the content of the scale, eight experts involved either professionally or academically with the tourist industry were interviewed, and in accordance with their expressed opinions, it was possible to ensure that the scale covered the whole of the studied content."  |
| Bigne, Sanchez, & Sanchez         | 2001  | "Image is shown in this study to be a key factor in the hands of destination managers. It is a direct antecedent of perceived quality and satisfaction (evaluation of the stay) and of the intention to return and to recommend the destination (future behaviour). It is also a key factor in influencing the choice of holiday destination, though this has not been analysed in our study. Destination managers should therefore not delay in taking a serious approach to their image."  |
| Litvin & Ling                     | 2001  | "The model presented herein is a tool to assist marketers accomplish this goal" (they used Fakeye and Crompton's survey instrument)  |
| Fakeye & Crompton                 | 1991  | "First, secondary sources were used. The initial pool was composed of items used in other image studies reported in the literature and from tourism literature published by a variety of tourism agencies and businesses in the study area. Second, additional items were derived from personal interviews conducted with representatives of selected chambers of commerce and RV/mobile home park managers in the study area, and experts in tourism who were independent of the chambers of commerce representatives. Third, a panel of seven tourism professionals from the study area was convened to review and discuss the items."   |
| Leisen                            | 2001  | "The significance of this study lies in its marketing implications. The tourism industry is experiencing a tremendous growth with an ever increasing number of destinations battling over the tourism dollar. While this development is certainly beneficial for the tourist, since he or she now can choose among a variety of options that fit his or her needs, it has created major challenges for tourism marketers. Forced by the high cost and the great variety of media, marketers have to allocate their limited budget for promotion, so that it generates the greatest amount of travel to the destination."   |
| Hankinson                         | 2005  | "A self-completion questionnaire was used to measure managers' ratings of the perceived quality of each destination and the commercial criteria used to select a destination."   |
| Bonn, Joseph, & Dai               | 2005  | "An expert panel was subsequently formulated to conduct interrater reliability on the open-ended responses generated. In addition, panel and focus group discussions were held with industry and community leaders to include the practitioner's perspective on key destination image attributes. As a result of this process, these responses were refined into a list consisting of 10 specific dimensions."   |
| Joppe, Martin, & Waalen           | 2001  | "This importance-satisfaction study is part of a larger ongoing project studying the attitudes and motivations of visitors to Toronto at four time periods. The major project is a collaboration between the Centre for Quality Service Research, <i>Where Toronto</i> magazine, and Tourism Toronto (the visitor and convention bureau for the city). The purposes of this study were to examine Toronto visitors' perceptions of products and services in terms of importance and satisfaction by origin, and to apply the results to the importance-satisfaction model to visually identify strengths and gaps in service.... In a series of meetings with the parties involved, a set of questions was developed that tapped not only the attributes associated with importance and satisfaction but other interests of the three partners." |
| San Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque | 2008  | "...several experts from the main sectors of the tourism industry were selected: Public Administration (experts involved in the management and promotion of the tourist destination), accommodation sector (a hotel manager) and travel agencies sector (the chairman of a national association of travel agencies). The purpose of this qualitative technique was to contrast the opinions from individuals with wide knowledge about the reality of the tourist destination. The interviews were semi-structured, the most employed method in qualitative research."   |

This table presents a sample of the statements made by past and recent traditional TDI studies which present an unproblematized and unacknowledged bias towards the commercial practices of tourism in the framing of their research. The implicit notion in these and most traditional TDI research is that the audiences for this research are the DMOs and other tourism marketing organizations. This creates a bias in the sense that researchers are reinforcing the meanings of one group (tourism elites) over those of others (hosts and/or marginal tourists). A problem then arises when researchers do not acknowledge this bias before subjecting the results of the survey data to a battery of statistical manipulations in order to measure *the* TDI of a destination. By not acknowledging or discussing this bias and its implications as a limitation of the study, and by perpetuating the role of 'researcher as expert' traditional TDI researchers work *with* tourism practitioners to reinforce a static, uncontested image of a destination.

The favoring of certain interpretations of a destination may be resolved within the postpositivist epistemic community by being reflexive and recognizing biases and/or changing the audience to the tourist and host instead of the commercial practitioners of tourism. There is, however, a more fundamental problem that this community of researchers cannot address. By focusing on the discovery of a single reality related to TDI, the reductionist approach of traditional positivist/postpositivist research inhibits a greater understanding of the phenomena. This occurs when researchers exclude statistically insignificant information that might provide greater contextual insight into the construct.

#### **IV. Reductionist approaches and the marginalization of contesting images**

In his definition, Crompton (1979, p. 18) states that “beliefs, ideas, and impressions” make up image but then proceeds to only measure the impressions students have of Mexico, essentially limiting his definition. Several researchers have deconstructed Crompton’s (1979) and others’ definitions of TDI in an effort to delineate measurable components of the construct. These components of image have become widely accepted in the study of TDI (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a; 1999b; Dann, 1996b; White, 2004; 2005). Although the components of TDI are not thoroughly understood, hard to measure, and often overlapping, traditional postpositivist studies steadfastly cling to the belief that TDI is increasingly reducible and measurable.

For instance, working from Scott’s (1965) and Boulding’s (1961) research on advertising, Gartner (1993) extrapolates that tourists may possess a *cognitive* image of a destination. Cognitive image is all the solid “factual” information one has about a destination. All of the known attributes that tourists assign to a place combine to form this image. This includes knowledge of the geography, culture, friendliness of the locals, security, and cost, along with countless other variables. However, Ward and Russel (1981; in Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997) observe that “the meaning of a place is not entirely determined by the physical properties of that place”. Ward and Russel (1981) posit that a flaw in early TDI literature was that it ignored these “meanings”. Crompton’s (1979) research on the image of Mexico exemplifies this flaw. He uses cognitive components such as sanitation, safety, crowding, and weather but ignores the feelings and meanings

attached to these variables. More recent TDI studies termed the feelings and meanings attached to the known attributes as *affective image* (Gartner, 1993; Dann, 1996).

The affective component of image is closely related to motivation (Gartner, 1993; Dann, 1996). Affective image is a manifestation of people's wants, needs, and motivations weighed against the known attributes of a destination (e.g. cognitive image) and in turn forms their TDI (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Beerli & Martin, 2004b; Kim & Richardson, 2003; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997). White (2004) asserts that this process of image formation is based on the psychological approach to measuring attitude formation. As I discussed earlier, this consumer-centric view of image formation has been one of the most popular frameworks for studying TDI in recent years (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Gartner, 1986; Kim & Richardson, 2003). The belief that TDI is formed in the mind of the individual, based on his or her wants and needs, creates a "methodological challenge" as Carmichael (1992) notes because of the multitude of variables that impact motivations.

From the aforementioned interplay of components evolves a positive or negative image of a destination dependent upon on whether or not a destination meets the needs of the individual. The third component is *conative* (Gartner, 1993). According to Gartner (1993), this component directly relates to the actions of a potential tourist. The evaluation of both cognitive and affective image components creates a destination image in the mind of the tourist. Using that image, the conative component then becomes the decision to stay or go. This component, however, is not as well documented in the literature as cognitive and affective image.

The three component construct of TDI is by no means the only measure for understanding the complex construct of TDI. In fact, before Gartner (1993) developed the three component construct, Echtner and Ritchie (1991) had devised a technique for measuring TDI on three axes connecting six components. From an extensive literature review of TDI, Echtner and Ritchie (1991) determined that the previous positivistic focus of TDI research, though reliable, was lacking a deep understanding of the linkages and interconnectivity of tourists' TDI. They believed that the way to rectify this shortfall in validity was to add several qualitative components to the study of TDI, thus creating a comprehensive measurement tool. Like Gartner (1993), Echtner and Ritchie (1991) based their model on the study of imagery in psychology. The two components of image in the discipline of psychology, according to Echtner and Ritchie (1991), are *imagery* and *discursive*.

Imagery refers to a gestalt method of representation of information. This type of image is analogous to Gartner's (1993) aforementioned affective component and can include "any or all of the senses" along with the feelings towards those perceptions. By contrast, discursive is far from holistic in that it is constructed from the fragments of information or discrete pieces of data processed about certain stimuli (MacInnis & Price, 1987 cited in Echtner and Ritchie, 1993). Similar to Gartner's (1993) three component approach, the psychological approach proposed by Echtner and Ritchie (1991) dictates that imagery and discursive processes work in conjunction with one another to create a TDI.

The reductionist methodology, as it emanates from a postpositivist epistemology, presents significant constraints on the way we understand TDI. The work I will use to illustrate these constraints is Echtner and Ritchie's (1993) "The Measurement of Destination Image: An Empirical Assessment" which is a continuation of their earlier work "The Meaning and Measurement of Destination Image" (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; 1993) both are considered by tourism researchers to be amongst the more forthright attempts to produce a methodology to 'objectively' determine a destination's TDI (Tasci, Gartner, & Cavusgil, 2007). The methodology that they produced has become a seminal manuscript in the corpus of TDI formation literature and has shaped the way that current researchers go about determining TDI (Gallarza, Saura, & Garcia, 2002; Hunter & Suh, 2007; Pearlman & Melnik, 2008; Pike, 2002; Prebensen, 2007; San Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque, 2008).

Echtner and Ritchie (1991; 1993) produced pioneering work in establishing a rigorous, systematic approach to conducting a mixed methods technique for 'measuring' TDI in a three dimensional manner. Further elaborating on their contribution, I will focus mainly on their latter paper since it demonstrates the implementation of their method. For the quantitative portion of their study Echtner and Ritchie developed a comprehensive list of "attributes" following a rigorous series of steps prescribed by Churchill (1979). This involved, amongst other steps, asking focus groups to list attributes of disparate places, a literature review of attributes used in previous TDI studies, and extensive statistical manipulation to determine dimensionality, consistency, validity and reliability of the attributes within the scales. They also devised open ended

questions to elicit place-specific attributes, or what they termed “holistic” images. In the creation of the open ended questions, they used expert judges (possibly tourism researchers) and pretesting in order to find the best way to phrase their questions to elicit the richest responses. After the data collection phase, three judges were again used to code the qualitative data. The following quote from their study exemplifies their systematic scrutiny and sensitivity to the most minute bias:

Issues of content validity, dimensionality, and internal consistency are addressed in the first four steps of scale development, and reliability, criterion validity, and construct validity are dealt with in the last half of the procedure. (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993, p. 5)

By maintaining a rigid adherence to statistical reliability and validity issues in their scale development, and their use of “experts” and collaboration in the coding of their open-ended questionnaire, they gathered data that is undoubtedly thorough and beyond reproach from within the postpositivist epistemic community. However, the epistemological standpoint of Echtner and Ritchie’s research should be critiqued because the findings make the positivist claim to presenting ‘objective facts’ when they tout the virtue of their method in being able to “completely measure destination image” (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993, p. 3). In their study, like most traditional TDI studies, the political context within which the TDI is formed is secondary to the statistical significance of the constructs. This can be detrimental when the findings are presented and/or received without acknowledgement of the politics and context that lay beneath the ‘facts’. Echtner and Ritchie are not alone in presenting their findings as complete and objective facts. The aim of traditional TDI literature is to produce objective facts which have implications for both theory and practice (Table 2.3).

At issue with these claims to the discovery of objective facts is that they often overlook contested meanings and other important ways of knowing TDI. For instance, by making the claim that their method is the best way of determining a complete destination image they preclude any other interpretation of place. In addition, as I will briefly demonstrate, by virtue of their epistemological standpoint Echtner and Ritchie, and those who identify with their epistemic community (Table 2.3), often do not “capture all the components of destination image” because they reduce a place’s TDI to only a few variables (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993, p. 3). Instead the reductionist methods that these researchers apply in their studies, whether qualitative or quantitative, effectively silence less prevalent images that might produce important insights into the meaning of place held by tourists and the people living in these destination sites.

Table 2.3 Examples of Claims of Objective Fact by Traditional TDI Researchers

| Author(s)           | Year  | Claim to facts  |
|---------------------|-------|---|
| Choi, Chan, & Wu    | 1999  | “Overall, the image of Hong Kong was positive, and the mean scores for items relating to shopping and tourist information were relatively high. However, negative images did arise from the crowded, busy and stressful environment in Hong Kong.”  |
| Govers, Go, & Kumar | 2007  | “...this study proves that secondary sources of information are essential agents influencing pre-visit image. Covertly induced and autonomous agents, in particular, have a dramatic influence, as they are mentioned in over 60% of the information sources in the study.”   |
| Bonn, Joseph, & Dai | 2005  | “Based on the results generated in this study, the message is clear: international visitors have higher service image expectations and standards, and they place more importance on environmental factors, than do domestic visitors. This implies that U.S. destination managers not only have to improve current standards but also need to stress their improvement of these dimensions in their marketing campaigns. Various governmental agencies and tourism bureaus have invested considerable resources into training tourism stakeholders to ensure better products and higher service quality.” |
| Baloglu & McCleary  | 1999  | “The results showed that knowledge, prestige, and social motivations directly impact image and excitement/adventure has an indirect impact. Advertising themes can be developed to effectively create and maintain destination image by appealing to these motivations. Countries seeking to increase their tourism share should consider the characteristics of their target markets and tailor their image development and positioning efforts to specific socio-demographic and motivation segments.”  |
| Beerli & Martin     | 2004a | “The influence of primary sources among first-time tourists becomes clear in the relationship between the number of visits made to places of interest in the destination and the cognitive dimension of image of natural and cultural resources. It is thus of primary importance that resorts carry out campaigns to make tourists aware of the places of interest and so increase their visits.”  |

A further critique of Echtner and Ritchie's (1993) study illustrates how reductionist methods can exclude certain information that might be important to the understanding of TDI. To begin, Echtner and Ritchie created three open ended questions to determine the "holistic image" of destinations. These three questions were:

1. What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of XXX as a vacation destination? (functional/holistic component)
2. How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting XXX? (psychological holistic component)
3. Please list any distinctive or unique tourist attractions that you can think of in XXX. (unique component) (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993, p. 5)

It is possible to imagine a different 'measurement' of image might be produced if Echtner and Ritchie (1993) used a technique that allowed them to probe deeper into the images that people had of places by asking 'why' instead of simply 'what'. By using this method Echtner and Ritchie's study overlooks vast amounts of contextual information that could inform our understanding of TDI.

Another technique Echtner and Ritchie (1993) use to produce a less than complete measurement of TDI is their systematic culling of marginal images. The methodological and analytical process they describe is a systematic elimination of marginal, statistically insignificant image attributes.

For each open-ended question, the responses given by more than 10% of the survey sample are listed. For Questions 1 and 2, the responses that were used to construct stereotypical holistic images (those provided by more than 20% of respondents) are grouped separately. (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993, p. 8)

This passage illustrates the way Echtner and Ritchie (1993) decontextualize qualitative data to create manageable data sets. The issue, however, comes when Echtner and Ritchie do not acknowledge that their 10% threshold may eliminate crucial

contextual information from the study possibly causing the reader to believe that TDI is an apolitical construct.

Echtner and Ritchie also proceed to explain how they reduced the attribute list garnered from an extensive literature review and focus groups to 70 scale items and then, through statistical procedures, further reduced the number of image attributes that are incorporated in their study. This has the effect of further silencing marginal images because these attributes go into the production of scales that become the ‘objective’ tool that encompasses all possible attributes of a place. If statistically marginal items are not on the survey, there is simply no possibility that they can be an attribute of a destination. Finally, as illustrated by the quote below, Echtner and Ritchie use the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to systematically eliminate “redundant” attributes that might provide nuanced insight into the meaning place:

To increase reliabilities, item-to-total correlations were examined to *determine which additional items should be eliminated...* Eight factors were extracted, with the varimax solution producing the cleanest results; *no weak items emerged*. The percentage of variance explained by this final solution was 52.1% . (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993, p. 8) [emphasis added]

Granted, Echtner and Ritchie set the bar high in their claim to provide a tool that captures all the components of TDI in order to “completely measure” the phenomenon and thus I am not arguing that they did not obtain a well informed understanding of destination image as held by Canadian university students; I am simply scrutinizing their claim to a singular, static TDI. Their epistemological position which produces these ‘facts’ must be challenged if we are going to have a truly “holistic” picture of TDI, one

that is inclusive of provisional and provincial ontologies and not exclusionary of other contextual, situated ways of knowing TDI.

It is increasingly evident that the standard-bearer of TDI research methodologies, the postpositivist mixed methods approach, is not the best of both worlds that captures the richness of images and image items important to individuals (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a;1999b) while at the same time providing statistically significant, generalizable data for tourism practitioners. By utilizing a postpositivist approach Echtner and Ritchie (1993) and other traditional TDI researchers limit what is considered valid knowledge in the field of academic TDI research, implying that the only valid knowledge is that which can be empirically tested and generalized. In addition, the audiences for this type of traditional TDI research are not tourists, the tourism workers and/or general populace of host countries. Instead the vast majority of this research either explicitly or implicitly is intended to produce a better instrument to “capture all of the components of destination image” (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993, p. 3) in order for tourism practitioners “to *completely* measure destination image” (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993, p. 3). While this is a interesting endeavor, the decontextualization that is often inherent in these studies produces a significant blind spot in our understanding of TDI.

These studies sometimes acknowledge the heterogeneous nature of the tourists (or market segments) yet they obscure the heterogeneous and contested nature of the host destinations and their inhabitants. They accomplish this by reducing the meanings embodied in these places to attributes such as “political stability... restful/relaxing...customs/culture...atmosphere (familiar versus exotic)...quality of

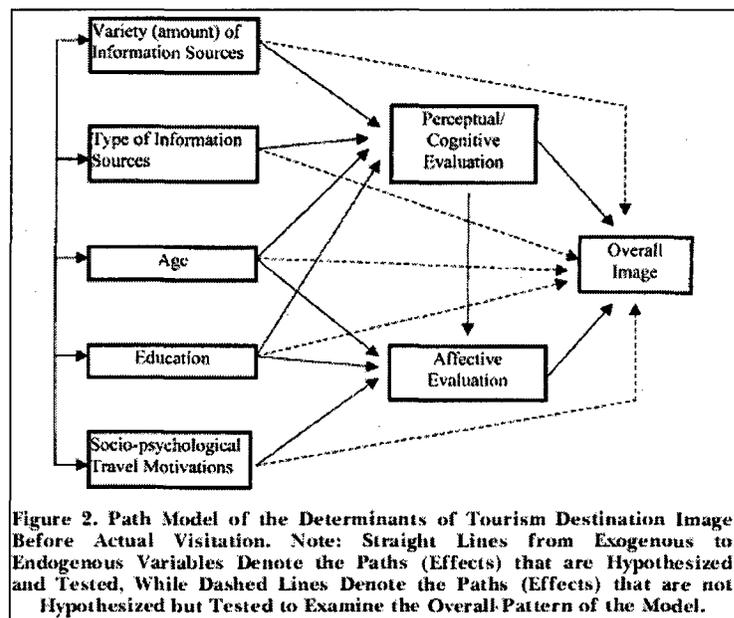
service... crowdedness” and the list goes on (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993, pp. 5,6,8,9,10). Studies like these neither acknowledge the discursive practices that produce the meanings of these “attributes” nor do they discuss the people whose homes are being imagined. This is a significant shortcoming of a traditional, reductionist, decontextualized, depoliticized approach to understanding TDI. In these studies the independent variable is the destination. This ignores that the destination embodies myriad, dynamic meanings for not only the tourist but the host as well. Another implication of this type of research is the possibility that it provides a ‘scientific’ rationale for the creation of stereotypical images that often appeal to Western tourists but are surreptitiously imposed on host communities by tourism marketers (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998).

#### **V. Image formation process**

In order to construct an argument for a constructivist, qualitative approach to exploring destination image I will examine a typical traditional model of TDI formation. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) use several prior positivist/postpositivist studies to develop their path model of TDI determinants (Figure 2.1). In their study they used previously published literature on TDI attributes to develop a questionnaire designed to measure image formation. They then produced a model from the results using both a statistical factor analysis and a path analysis. Through this process they produced a model that shows how the operationalized constructs of traditional TDI research relate to each other. Though one could draw attention to the biases in the operationalization of the variables in Baloglu and McCleary’s model, what is most important for the purposes of this paper is

the lack of understanding about the “paths” and the “determinants”. As informative as this model is, it does not provide a contextual understanding of how TDI is formed. Theories about demographics, motivations, and the amount and types of sources marginalize the impact of specific socio-cultural factors along with the way media, messages, and information are being conveyed; each of which has the potential to greatly influence the formation of image. Nor can this model accurately portray the formation of TDI without ignoring the fundamental political context within which it is situated. These shortcomings in traditional research can be addressed by heeding the challenge to tourism researchers put forth by Hollinshead (in Phillimore & Goodson, 2004) to make the familiar strange by contextualizing rather than reducing, thus providing an alternative understanding of how TDI is formed.

Figure 2.1 Baloglu & McCleary’s Model of Image Formation



(Baloglu & McCleary, 1999)

Past and contemporary analyses of the TDI formation process emanate mostly from a positivist/postpositivist epistemic community that attempts to reduce image formation to only a few variables and then measure the relationships between these variables using a host of qualitative and quantitative techniques (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001). The 'subjects' of these studies are often tourists or potential tourists from places, or 'markets', that the researchers (or those sponsoring the research) feel would be acceptable consumers of a certain place, or 'destination'.

This type of traditional TDI research, while sometimes useful in achieving "performative" results for the commercial practice of tourism, adheres to the narrow operational definition of cognitive and affective components, which situates the formation of TDI within the individual and therefore is often inadequate at addressing the broader political and societal influences and implications of the formation of TDI (Tribe, 2004, p. 57).

It is important to note that this type of research did not attain its dominant position because it is the most precise or only way of knowing TDI. It is part of a broader discourse that privileges the production of statistically relevant data in part because its predictive powers are invaluable in managing contemporary capitalist economies (Tribe, 2004, p. 57). Within this discourse certain implicit assumptions become sacrosanct and beyond reproach. These implicit assumptions, as they manifest in TDI research, hinder an understanding of the other by marginalizing contested meanings of place, while at the

same time reinforcing stereotypical images that are often designed to manipulate tourists and not project the voices and meanings of the host.

Traditional TDI research is often directed towards an audience of tourism business interests. By not acknowledging in their studies how focusing on this audience may bias their findings, researchers create a power differential, which favors tourism practitioners over other constituencies in the development of tourism (Tribe, 2008). This research tends to overlook local meaning of place and reinforce only those aspects of a destination that tourism professionals and tourism experts feel are profitable, attractive, signifiers of a place or a people.

## **VI. Unconventional traditional studies of TDI**

While the postpositivist mixed methods approach dominates the corpus of TDI literature they are not the only techniques being applied to explore the phenomenon. Other postpositivist studies take more novel approaches to ‘measuring’ the phenomenon of TDI. For instance, Jacobsen and Dann (2003), Ryan and Cave (2005), and Govers, Go, and Kumar (2007) all utilize various qualitative elicitation techniques to produce their data sets and then proceed to analyze these data sets using various reductionist statistical and modeling software to generate findings with the positivist limitations and biases similar to those discussed in the above critiques.

Postpositivist research can take many forms and the studies do not all have to use quantitative techniques in the data collection or analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). A good example of this in TDI research is Hughes and Allen’s (2008) research on TDI of

Eastern European countries. In their data collection and analysis they make no claim to the generalizability of their research, however they proceed to associate their findings with other postpositivist studies such as Ryan and Cave (2005) and Echtner and Ritchie (1993). Below is a passage from Hughes and Allen, which I feel demonstrates how qualitative research situated in the positivist/postpositivist paradigm still maintains a passive voice and does not acknowledge the role of the researcher in the creation of knowledge about a place's TDI.

A visitor stated that 'you don't get that feeling of exuberance and wealth and colour; maybe slightly more sombre mood than you might get in the west' whereas another believed that 'people [were] struggling, kind of miserable outlook'. The term 'depressed' was used by another who also considered that 'Albania's very nasty; it's a very repressed country'. Some visitors were more upbeat. One person had a view of 'people dancing, playing strange instruments; very traditional; and traditional dress' whereas another associated CEE [Central and Eastern European countries] with 'café music, gypsy bands, gypsy music' (Hughes & Allen, 2008, p. 33)

Like other traditional TDI studies, this research also holds the implicit assumption that the audience of their research is tourism industry professionals. This is evinced from the following statement that I feel exemplifies what happens when you frame TDI research to ignore the political context in which place image is formed. Note the matter-of-fact recommendation to marketers of possible war torn countries to clean up their image:

There are a number of fairly obvious 'practical' implications of this study for image-generators and marketers of CEE countries. In particular, these include improving knowledge and awareness of the countries and their tourism product as well as altering image. *Places for which dourness and war are images will find it advisable to work to remedy these* (Hughes & Allen, 2008, p. 38) [emphasis added]

While I applaud Hughes and Allen for seeking to find an inductive approach, rather than a deductive hypothesis testing approach to knowing TDI and allowing the participants' voice to be heard through their use of direct quotations, I find their results produced more questions about the context within which tourists form their image of Central and Eastern European countries (CEEs) than insights into TDI (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004).

There is no doubt that the majority of TDI studies continue to occupy the traditional phase of research as defined by Denzin and Lincoln (1998) and Phillimore and Goodson (2003). These studies, while producing adequate knowledge to facilitate tourism practitioners' manipulation of tourists, forgo a contextual exploration of TDI that might help tourists better understand the places they visit and hosts project more nuanced representations of their homes. Instead of using more and more elaborate methods in an attempt to garner 'facts' about TDI, in this study I focus on creating situated accounts of TDI that acknowledge that my perspective as a researcher, like that of all other humans, is biased. I countered the traditional approach by creating a more inclusive practice, which acknowledges my situatedness in the research and presents a trustworthy and neutral account of the findings. In addition I encourage the reader to decide if the research is credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable. (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001a; Schwandt, 2007)

## **VII. Social constructivist considerations of TDI research**

Within the TDI research studies that I have examined White's (2005) research note entitled "Destination Image: To see or not to see? Part II" comes closest to presenting a significant shift from the traditional, postpositivist framework to one that is situated in what Denzin and Lincoln (1998) and Phillimore and Goodson (2004) define as a fifth moment of research. There are several studies of TDI that explore the role of tourism mythmakers (tourism marketers, travel writers, etc.) that are situated in this fifth moment yet White's (2005) research is unique in the sense that he interviews tourists about their TDI. White moves beyond the confines of "positivistic rigidity" and acknowledges the "flexibility" that a qualitative research design affords during the "data collection process and interpretation of findings" (White, 2005 pp. 192-193). With this in mind, and perhaps because of the nature of the paper, White incorporated into his research an analysis of body language, verbal hesitations, and implicit meaning, making it the only TDI research that I have read that a) asks tourists their destination image, and b) uses more than just their explicit statements to determine meanings embodied within their image.

Though the body of research pertaining to TDI is dominated by positivist/postpositivist studies there have been several authors that have forged an alternative path to understanding the construct. The important works of Santos (2004), Echtner and Prasad (2003), Morgan and Pritchard (1998), Gotham (2002; 2007), Cornellison (2005), Adams (1995; 1997; 1998; 2004), and Britton (1982) demonstrate that alternative ways of investigating TDI can produce important and useful insights into

the construct. Santos, Echtner and Prasad, and Morgan and Pritchard's studies examine the discursive practices that are involved, and often hidden, in the tourism myth creation process. Equally important, Gotham, Cornellisen, Adams and Britton examine the political contestation of the representation of place by others whether it be in the rebuilding and branding of New Orleans (Gotham, 2002; 2007), the local-global/political-financial struggle for the power to construct South Africa's projected tourism image (Cornelissen, 2005) or the power of politicians, tour guides, and tourists to construct tourism images in the Indonesian archipelago (Adams, 2004), and exploring the political economy of tourism from a postcolonial perspective (Britton, 1982). I have drawn from these perspectives to inform my exploration of the TDI of Cuba. As this thesis progresses I will further discuss the relevance of many of these findings to this study.

Of particular relevance here is Santos's (2004) study of the framing of Portugal. She utilizes a frame analysis technique to focus on a discrete collection of newspaper articles that featured travel writing about Portugal. While Santo's study is similar in approach to my research, the subjects of my study were more heterogeneous than "the limited variety of cultural observations made in American travel articles (Santos, 2004, p. 128)." In presenting her frame analysis Santos transcends the role of the traditional/modern, positivist/postpositivist researcher by acknowledging that there exist other ways of knowing TDI. Her findings also indicate that there are multiple interpretations of place and that through the framing of their writings, travel writers disempowered the host communities by using their powerful position to interpret the 'other' to relegate complex places and people into narrow preconceived narratives.

*Social constructivist approaches*

Social constructivist (henceforth abridged as constructivist) approaches to exploring TDI, or more precisely approaches to research from a constructivist paradigm, can add a new perspective to our understanding of the phenomenon. By approaching an investigation of TDI from a constructivist paradigm we can explore new dimensions that illuminate meanings of places and situate these meanings in their social and political context. Constructivist approaches contrast positivist and postpositivist TDI research by not presuming that there is a singular reality separate from human cognition from which we can determine 'facts' by using increasingly varied and sophisticated data collection and analysis techniques (Table 2.4). Instead constructivist approaches posit that humans create institutions which reinforce meanings (Berger and Luckman, 1966). These institutions cannot be explored separately from their context because it is the history and context of the shared experiential and linguistic meanings, which are never static and are constantly being contested, that constitute reality. Therefore, instead of trying to discover an objective fact, constructivist researchers attempt to gain insights into meanings by examining ways in which individuals relate to the institutions they create as well as how they interpret phenomena.

Table 2.4 Paradigmatic Comparison

| <i>Issue</i>   | <b>Positivism</b>   | <b>Postpositivism</b>   | <b>Critical Theory</b>   | <b>Social Constructivism</b>  |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| <i>Ontology: dealing with the nature of being</i>  | Naive realism -real" reality but apprehensible<br><br>REALIST: Reality exists independent of observer's perceptions and operates according to immutable natural laws that often take cause/effect form.<br><br>TRUTH is defined as that set of statements that accurately describe reality. " | Critical realism -real" reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible "                            | Historical realism - virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values; crystallized over time  | Relativism -local and specific co-constructed realities<br><br>RELATIVIST: There exists multiple, socially constructed realities ungoverned by natural laws --causal or otherwise.<br><br>TRUTH is defined as consensus construction of the combined quantity and quality of info that provided the most powerful understanding that leads to action. |
| <i>Epistemology: dealing with the nature of knowledge, its presuppositions, foundations, extent and validity</i> | Dualist/objectivist (Knowledge is a phenomenon that exists external to the observer; the observer maintains a distance and studies the phenomenon (sometimes referred to as empiricism)); findings true   | Modified dualist/objectivist; critical tradition/community; findings probably true                                    | Transactional/subjectivist (Knowledge is created by inquiry through a dynamic interaction with the environment; knowing and being are the same thing); value-mediated findings | Transactional/ subjectivist; co-created findings  |
| <i>Methodology</i>   | Experimental/ manipulative; verification of hypotheses; chiefly quantitative methods<br><br>INTERVENTIONIST seeks to control variables and neutralize contexts. The goal is to explain how something "really works" in order to predict and control.  | Modified experimental/manipulative; critical multiplism; falsification of hypotheses; may include qualitative methods | Dialogic/ dialectical  | Hermeneutical/ dialectical HERMENEUTIC (interpretation): seeks a dialectic (a dialogue among differing views) that creates an ongoing process of iteration/analysis/critique/reiteration/reanalysis, etc. that leads to a joint construction of a case. The goal is understanding.  |

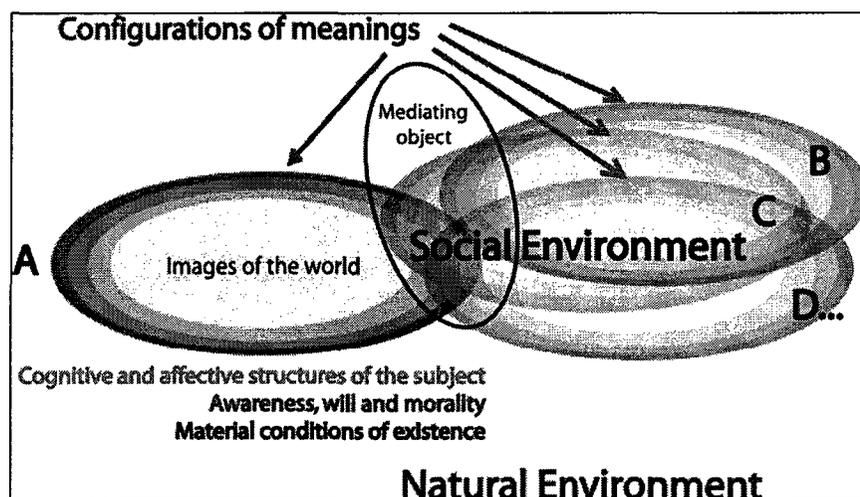
Adapted from Guba and Lincoln (2005).

"Reality", from a constructivist paradigm, is the constraints in the interpretation of phenomena. These constraints can be conflicting interpretations of the ability of a discourse to explain a phenomenon. Thus the boundaries of "reality" are defined. These interpretations also inspire certain actions adding to the corporality of the meaning of the phenomena (Figure 2.2). There is no 'reality' per se, as discourses are the best way of understanding why certain phenomena occur because discourses are given meaning by, and create meaning for, individuals situated in a certain place and time (Campos, 2007; Foucault & Gordon, 1980). Campos (2007) presents a concise explanation of this

process as well as an interesting model that demonstrates how myriad interlocuters (mediating information sources) interact on multiple levels to create knowledge:

It is through these three interconnected structural and functional levels that communication partners will be able to construct and coconstruct images of the world that are provisional symbolic accounts or glimpses of represented reality. These interpretations are (or are not) incorporated (assimilated and accommodated) into the person's configuration of meanings (Figure 3). Such images of the world result from the integrative ability that humans have to process numerous language possibilities at once in inner and outer parallel movements. This processing ability enables knowledge creation as a result of the interaction between interlocuters' A and B (case of dyads), A, B, C, D, and so on (case of multiple interlocuters such as discussion forums on the Internet), or  $n$  images of the world (case of larger communities and societies). (Campos, 2007 p. 398)

Figure 2.2 Campos' Model of Knowledge Construction



(Campos, 2007, p. 398)

Because of the fundamental difference in the way constructivists view the “conditions of existence” (Campos, 2007, p. 398) it becomes problematic to impose positivist criteria such as validity, reliability, and objectivity to evaluate the rigor of their research. Guba and Lincoln (1989) consider the use of new terminology to evaluate the constructivist methodological practices. Schwandt (2007) provides a concise account of

how positivist evaluation criteria loosely translate to Guba and Lincoln's constructivist criteria:

One way they characterize as [sic] that of employing *trustworthiness* criteria, and they describe these criteria as analogs to "scientific" understandings of conventional notions of internal validity (*credibility*), external validity (*transferability*), reliability (*dependability*), and objectivity (*neutrality*) (Schwandt, 2007, p. 12). [emphasis in original]

This statement presents a simplified way of understanding the criteria yet these are not simply new words to measure the same phenomena. Because of the epistemological position of constructivist research these criteria embody different meanings than the logical positivist validity and reliability. For instance, credibility is a way to assure that the study participants' voices are heard in their own words and situations and that if these participants were presented with the research they would recognize their own words and concede that they were interpreted by the researcher in a manner that they agree with (i.e. meaning and interpretations are plausible to those who constructed them) (Kincheloe & McClaren in Denzin & Lincoln, 1998 pp. 287-289; Creed, Langstraat, & Scully, 2002; Olesen in Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, pp. 300-332).

Transferability is the acknowledgment that no two contexts are ever the same because people "reshape cognitive structures to accommodate unique aspects of what they perceive in new contexts" and Kincheloe & McClaren (in Denzin & Lincoln, 1998 pp. 287-289) go on to explain that it is "through their knowledge of a variety of comparable contexts, [that] researchers begin to learn their similarities and differences – they learn from their comparison of different contexts." Thus researchers should strive to understand the similarities and differences in the contexts in which their research takes

place. Furthermore, the concept of dependability is intended to evaluate whether the research presents to the audience the phenomena and situation being explored and finally neutrality connotes a way of evaluating whether the researcher presents the research in a way that avoids using the research and/or the participant's voice to project unwarranted polemical statements (Schwandt, 2007).

This presents a radical shift in our way of knowing the world including TDI. Leaving aside its impact on other social sciences, constructivism has allowed tourism researchers to change the way in which they formulate research practices. The shift from the positivist 'researcher as expert' role to a methodology that incorporates the voice of the participant, as in the above mixed methods studies, can be attributed in large part to this epistemological revolution (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001a; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). However, as I attempted to demonstrate in the preceding critique of TDI literature, tourism researchers still cling to their role as experts measuring a singular reality. This is because tourism research is dominated by the definition of tourism as a commercial practice first and foremost. Therefore the western discourse of scientism and development pervade tourism research to the detriment of other ways of knowing the tourism phenomenon (Hollinshead, 2004). This is what drives studies pertaining to tourism to produce either theory generating qualitative research or statistically significant quantitative research. There is very little room in that continuum for research that produces provisional and provincial ontologies that explore situated meanings because these studies can seldom be used to generate revenue for the tourism industry. As the impact of tourism becomes increasingly important, the constantly expanding reach of the

tourist gaze as well as the ability of tourism industry practitioners to find new and unique ways of promoting people in places becomes more complex. With this in mind, the necessity of a constructivist discourse in tourism becomes strikingly apparent (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001b).

The implications of a constructivist approach to the exploration of TDI are far reaching. Morgan and Pritchard (1998) illustrate how tourism promotion has the power to mediate our images of place and define the 'other' to suit the fantasies of the western tourist. Urry (1990), in his book The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies, also demonstrates that he occupies this epistemic community when he theorizes the influence of the tourist on the host. If we examine tourism from a constructive epistemology we must acknowledge that our world is constructed through meanings of phenomena, not objective realities, and these meanings are constantly changing and being contested internally and externally.

*Critical constructivist paradigm* By demonstrating that the TDI research can be conducted for reasons other than measuring the construct, the constructivist paradigm has opened myriad possibilities for studying TDI. For this reason I have relied heavily on the basic ontological and epistemological principals of the paradigm. However, I have one fundamental issue with the constructivist paradigm. I feel the relativist ontology of constructivism impedes the researcher's ability to proffer a social critique. Since to critique one must have an ideal and a place to stand the relativist ontology of a purely constructivist approach did not fit the way that I perceive the world. It was because of this ontological issue that I sought and discovered a paradigmatic definition that fits my

worldview. The critical constructivist paradigm, while firmly situated within the constructivist camp, allows me to possess a notion of an ideal state of being and therefore critique those institutions, phenomena, and situations that I feel detract or inhibit that ideal state. This does not imply that I am an all knowing “expert” but instead recognizes that I, as a researcher, have an ideology and with it comes a notion of an ideal condition.

Pioneered mainly in the fields of education and cultural studies (von Glaserfeld, 1984; Anderson, 1990; Jofili & Watts 1995; Kincheloe, 2005), the critical constructivist paradigm combines the relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology of the constructivist paradigm with the “critical science” of Habermas (1987) and the second generation of the Frankfurt School. Critical science is “governed by the intent to bring about emancipation from the relations of dependence that ideology in particular has set in place and that come to appear to us as natural (Crotty, 1998 p. 140).” As Anderson (1990, p. 38) notes it “combines the explanatory power of constructivist social theory with the insights of critical theory”.

In essence the critical constructivist paradigm combines Berger and Luckmann’s (1967) relativist idea that humans form institutions through their social interactions with the Habermas’s (1987) concept of an ideal speech situation. In other words, Berger and Luckmann view reality as being created through social interaction and there is no right or wrong situation created from these interaction. On the other hand, Habermas’s (1970) notion of an ideal speech situation dictates that these institutions constrain certain individual’s ability to make claims to truth. As an answer to this disequilibrium Habermas proposes the notion of emancipation through education. So the critical

constructivist paradigm is based on a foundation that combines the idea that truth claims can be analyzed in the context of the (society) in which they are created with the notion that disequilibrium in the ability to make truth claims (the ability to influence the construction of reality) must be rectified. Or more succinctly, critical constructivists eschew rational science as an explanation for social phenomena while maintaining the possibility of social critique

Although this research is designed to have emancipatory capabilities, their capacity to aid the participants of this study are limited. As I will discuss further in the conclusion of this study the praxis, of theory put into practice, element of this research will manifest after the research has been completed. It can best be understood as a delayed praxis whereby the results of the study are disseminated to an audience composed of study participants and others who might share their situation.

*Frame analysis as a way of exploring the critical construction of TDI*

Frame analysis has been employed as an analytical tool for academic research since the 1970's. In his book Frame Analysis, Erving Goffman (1974) set the groundwork for a methodology that allows for an investigation of the ways in which people make meaning of their world through variable use of information, or as he puts it "organization of experience" (p. 11). By examining issues through a frame analysis, Goffman (1974) demonstrates, we are able to examine not only how meaning is made of remarkable events, but also the discursive practices that reinforce dominant discourses and produce significant silences (Creed, Langstraat, & Scully, 2002)

By using a qualitative frame analysis approach we can move beyond the constraints/limitations of the traditional postpositivist research (Van Gorp, 2007). Goffman (1974) demonstrates how framing is a useful methodology for interpreting multiple configurations of meanings. He emphasizes that people in our Western society have “schemata of interpretation” that they use to ascribe meaning to phenomena that they encounter (Goffman, 1974, p. 21). This meaning is informed by a person’s knowledge garnered from experience. Frames, Gitlin (1994) proposes, mediate a person’s selection, exclusion and interpretation of various discourses. Citing Gamson and Lasch (1983) Creed, Langstraat, and Scully (2002) summarize the meta and micro cognitive effects of frames as such:

“Frames, as in the phrases “picture frame” or “window frame,” define boundaries and direct our attention to what events and texts are relevant for our understanding of an issue or situation... At the same time, we can think of frames in terms of the “frame of a house,” an invisible infrastructure that holds together different rooms and supports the cultural building blocks that make up the edifices of meaning. (Creed, Langstraat, & Scully, 2002, pp. 36-37)”

In this sense, frames provide an individual with a meta-cognitive rationale (frame of a house) to employ the micro-cognitive function of inclusion, exclusion, and interpretation of information about a phenomenon or experience. As a result of this information selection process a frame impacts a person’s interpretation of a phenomenon. At the same time, the differential selection and implementation of information excludes certain ways of understanding, thereby producing silences. It also conflicts with other people’s framing of a phenomenon or event, thus creating contradictions. It is these silences and contradictions that compel the researcher to examine not just what is

included within the frame but also what is excluded (Creed, Langstraat, & Scully, 2002; Entman, 2007).

This is an important methodological shift for TDI research because it moves beyond the notion of TDI being the sum total of cognitive and affective image components. Frame analysis requires the researcher to examine the dominant discourses, contesting discourses, and account for the voice of the 'other' in the exploration of how tourist destinations are socially constructed. This is something that has rarely been done in TDI research.

Creed, Langstraat, & Scully (2002) concisely articulate the virtues of a good frame analysis. They stress that a proper frame analysis articulates the frame, or frames, in a way that would be recognizable to the sponsor of the frame (the person or entity that proffers it), exposes the underlying logic and/or contradictions within the frame, incorporates discussion on the frame sponsors and the larger societal context within which the frame is situated, and does so in a manner that is reflexive and clearly expressive of the authors' ideological situatedness (Creed, Langstraat, & Scully, 2002).

## **VIII. Conclusion**

In the above chapter I have illustrated the myriad gaps in our understanding of TDI that are caused by an overreliance by tourism researchers on the postpositivist epistemology. I have also shown that the fundamental methods of this type of tourism research were borrowed from marketing research and as such share many of the same performative qualities of its parent field. As a result, TDI research often treats the

construct as reducible, with variables that can be manipulated to target certain audiences. Also, this type of research invariably favors the tourism industry and often overlooks the voice of local residents.

In addition to the critique of traditional postpositivist TDI research I discussed a nascent epistemological shift in TDI research, which presents a different way of knowing TDI. Approaching TDI research from a constructivist epistemology that contextualizes the formation of images rather than reducing them is a shift towards a new way of understanding TDI. Also, by contextualizing the political and social situatedness of TDI this constructivist research can be an emancipatory practice. When TDI is explored in context the power to construct destination discourses (realities) is illuminated.

In the next chapter I will discuss the dominant discourses of Cuba from an Anglo North American perspective. That discussion will be followed with a chapter that presents the operationalization of my constructivist approach to exploring the formation of the TDI of Cuba by both American and Canadian residents. By doing this I hope to present an alternative to the traditional postpositivist approach to understanding tourist destination image.

### CHAPTER 3: CUBA IN CONTEXT

Cuba occupied multiple levels within the American imagination, often all at once, almost all of which functioned in the service of U.S. interests. The North American relationship with Cuba was above all an instrumental one. Cuba - and Cubans - were a means to an end, to be engaged as a means to fulfill North American needs and accommodate North American interests. The Americans came to their knowledge of Cuba - and Cubans - principally by way of representations entirely of their own creation, which is to suggest that the Cuba that the Americans chose to engage was, in fact, a figment of their own imagination and a projection of their needs. Americans rarely engaged the Cuban reality on its own terms or as a condition possessed of an internal logic or Cubans as a people of an interior history or as a nation possessed of an inner-directed destiny. It has always been thus between the United States and Cuba. (Pérez, 2008, pp. 22-23)

#### **I. Introduction**

The policies of the US and Canadian governments towards Cuba punctuate a rare divergence in foreign policy that has had tremendous impacts on the discourses on the island within both the US and Canada. The mainstream discourses from both countries reflect the divergent diplomatic paths taken by the two governments. While the American government significantly prohibits travel, trade, and thereby information exchanges with Cuba, the Canadian government boasts a significantly longer continually open trading relationship with Cuba which has allowed for a constant flow of goods and services between the two countries including a one-way flow of tourists from Canada to Cuba. Although these policies appear to mark a distinction between the two countries' discourses on Cuba, they belie an even more significant similarity. Both the US and

Canadian mainstream discourses on the island entrench the power to define Cuba within the First World, thereby perpetuating forms of economic and political domination.

The above passage by Pérez (2008) illustrates the unique role that Cuba has played in the US political elites' consciousness. As its author notes, not only has the US government constructed a Cuba to fulfill its own needs, in doing so it has denied the Cuban people the right to significantly influence the image Americans have of Cuba. While this quote is most aptly applied to represent the discourse of the US government, it can also be transferable to how tourism firms who market Cuba to Canadians also deprive Cubans of the ability to define themselves and their country. I will offer a review of the existing literature on the mainstream Anglo American discourses on Cuba with the aim of illustrating the role public policy, both domestic and foreign, plays in shaping the image of the island.

## **II. Cuba as a destination**

Immediately following the Cuban Revolution tourism to the island was virtually non-existent. Avella and Mills (1996) posit the post revolution shunning of tourism by the Cuban people as evidence of the significant role that tourism played in creating the repressive conditions that spurred the revolution. As Schwartz (1997) documents, tourism under the government of Fulgencio Batista was a bastion for exploitation of the Cuban people and Cuba's resources by elite Cubans and Americans. However, as a result of the Cuban government's desire to diversify the Cuban economy in the early 1970s, the policy on tourism shifted and they began to allow package tours to Canadian tourists

(Avella & Mills, 1996; deHolan & Phillips, 1997; Elliot & Neirrotti, 2008). Cuba's government slowly began to build their tourism infrastructure to focus on being a sun, sand, and sea destination and by the mid 1980s visitor numbers to the island had surpassed the pre-revolutionary level. In 1991, as a consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union (Cuba's largest trading partner) and the economic hardships that ensued, the Cuban government declared a "special period during peacetime" that opened the doors for a moderate shift toward a market socialist economy (McLaren & Pinkney-Pastrana, 2001). The belief that tourism could pull Cuba from the brink of economic collapse paved the way for policies that facilitated limited private ownership of businesses as well as foreign investment in tourism infrastructure on the island. By the late 1990s these policies had attracted 25 joint ventures with large hotel and resort corporations, resulting in over 13,100 rooms on the island (Jayawardena, 2003). Cuba is now the fourth-largest tourism destination in the Caribbean in terms of visitor expenditures with the majority of tourists coming from Canada, Mexico, Europe, and South America; all this was accomplished without American leisure tourists visiting the island (Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2004). Today Cuba hosts over six times as many tourists as it did in its "heyday" prior to the US government's 1961 embargo that put a stop to American travel to the island (Jayawardena, 2003). Cuba is currently thriving as an international tourist destination. It is poised to become the number one destination in the Caribbean by 2010 (Gutierrez Castillo & Gancedo Gaspar, 2002; Jayawardena, 2003).

### III. United States-Cuba relations

In January 1959, revolutionary guerillas, led by Fidel Castro, overthrew the US-backed Fulgencio Batista government. The new government was quick to nationalize the major industries in Cuba (particularly sugar production), as well as large swaths of land owned by foreign interests. This created a rift between the Americans that owned industrial interests in Cuba and the Cuban government. Due in large part to this rift and coupled with a fear of Soviet influence on Cuba (brought on by the nationalization of industry) the American government quickly began to impose sanctions, and eventually a blockade, on Cuba (Franklin, 1997). The US and Cuba have maintained a contentious relationship ever since. Though neither country has perpetrated any acts of direct aggression against the other, diplomatic relations have been frosty for over four decades.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the blockade the US government has remained mostly adversarial towards Cuba, with only brief periods of *détente* during the Carter administration (Fisk, 1999). The American public has generally remained apathetic regarding the government's policies towards the island but, as Fisk (1999) and Mayer (2001) have discovered, opinions (not image) of the island are strongly correlated to events that occur between the US and Cuba. Fisk (1999) found, contrary to his hypothesis, that Americans' attitudes towards Cuba have not changed significantly over the course of four decades. Various events relating to the US-Cuba relationship such as the Mariel boat lift, the downing of two planes belonging to a suspected Cuban-American terrorist group based in Miami by the Cuban Air Force, and more recently the Elian Gonzalez incident have

evoked strong opinions from the American public. However, these strong negative attitudes are temporary and public opinion about Cuba (or more precisely the Cuban government) returns to a moderately unfavorable status rather quickly after media coverage subsides (Fisk, 1999; Mayer, 2001).

*United States policy documents*

Two acts of the US Congress create the framework on which US government policy towards Cuba is based, the Trading With the Enemy Act of 1917 (TWEA) and the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. The TWEA was enacted by the US Congress during World War I as a wartime measure to prevent aid from being sent to enemies on the United States. The Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) was an omnibus bill meant to purposely direct aid in order to further the US government's foreign interests. It was also the first act that codified the official stance of both the US president and congress towards the revolutionary government of Cuba by allowing the president to block the shipment of all non-humanitarian goods to the island nation (Wilkins, 1967). The TWEA and FAA were first used against Cuba in 1963 when the Kennedy Administration enacted the Cuban Assets Control Regulations (CACR) to enforce its blockade of the island. The CACR was meant to punish the government of Fidel Castro for nationalizing American-owned corporations by blocking all travel and trade with Cuba (Franklin, 1997).

The enforcement of the policies against Cuba is in the purview of the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), which has the authority to impose travel and trade restrictions on US companies and individuals wishing to travel to

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<sup>2</sup> With the exception of the April 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, which may or may not be classified as a *direct* act of aggression.

or engage in commerce with Cuba. In order for the blockade of Cuba to be constitutionally justifiable, the island was declared an 'enemy state' due to its socialist leanings and close ties with the Soviet Union (Franklin, 1997). While the TWEA, FAA, and CACR provided legal justification for the blockade, as well as set the tone for the discourse towards Cuba, several other acts of congress articulate the US government's Cuba policies more precisely.

The corpus of legislation and other public policy that regulates the US government's interactions with Cuba is voluminous (Table 3.1 presents some of the most significant documents) nonetheless three documents articulate the justification and terms of the blockade and frame the US government's Cuba discourse (Travieso-Díaz, 1993). The Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, The Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Libertad) Act of 1996 (commonly known as the Helms-Burton Act), and the Commission for the Assistance to a Free Cuba report to the president (CAFC) articulate the policy of the US government as well as reflect the current attitude of many of its politically influential citizens (Helms-Burton, 1996; McLaren & Pinkney-Pastrana, 2001; Powell, 2004; Rice & Gutierrez, 2006; Torricelli & Graham, 1992). Coupled with these are the policy statements that operationalize the enforcement of the laws and regulations set forth by these documents (Office of Foreign Assets Control, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2004d). With each permutation, policy towards Cuba has grown more draconian in its sanctions and rhetoric and has directly impacted the information Americans receive about Cuba.

The Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, commonly known as the Torricelli Act, was a measure designed to further isolate Cuba after the dissolution of its largest trading partner, the Soviet Union. The act restored many of the sanctions that had been eased since the 1960s and gives authority to the Department of the Treasury to 'maintain a branch of the Office of Foreign Assets Control in Miami, Florida, in order to strengthen the enforcement of this title' as well as impose civil penalties on any entity violating the act (Franklin, 1997; Torricelli & Graham, 1992).

The Helms-Burton Act was passed into law amidst extensive media coverage of a Cuban military downing of two aircraft piloted by members of an anti-Castro organization based in Miami. This act of congress was meant to further choke off the flow of US dollars to the Castro government, thereby weakening it and setting the stage for a counter-revolution (Helms-Burton, 1996). The Helms-Burton Act formalized many of the blockade practices already in place from the Torricelli Act as well as increased the civil penalties for individuals who travel to Cuba illegally (Nichols, 1998).

Recently the Helms-Burton Act has been revised for the twenty-first century by the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba report (CAFC) commissioned by then Secretary of State Colin Powell in May of 2004 and updated by then US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and then US Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez (Powell, 2004; Rice & Gutierrez, 2006). In his 458 page report Powell recommends among other things greater restrictions on travel to Cuba as a means of choking off the money supply to the Cuban government. Many of the recommendations from the report have been implemented and include: limiting the number of times Cuban-Americans can visit

family members from once a year to once every three years, stricter regulations on family visitation, limiting the types of educational travel, and the elimination of fully hosted travel (Powell, 2004).

These policy documents as well as the additional measures taken by the US government to cut Cuba off from the global community constitute a prohibition on tourist travel and tourism information. While there have been numerous addenda and policy statements pertaining to diplomatic relations with Cuba, Table 3.1 illustrates the most remarkable actions taken by the US government to block goods and information from reaching Cuba and Cuban information from reaching the American people.

Table 3.1 US government political mediation pertaining to Cuba

| Year | Policy   | Description   |
|------|--|---|
| 1917 | Trading with the Enemy Act   | Provides the "legal" basis for cutting off aid and restricting American travel to Cuba  |
| 1961 | Foreign Assistance Act of 1961   | Document stipulates the terms through which US foreign aid will be allocated  |
| 1963 | Cuban Assets Control Regulations (CACR)  | Bans Americans from travel to Cuba from 1963 until 1977   |
| 1977 | Presidential Directive/NSC-6, in   | Carter Administration lifts restrictions on U.S. travel to Cuba   |
| 1982 | Section 6(j) of the Export Administration Act of 1979                                | Reagan Administration re-imposed restrictions on travel to Cuba as well as added Cuba to the list of state sponsors of terrorism  |
| 1992 | The Cuban Democracy Act of 1992  | Formalizes the myriad policies and actions taken by the US government into one omnibus act of congress. This includes further restriction on certain travel, intensification of anti-Castro rhetoric, and sanctions against other nations that violate the blockade   |
| 1994 | Federal Register, August 30, 1994, pp. 44884-44886                                   | New regulations that required professional researchers to apply for specific license rather than travel freely under a general license  |
| 1995 | Federal Register, October 20, 1995, pp. 54194-54198                                  | New regulations that required free-lance journalists traveling to Cuba to obtain a specific license rather than travel freely under a general license   |
| 1996 | The Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Libertad) Act of 1996                   | Further intensified the anti-Castro rhetoric, penalized foreign companies conducting business in Cuba, permitted US citizens to sue foreign investors that profited from 'American-owned property' in Cuba, and denied these investors entry into the US  |
| 1999 | Federal Register, May 13, 1999, pp. 25808-25820                                      | President Clinton announces measures to loosen the blockade. Travel for professional research became possible under a general license, and travel for a wide range of educational, religious, sports competition, and other activities became possible with specific licenses authorized by OFAC on a case-by-case basis. |
| 2000 | Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 (Title IX of P.L. 106-387) | Prohibits travel-related transactions for "tourist activities"  |

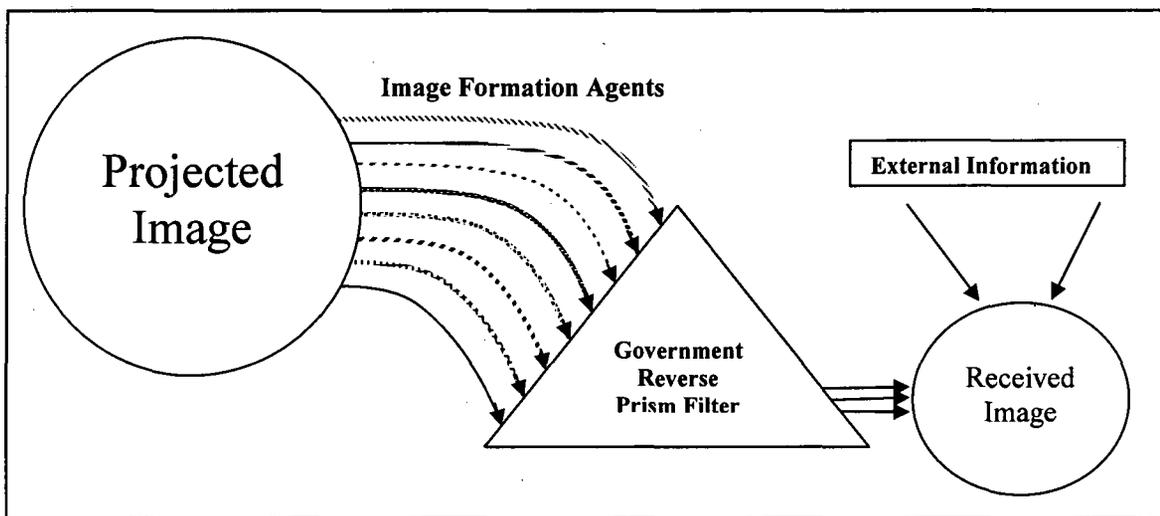
|      |   |   |
|------|---|---|
| 2001 | OFAC published regulations pursuant to the provisions of the Trade Sanctions and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 | President Bush announces that he had asked the Treasury Department to enhance and expand the capabilities of OFAC to prevent, among other things, "unlicensed and excessive travel."  |
| 2003 | Appendix to 31 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Part 501 & CFR Part 515  | New OFAC enforcement guidelines loosen restrictions on family visitation but eliminate people-to-people educational exchanges unrelated to academic coursework  |
| 2004 | Commission for the Assistance to a Free Cuba  | A 458 page report with plans for "Hastening Cuba's Transition" to an American style 'free market' economy. Some recommendations for "Undermin[ing] regime sustaining tourism" that were implemented from the plan are: expanding policing of the waters between Florida and Cuba with the objective of stopping pleasure boating traffic; Eliminating fully-hosted travel as a legal category of permissible travel; Further restricting specific licenses for educational activities in the following ways: the institutional licenses are restricted to undergraduate and graduate institutions, while the category of educational exchanges sponsored by secondary schools are eliminated; three types of licensed educational activities are required to be no shorter than 10 weeks and include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• structural education programs in Cuba offered as part of a course at the licensed institution</li> <li>• formal courses of study offered at a Cuban academic institution</li> <li>• teaching at a Cuban academic institution</li> </ul> |
| 2006 | Commission for the Assistance to a Free Cuba  | A revision of the aforementioned report. No significant change in the tone of the document was made however significant portions were redacted.   |

### *American access to Cuba*

The most significant impact of the blockade on the majority of US residents has been to limit their access to information regarding Cuba. This access takes many forms. One of the more overt forms of this prohibition of information regarding Cuba is denial of access to the island for vacations, educational travel, cultural exchange, or business. There are other covert ways in which this information pertaining to the island is inhibited from reaching US residents. In a conference presentation my advisor, Barbara Carmichael, and I documented the myriad ways that the US government's blockade has curtailed access to marketing material, products, and independent journalistic accounts of Cuba (Canally & Carmichael, 2007). Through a conceptual model we demonstrated how information about Cuba is rendered through the US government's political/ideological filter so that the majority of information US residents have access to about Cuba fits in a

narrow frame (Figure 3.1). In the model the projected image represents all sources of information about Cuba that is eventually interpreted by tourists. According to Gartner (1993) the Image Formation Agents represent the possible sources of information that US residents may use to inform their image of Cuba. The Government Prism Filter is the policies and practices of the US government that inhibit these information sources from being readily accessible to Americans. As the model shows, there are sources of information that people in the US can use to form their image of Cuba yet a wide range of images about Cuba are filtered through this reverse prism. This is important because with limited access to alternative information about Cuba the US government rhetoric dominates the discourse on the island within the US. In the next section I will demonstrate the significant rhetorical statements that pervade US policy documents as well as US government discourse on Cuba.

Figure 3.1 US government filter of information pertaining to Cuba



United States government policy that pertains to the blockade of Cuba does not always reflect the will of US residents. Although (Fisk, 1999; Mayer, 2001) most Americans hold an unfavorable opinion of the Cuban government, polling data suggests that a small majority (51%) of them feel that the economic blockade of Cuba should be lifted (Gallup, 2007). In addition, a large majority of those surveyed by Gallup in 2009 favored ending the US government's travel restrictions to the island (Gallup, 2009).

*Salient aspects of the US government's Cuba discourse*

Since the 1960s the US government, as well as private interests, have attempted to construct a Cuban discourse that justifies the harsh sanctions imposed upon the island (Franklin, 1997). While the main driver of this discourse is the US government, the Cuban government's adherence to an economic system that rejects the market approach to organizing their economy earns it little sympathy from many private and state actors as globalization spreads modern capitalism throughout the world. Articulation of this discourse has come primarily from the policy documents discussed above. Although a full discourse analysis is beyond the scope of this paper, a brief discussion of the important themes in these documents is necessary in order to better understand the self-referential role that these policies play in the development of a Cuban discourse.

Below is an amalgam of passages and quotes from the policy documents that exemplify the tenor of the US government's Cuban discourse. These policy documents are all based on the assumption that the government of Cuba needs to transition from its current structure and it is the obligation of the United States government, as a model of democratic values, to "hasten and ease Cuba's democratic transition" (Powell, 2004, p.1).

Not relying solely on the unstated assumption that Cuba is anti-democratic, the Torricelli Act explicitly states that there is no indication that the “Castro regime is prepared to make any significant concessions to democracy or to undertake any form of democratic opening” ... which the “Cuban people have demonstrated their yearning for...”(Torricelli & Graham, 1992, p. 1). Instead of addressing the “[c]hronic malnutrition, polluted drinking water, and untreated chronic diseases [that] continue to affect a significant percentage of the Cuban people” (Rice & Gutierrez, 2006, p. 6) the “totalitarian Castro regime” (Helms & Burton, 1996, p. 3) uses its resources to “threaten international peace and security by engaging in acts of armed subversion and terrorism such as the training and supplying of groups dedicated to international violence” (Helms & Burton, 1996, p.3).

One of the most remarkable statements of the US government’s policy towards Cuba comes from the Helms-Burton Act (Section 2, item 3), which states that “[t]he Castro regime has made it abundantly clear that it will not engage in any substantive political reforms that would lead to democracy, a market economy, or an economic recovery” (Helms & Burton, 1996, p. 3). Here the act equates the system of governance “characterized by formal equality of rights and privileges” (Dictionary, 2008a) with a way of structuring an “economy that relies chiefly on market forces to allocate goods and resources and to determine prices” (Dictionary, 2008b). The government documents reiterates the link between the two arguably incongruent constructs of democracy and capitalism by, in part, defining the meaning of a “democratically-elected government” as one that “is substantially moving toward a market-oriented economic system based on the

right to own and enjoy property” (Helms & Burton, 1996, p. 3, 7). The latest CAFC report offers further insight into the motives for creating the discourse by dedicating almost twice as much space to “Helping Cubans Create Market-Based Economic Opportunities” (CACF Chapter 4, pp. 61-75) as it does to “Helping Cubans Get to Free and Fair Elections” (CACF Chapter 3, p. 52-60).

The US government rhetoric that accompanies the formal blockade policies creates a powerful propaganda tool. The government blockade inhibits independent information about Cuba from reaching Americans while simultaneously projecting a pro-Western rhetoric, thereby nurturing a dominant discourse on Cuba replete with “representations [of Cuba] entirely of their own creation” (Pérez, 2008, p. 22-23). Figure 2 is a map created by the US Central Intelligence Agency around 1962 that depicts the range of the SS-4 and SS-5 missiles that the US government suspected Cuba of attempting to acquire. This map is indicative of the US government’s adversarial diplomatic stance towards Cuba.

Figure 3.2 Cold War Map of Cuba



(Hanson, 2007)

While the US government's rhetoric has been confrontational and based on overt hegemonic endeavors and economic ideologies, the Canadian discourse has been markedly different. In the following section I will examine how the Canadian government's liberal trade relationship with Cuba has fostered a discourse that is different in substance and tenor from that of the US government.

#### **IV. Canada-Cuba relationship**

The Canadian government's diplomatic stance towards Cuba has occasionally been concerned with geopolitical issues but the foundation of its relationship with the island has primarily based on trade and commerce (Engler, 2009; Kirk & McKenna, 1997). Since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the Canadian government has viewed Cuba as a natural market for Canadian goods and services. As the Canadian Department of External Affairs expressed in 1949 to the newly appointed Canadian Head of Mission in Havana

“Relations between Canada and Cuba have always been primarily commercial and financial” (Kirk and McKenna, 1997 p. 8). Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and mid 20<sup>th</sup> century Canada was a major exporter of cod fish, potatoes, and financial services to Cuba. After Cuba’s Revolutionary government took power in 1959 and the US government imposed its blockade of the island, trade between Canada and Cuba doubled. This was a result of the Cuban government trying to fill the void left by the disappearance of US trading partners (Kirk & McKenna, 1997).

Unlike the US government, the Canadian government has maintained a relatively cordial diplomatic relationship with Cuba. Kirk and McKenna (1997) aptly describe the Government of Canada’s policy towards Cuba as “a radically different approach” than that of the US. Cuba was the first Caribbean country to host a Canadian diplomatic mission in 1945 and has maintained uninterrupted relations ever since (Cuba, 2007). During the Cuban Missile Crisis, many Canadians wanted the Prime Minister to take a hard-line stance against Cuba’s actions but John Diefenbaker refused to cut diplomatic ties (Kirk & McKenna, 1997). The Canadian government’s refusal to adhere to the US government’s blockade has caused some tension between the two nations. The Canadian government has withstood tremendous political pressure from the US government to cool their diplomatic relationship with Cuba (Kirk & McKenna, 1997). In the introduction to their book Canada-Cuba Relations, Kirk and McKenna (1997) describe several important actions taken by Canadian politicians to strengthen economic relations with Cuba. They also note that, like much Canadian foreign and domestic policy, pressure from the US

government is ubiquitous throughout the history of Canada-Cuba relations (Cuba, 2007; Kirk & McKenna, 1997).

Following Diefenbaker's tenure as Prime Minister, the Liberal party leader Lester B. Pearson took a different approach to relations with Cuba. While not taking an overtly hostile diplomatic tact, Pearson's government reacted to many of Cuba's overtures with cool indifference (Kirk & McKenna, 1997). For instance, his Department of External Affairs turned down a Cuban government request to allow charter flights for tourists from Canada to Cuba. However, despite this, the distinct lack of support from Pearson's government, the Canadian business community began to recognize the economic opportunities that Cuba provided. During the Liberal leaders administration Canadian exports to Cuba grew from \$14 million to almost \$50 million (Kirk & McKenna, 1997 pp. 80-81). Though expanding Canadian exports and frigid diplomatic relations typified the Pearson years between 1963 and 1968, the administration that followed brought a drastic shift Canada's relationship with Cuba.

Pierre Elliott Trudeau, the Prime Minister almost continuously from the late 1960s to the mid 1980s, took an active role in repairing relations with Cuba. His 1976 visit to Cuba and subsequent meetings with Fidel Castro was focused more on issues of politics than trade (Wright, 2007). As diplomatic ties were being strengthened by Trudeau, his government was continuing to facilitate the expanded export of Canadian made goods to Cuba. During his term as Prime Minister, Canada's exports to Cuba grew by 1000% (Kirk & McKenna, 1997). However due to the lack of amenities on the island and weak support from the Cuban government the Department of External Affairs chose

not to promote Canadian leisure travel to Cuba's struggling industry. Coinciding interests and events that occurred during the succeeding administration of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney set the foundation for the large role that Canada now plays in contemporary Cuban tourism.

As the Soviet Union disbanded, Cuba began to search for new sources of revenue. As a result, in the late 1980s and early 1990s Cuba began to develop a more sophisticated tourism industry. It was a combination of the Cuban government's new focus on tourism and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's pro-business stance that resulted in Canadian comprising one quarter of the tourist (the most from any one country) to Cuba by the mid-1990s. Also, during that period several management agreements were signed that allowed Canadian companies to manage tourism resorts in Cuba (Elliot & Neirotti, 2008; Padilla, 2007; Sanchez & Adams, 2007). However, the growth in Canadian travel to Cuba is not a completely accurate picture of the Mulroney government's stance towards Cuba. Due in large part to Mulroney's affection for US policies, much of the growth in the tourism industry was accomplished despite support from the Canadian government (Kirk & McKenna, 1997). In the early 1990s Canadian businesses began to recognize the potential of Cuba as a market where they did not have to compete with American businesses. As a result Canadian companies began to develop relationships and partnerships with the Cuban government to bring Canadian tourists to the island as well as supply goods for Canadian tourists' consumption (Kirk & McKenna, 1997). These ventures set the stage for the Chrétien government in the 1990s and 2000s to create a

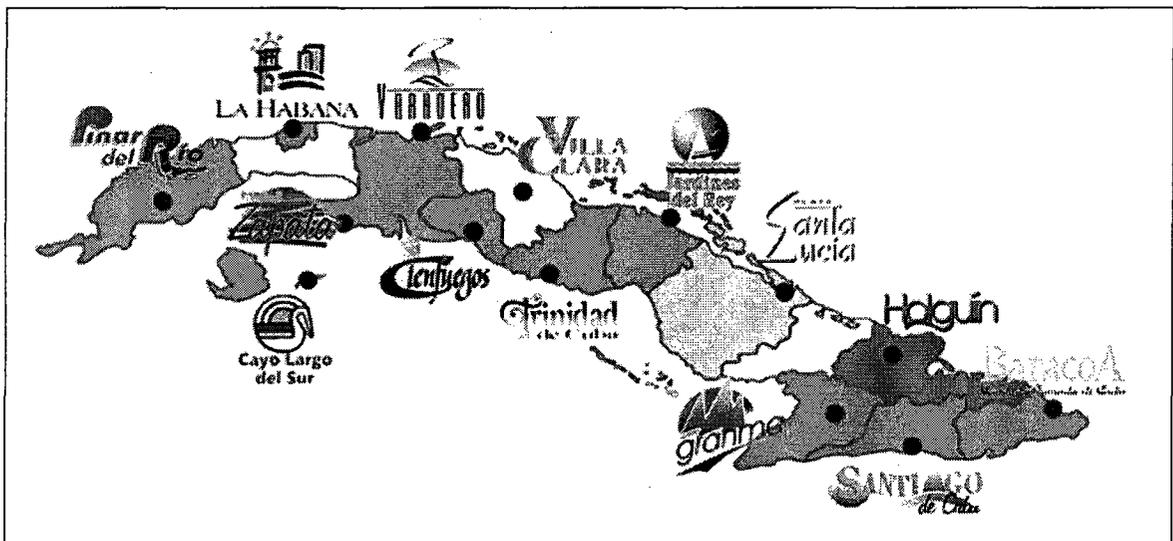
political and economic atmosphere that fosters the current flow of Canadian tourists and tourism businesses to Cuba.

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's stance towards Cuba was influenced by his desire to distance himself and his government from that of the United States (Kirk & McKenna, 1997). As a political gesture symbolic of his independent political course as well as a pragmatic scheme to increase Canadian exports, Chrétien developed an extensive trading partnership with the Cuban government. By the end of his term Canadian companies were building modern runways, airport terminals, and supplying Cuba with sophisticated hotel booking software, along with importing an expanded amount of Canadian brand name product for Canadian tourists to consume while on vacation (Kirk & McKenna, 1997; Jayawardena, 2003).

The continuous economic relationship has contributed to the current tourism practices on the island (Avella & Mills, 1996; deHolan & Phillips, 1997). Although there are no Canadian-operated resorts or joint operated tourism resorts with Cuba, Canadian companies such as Delta Hotels manage several resort hotels throughout Cuba. Also Canadian travelers still represent the largest group of visitors to the island (Elliot & Neirrotti, 2008; Padilla, 2007; Sanchez & Adams, 2007). Tourism represents the largest source of foreign exchange for Cuba. Numerous Canadian tour operators, travel agents, and airlines market Cuba to Canadian tourists (Cuba Tourist Board, 2003). As well, the Cuban Tourist Board office in Canada and myriad resorts advertise Cuban vacations to Canadian tourists looking for a budget sun, sand, and sea holiday (Cuba Tourist Board, 2003). This barrage of marketing and the subsequent volume of Canadian travel to Cuba

reinforces a discourse on Cuba that portrays Cuba as primarily a tourist destination. In the following section I will examine how the marketing of Cuba by firms and organizations contributes to the Canadian discourse on Cuba. Figure 3 is a map of Cuba from the Cuba Tourist Board in Canada that illustrates the branding of the various regions of Cuba for the benefit of tourists.

Figure 3.3 Tourist map of Cuba



(Cuba Tourist Board, 2003)

*Salient aspects of the marketing discourse of Cuba: a postcolonial critique*

The works of Echtner (2002) and Echtner and Prasad (2003) provide an extensive examination of tourism brochures of Third World countries. They undertook a content analysis of the text and pictures in 115 tourism brochures produced for First World tourists that represented 12 geographically diverse Third World tourism destinations. They discovered that the depictions in these marketing materials were, at best, curtailed and at worst demeaning to the host destinations. Fortunately for the purpose of this paper

one of the 12 places that Echtner (2002) and Echtner and Prasad (2003) included in their analyses was Cuba. I must surmise that the tourism brochures they examined were created for and disseminated to a Canadian audience since, as discussed above, the marketing of Cuba to American tourists is virtually non-existent.

Echtner (2002) and Echtner and Prasad (2003) found that brochures depicting Cuba were similar to those depicting two other places in their study, Jamaica and Fiji. They grouped these three destinations into a category labeled *sea-sand*. Unlike other places that they examined, these sea-sand destinations were depicted by tourism marketers as being tropical paradises. Table 3.2 was adapted from Echtner's (2002) and Echtner and Prasad's (2003) analysis of Cuban tourism brochures. It presents the most common phenomena (those appearing in over 50% of the brochures they examined) discussed in marketing material pertaining to Cuba, Jamaica, and Fiji.

Echtner (2002) and Echtner and Prasad (2003) demonstrate the tightly framed images that are used by First World marketers to depict Cuba to potential tourists. Other places examined in their study are described in the brochures as authentic, exotic, mystical, and enchanting with stoic peasants in ethnic dress. However, Cuba was framed as a tropical paradise. In this paradise the hosts are servile and the atmosphere is verdant and inviting. In Cuba, food and tourist amenities are abundant and the local people are always at the ready to serve the tourists' whims. To create an image of familiarity, Cuban hosts are often portrayed in resort uniforms or in elaborate costumes performing for tourists.

Table 3.2 Tourism brochure images of Cuba

|            |  |  |
|------------|--|--|
| Attraction | <u>Nature:</u><br>beaches, ocean, island, sand, coastline  | <u>Man Made:</u><br>Resorts, Varadero, swimming pool, beach shelter      |
| Actors:    | <u>Hosts:</u><br>mostly females, in uniform/costume, smiling   | <u>Tourists:</u><br>vacationers, sunseekers, lovers, couples in swimwear |
| Actions:   | <u>Hosts (interaction):</u><br>serve, entertain, welcome   | <u>Tourist:</u><br>indulge, participate in activities                    |
| Atmosphere | natural, pristine, tropical, verdant, gentle, amiable, best (superlatives such as first class, posh, deluxe and luxurious) |  |

Adapted from: Echtner, 2002; Echtner & Prasad, 2003

Both Echtner (2002) and Echtner and Prasad (2003) document the tightly framed images of Cuba portrayed by First World tourism brochures but the later article incorporates a critique of postcolonial marketing practices. A postcolonial practice can be understood as the perpetuation of historic colonial master/servant relationships through means other than direct governmental domination and military coercion. A discussion on postcolonial theory, however brief, would not be complete without an acknowledgement of Said's (1978) seminal work Orientalism in which he uses philology to illustrate the means by which western colonial masters exerted the power to create and recreate northern Africa and southwestern Asia, to justify their colonial interventions.

Although it might appear antithetical to examine Cuba, a supposed socialist society, as a recipient of postcolonial practices, I agree with Echtner (2002) and Echtner and Prasad (2003) that the act of marketing Cuba as a paradise for Western travelers is a postcolonial practice. This study does not explore the ways in which the Cuban government and Cuban society have reacted to the narratives that are ascribed to them. I do not wish to unequivocally suggest that Cuba has no agency in resisting the role

assigned to it by tourism marketers. I simply endeavor to describe the practices of First World tourism marketers, which appear to have significantly influenced many of the Canadian study participants, as a mirroring the postcolonial practices. To dismiss the practices of these marketer because Cuba is a socialist society, to me would suggest that these postcolonial endeavors are unimportant. As I discussed earlier, the exploring the practices that intercede in a person's evolution of TDI is one my research objectives. As a critical constructivist, if the practices of marketers unduly influences the access to and receipt of information it is important for me to understand the power relations inherent in those practices. Therefore, in my critique of postcolonial practices I will examine the marketing discourse wit the intent to illustrate how may influence a tourist's image, which consequently may influence their behavior.

Recently a corpus of tourism literature has grown around postcolonial theory. Several tourism researchers have recognized that tourism patterns often mirror former colonial relationships. In addition, these researchers also recognize tourism's place making power as a powerful new tool for economic domination in an increasingly global neo-liberal environment (Adams, 2004; Britton, 1979; 1982; Echtner & Prasad, 2003; Palmer, 1994). In this spirit, Echtner and Prasad (2003) explore how the power to portray Cuba, along with other destinations, to First World tourists is wielded by tourism marketers.

Echtner and Prasad (2003) situate the marketing of Cuba, Jamaica, and Fiji into a category they term *The Myth of the Unrestrained*. They use this term to demonstrate how the framing of these places by First World marketers produces significant silences in the

interpretation of place. Echtner and Prasad (2003) explain how the portrayal of places such as Cuba as hedonistic, tropical paradises is the projection of a First World fantasy that over emphasizes certain phenomena and deemphasizes or omits other phenomena, thereby continuing colonial power relationships. For instance, they cite Ashcroft et al. (1998, p. 98) to explain how the Western ideal of paradise as produced in the tourism brochures omits images of the more discomfoting aspects of Third World destinations.

This destination is not a place 'that may involve such discomfoting actualities as mosquitoes, mangrove swamps and poisonous fauna, as well as human poverty and exploitation; instead it becomes an imaginative construct that says more about the...fantasy than the actual location in which it finds its setting' (Ashcroft et al in Echtner & Prasad, 2003, p. 675).

Through the practice of deemphasizing these less than utopian phenomena, First World tourism marketers create a paradisiacal playground for First World tourists to play out their ego-enhancing fantasies.

In addition to what is not emphasized in the tourism brochures, Echtner and Prasad (2003) discuss how the images that are emphasized can also reproduce former colonial power relationships between First World tourists and Third World hosts. They note that the portrayal of Third World hosts as "smiling, serving and submissive... resurrects the asymmetrical relationships between the former colonizers and the colonized, relationships often characterized by the power divisions between master and servant" (Echtner and Prasad, 2003 p. 674). They posit that the production of these images of Third World places as possessing pristine, gentle nature, abundant tourist amenities including food and drink, and servile hosts "presents a romanticized version of

colonial exploitation” that fetishizes the First World tourists’ experience (Echtner and Prasad, 2003 p. 672).

## **V. Conclusion**

Whether through a persistent blockade of travel and information or through policies that encourage the one-way flow of tourists, the US and Canadian governments influence the dominant mainstream discourses of Cuba. These discourses on the island entrench the power to define Cuba within the First World, thereby perpetuating forms of domination by denying the existence of Cuba “on its own terms or as a condition possessed of an internal logic or Cubans as a people of an interior history or as a nation possessed of an inner-directed destiny” (Pérez, 2008 p. 23). As I will demonstrate in the analysis and discussion section of this thesis these public discourses share strong similarities with the way study participants’ framed Cuba.

## CHAPTER 4: METHODS

### **I. Introduction**

To examine the social construction of Anglo North Americans' image of Cuba I used a qualitative approach. I undertook this approach to explore an alternative way of knowing TDI. Instead of "measuring" people's TDI of Cuba I was interested in how they make meaning out of the phenomena they perceive to be related to Cuba. Also, instead of simply examining the information people use to inform their image of Cuba, I was interested in how broader discourses inform people's framing of a destination. I developed a qualitative method to explore the socially constructed nature of the TDI of Cuba. Below I will discuss the methods that I used to recruit participants, develop the semi-structured interview format, and analyze the data.

### **II. Recruitment of participants**

To garner a rich perspective on the Anglo American TDI of Cuba I made an effort to include a diverse range of age and gender constituencies that represent the spectrum of tourists that visit the Caribbean (Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2004). I used visitor data provided by the Caribbean Tourism Organization (2004) to guide me in the recruiting of study participants. The age and gender of visitors to 24 Caribbean islands was averaged to create to guide for purposive selection of participants (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Visitor profile by age and gender

| Constituencies | Under 20 | 20-39 | 40-59 | 60+ | Male | Female |
|----------------|----------|-------|-------|-----|------|--------|
| % of Visitors  | 10       | 48    | 31    | 9   | 51   | 49     |

(Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2004)

While non-tourists are a possible avenue for further research on the TDI of Cuba, for this study only those people who had been to the Caribbean were asked to participate. Previous tourists to the Caribbean were chosen for this study because I felt that this would result in richer descriptions of Cuba. The selection of tourists to the Caribbean made it more likely that study participants would have used information relating to the Caribbean to choose their destination. Also, tourists that had visited the Caribbean had an organic image (image formed from a previous trip) with which to compare their images of Cuba.

For my research I interviewed 42 Anglo North American tourists. Interviews were conducted with 22 Americans and 20 Canadians. These interview participants were drawn from regions within Canada and the US that have the most outbound tourists to the Caribbean. They are also places where I have lived for several years and of which I possess a thorough familiarity of the cultural norms. These regions include southwestern Ontario (including the Greater Toronto Area) and the northeastern, United States (including suburban Philadelphia and Washington DC).

These regions were selected for three reasons. First, they are the largest travel market for tourists to the Caribbean and therefore people in these regions were more likely to have received information about Caribbean destinations through various

commercial and non-commercial sources (Ankomah, Crompton, & Baker, 1996; Crompton, 1979; Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2004). Second, since these are the largest travel markets for the Caribbean, my chance of finding a diverse range of participants was more likely. Finally, these are regions where I either have a home, as in Waterloo, Ontario, or have family that I could stay with, as in suburban Philadelphia. This was important because it provided me with accommodations while I conducted my research and my familiarity with the region and people greatly facilitated finding study participants.

A similar solicitation method was used to find participants in Canada and the US. I used a modified snowball sampling technique. Initially I relied on friends to encourage people to participate in my study. After each interview I asked the participants if they could recommend someone to contact me that they knew had been to the Caribbean and was willing to be interviewed. In addition to this, I used a cold call approach to achieve more diversity amongst the interviewees. These people were either approached on the street or in cafes and asked if they would be willing to participate in my study. The cold approach technique resulted in five interviews. While I did interview three couples, each individual separately, I took care not to interview too many people that had traveled together in a group or a package tour.

Studies that have utilized interview techniques similar to the ones I used for this research such as Naoi, Airey, Iijima, and Niininen's (2006) have had a tendency towards small sample sizes. For instance, previous tourism research that has utilized the triad elicitation technique has focused on nearly 25 interviews from which to elicit constructs

(Harrison & Sarre, 1971; Naoi, Airey, Iijima, & Niininen, 2006; Pike, 2003). Initially I endeavored to use theme saturation from my interviews, whereby no new themes would emerge following several successive interviews (Naoi, Airey, Iijima, & Niininen, 2006). Because similar accounts and images kept reoccurring I feel that I did obtain theme saturation for both the dominant Canadian and American framing of Cuba's TDI. I would note, however, that there appeared to be myriad, often subtle, contesting images that would be a fruitful avenue for further exploration. I did not achieve theme saturation of these contesting images but I feel that enough of these images were expressed by interviewees to illustrate the boundaries/limitations of the dominant frames.

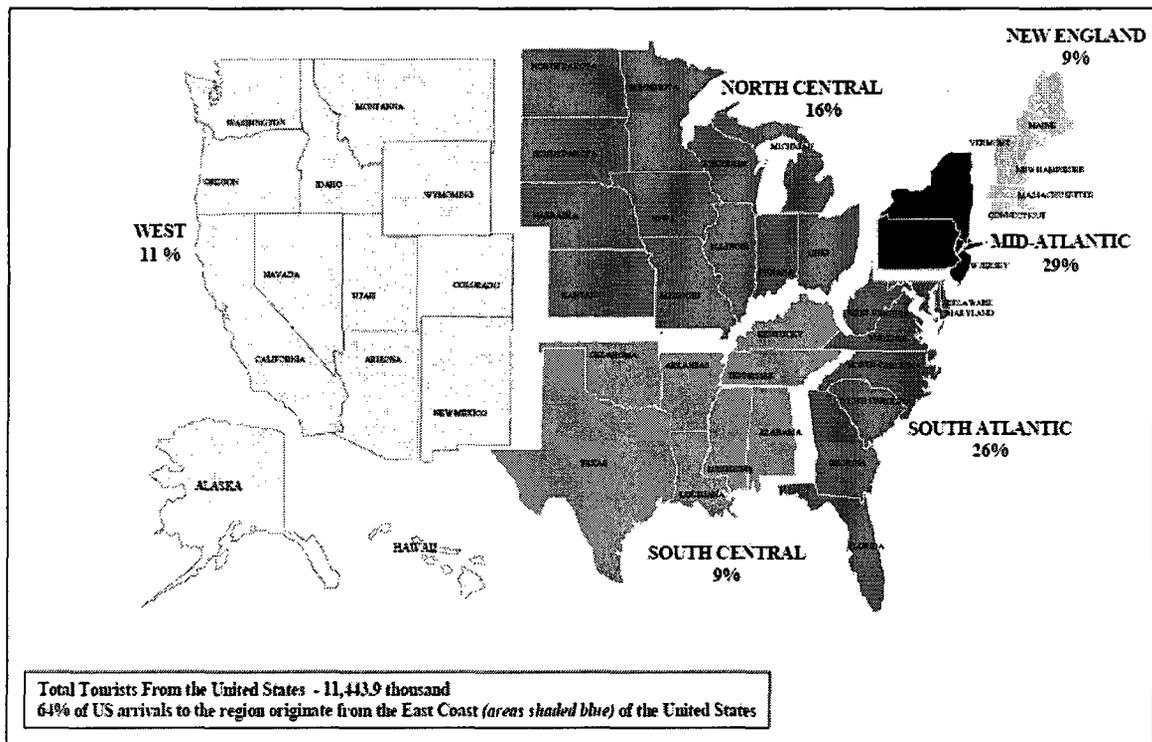
#### *Geographic origin of Caribbean tourists from Canada and US*

Canadians and Americans have a similar pattern of visitation to the Caribbean. Tables 4.2 and 4.3 show that five of the top six destinations in the Caribbean are shared by both American and Canadian tourists. There are, however, a few key differences. Americans prefer to travel to Puerto Rico more than any other destination in the Caribbean, possibly due to its status as a US Protectorate. Additionally, ease of travel (no customs inspection) and reverse diaspora account for Puerto Rico dominating the US market for a Caribbean tourist. For the Canadian market, Cuba is the premiere destination accounting for over 32% of all Canadian travelers. Compare this to the US market where Cuba ranks 23rd out of 33 destinations in the Caribbean. While most Canadian travelers visit Cuba for leisure, the officially recorded 0.4% of the American market is made up primarily of members of the Cuban diaspora visiting family members

and using their American passports (Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2004). None of the American study participants had visited Cuba.

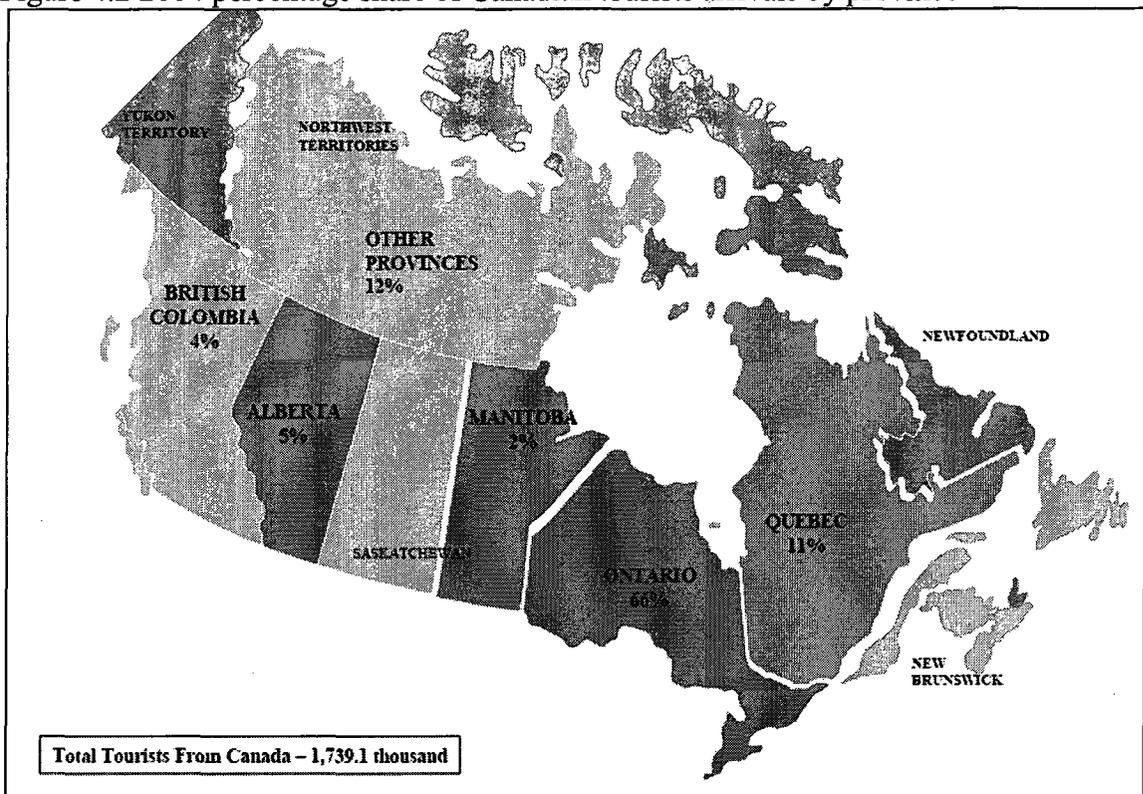
Other similarities regarding the geography of tourists' embarkation points exist as well (Figures 4.1 & 4.2). The majority of tourists to the Caribbean from both Canada and the US come from eastern provinces/states, which in turn are areas with high population density (southern Ontario and eastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York City region).

Figure 4.1 2004 portion of US tourists arrivals by geographic region



(Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2004)

Figure 4.2 2004 percentage share of Canadian tourists arrivals by province



(Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2004)

Table 4.2 Comparison of Canadian &amp; American top Caribbean destinations

|                    | US % of Arrivals | Rank | Canada % of Arrivals | Rank |
|--------------------|------------------|------|----------------------|------|
| Cancun (Mexico)    | 15.3             | 2    | 10                   | 3    |
| Dominican Republic | 8.1              | 5    | 25.8                 | 2    |
| Puerto Rico        | 28.1             | 1    | 3.1                  | 6    |
| Cuba               | 0.4              | 23   | 32.4                 | 1    |
| Bahamas            | 11.9             | 3    | 3.9                  | 5    |
| Jamaica            | 8.7              | 4    | 6.1                  | 4    |

(Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2004)

### III. Interview process

Study participants took part in interviews that averaged 30.34 minutes with Canadian interviews averaging 7.17 minutes longer than the American interviews. The interviews were digitally recorded which allowed me to record field notes and employ a probing technique during the interviews. Following Yin's (2003) interviewing technique, I took field notes to capture the interview setting and key points, but most importantly I recorded the body language, non-verbal cues, and voice intonation of interviewees that White (2004; 2005) noted to be important for understanding meaning in his TDI research. These notes were used to supplement the text produced from the interview transcripts and clarify aspects of the interviews that were not evident in the voice recordings.

The interviews were designed to elicit information regarding tourists TDI of Cuba and other Caribbean destinations, how that image was formed, information sources used to form them, as well as questions relating to travel motivations. In an effort to garner the most robust responses, the interviews consisted of several elicitation techniques (to be discussed later in this chapter) designed to promote recall and reduce brevity in participant responses.

#### *Methodological challenge: predetermining Cuba*

The interview was structured in a way that allowed me, through the questions presented to the study participants, to not initially predetermine the image of Cuba by assigning it the label of "destination" or any other value laden designation. One of the fundamental challenges of this research was the issue of what is termed in positivist

research as *exposure bias*. Exposure bias is summarized best by Grunert and Bech-Larsen (2005, p. 228) as:

A belief presented to a respondent as part of a survey, previously unknown to the respondent, [which] will result in the respondent learning the belief....the problem remains that the survey instrument has changed the respondent's cognitive structure rather than measuring its properties only.

Although the social constructivist epistemology is not concerned with eliminating biases I was cautious as a researcher not to project my values onto participants' meaning of phenomena related to Cuba. I designed the interviews so that participants were initially able to assign their own meaning to Cuba.

A limitation of this research was that I interviewed people who had been to the Caribbean as tourists. My interview solicitation may have prompted the interviewees to be in the mindset to think about places as destinations while being interviewed. However, in my introduction to the study and my presentation of the initial elicitation technique I made every effort to reiterate that I was looking for participants' image of places and never used the word "destination" to describe the names on the cards which I used in the initial phase of the interview.

#### *Interview elicitation techniques*

Interview participants, especially those in the US, were not expected to possess a thorough knowledge of Cuba. This posed a methodological challenge of sorts. I wanted to elicit a thick description of people's image of Cuba while attempting to not impose predetermined meanings onto the island. I felt that asking participants "what is your image of Cuba?" would result in short vague descriptions of their place image. Conversely, I did not want to ask them a set of open ended questions that might steer

their images towards a pre-assigned meaning of Cuba. In order to not predetermine meaning of phenomena ascribed to Cuba as well as to avoid unduly informing participants about Cuba through interview questions, specific elicitation techniques were developed and employed in an order that placed inductive techniques and probing techniques first, followed by techniques that were developed to garner more descriptive images of the island.

To discourage participants from providing short dismissive responses to questions pertaining to their image of Cuba and other places in the Caribbean I felt it was initially necessary to use a technique that encourages participants to start thinking about Cuba but not induce the participants to think about Cuba as a tourist destination. The format I used to accomplish this task was first a triad elicitation section, followed by a scenario portion, and finally open-ended questions. Probing was used throughout to attain greater insight into the meanings participants ascribed to various phenomena. These techniques were utilized within a qualitative, semi-structured interview in an effort to produce a thick, rich, data set from which to determine themes relating to Anglo North Americans' TDI of Cuba. In the following sections I will elaborate on how and why I used these methods in my study. I will start by discussing the theoretical underpinnings for the triad elicitation technique.

#### *Triad elicitation technique*

The triad elicitation technique describes a process by which a study participant is given three elements and asked to group the two that they perceive to be similar and then to describe in which significant way they are different from the third element. This step

is then repeated with different triads of elements known as *sorts*. This technique was initially developed by Kelly (1955) as a way of measuring his Personal Construct Theory.

Like other qualitative techniques, the triad elicitation is touted as a useful tool for eliciting images without forcing respondents to adhere to predetermined constructs (Coshall, 2000; Jenkins, 1999; Ryan & Cave, 2005). Respondents are asked to compare three “elements” (often destinations in TDI research) and state what two of the elements have in common that the third one does not. In doing this, they are expressing their own constructs or images. The study participant responses represent constructs that are spontaneous and therefore reflect their top-of-mind image of a destination. This step is repeated until no new constructs occur. Researchers note that this method is very useful in TDI research although it is time consuming (Coshall, 2000; Jenkins, 1999; Ryan & Cave, 2005).

Dann’s (1996) findings also lend support to the use of a triad elicitation technique to study destination image formation. In his study on TDI, Dann (1996) presented tourists with pictures from travel brochures and asked them to describe their image based on the photo. The transcripts were then used to analyze socio-linguistic themes. In keeping with Kelly’s (1955) original intention for the technique, Dann notes that the cognitive appraisal of image is often manifested in mental comparisons such as ‘X reminds me of Y’. He believed that this method allows tourists to generate a TDI *a posteriori* instead of imposing *a priori* images which is what occurs when respondents are asked fit their TDI into attribute lists.

For this study the triad elicitation technique described above was adapted to address the unique challenges associated with exploring the image of Cuba. First, unlike the traditional approach that Kelly (1955) described, the elements, or places, for this study were predetermined and included the 12 most visited destinations within the Caribbean region (see Table 4.3). Also, the triads for this study were predetermined to elicit information regarding participants' image of Cuba. I adapted the technique used by other TDI researchers to obtain a richer understanding of certain phenomena related to people's images Cuba.

*Triad elicitation technique in practice.* The participants agreed to participate in the study by reading and signing the informed consent statement. I then began the interview by giving each participant three cards with Caribbean place names on them. I then asked them to combine two places that they felt were similar and describe to me how they were similar and how they differed from the third. I informed them that this was a guide and if they felt that all the places were the same or different they could express that as well. All the places were islands in the Caribbean Sea except for Mexico and Bermuda (in the Atlantic Ocean). As one study participant, Michael (who is a particularly illustrative example because he evinces many elements of the dominant American framing of Cuba) noted after the interview was finished, the physical action of handing the card over to the interviewee, to him, had the effect of turning the power in the interview over to the participant thereby making the interviewee more comfortable. While I hoped this was the case with all the people I interviewed it is not something that I explored with participants.

I can say however that many people did appear comfortable and deliberative after being handed the cards.

In terms of the quantity of sorts (a grouping of three cards) that are elicited, Kelly (1955) suggested that 20 is the optimal number that produces the least repetition of constructs. Image and branding researchers suggest that new sorts continue until the participant runs out of new constructs (Coshall, 2000; Embacher & Buttle, 1989; Naoi, Airey, Iijima, & Niininen, 2006; Pike, 2003; Waitt, Lane, & Head, 2003). The Cuba card was included in all the sorts that were presented to both American and Canadian study participants. Participants in this study generally stopped indicating new images of Cuba after three sorts however this varied depending upon the amount of detail they provided. For instance some participants expressed a very detailed description of Cuba in the first two sorts and therefore when given the third sort had no new images to express. Other participants who were not as verbose were given more sorts in order to elicit a richer description. Table 4.3 presents a list of the initial sorts that were used to elicit images from participants. I purposely chose the combination of these places to provide a variety of Caribbean places for participants to compare and contrast with Cuba. Also, I encouraged participants to use these sorts as a guide and, through the use of a blank card, use examples of other places they felt would help them express their images better.

Table 4.3 Place sorts

|                                  |
|----------------------------------|
| Jamaica, Cuba, Mexico            |
| Haiti, Dominican Republic, Cuba  |
| Puerto Rico, Cuba, Cayman Island |
| Bermuda, Cuba, Virgin Islands    |
| Bahamas, Cuba, Turks & Caicos    |

|                          |
|--------------------------|
| Aruba, Blank Card*, Cuba |
|--------------------------|

\*Blank card was used throughout if requested by the participant

One of the reasons that I used the triad elicitation technique was that it allowed the study participant to express an image of Cuba as something other than a tourist destination. The triad elicitation technique is inductive and did not encourage participants to form a TDI of Cuba that they do not already possess. This allowed them to describe how places were similar or different and did not pressure them to generate an image to satisfy my questions. Interviewees were given the ability to have a non-image of Cuba by expressing that they perceived phenomena in some places but not in Cuba. While there were very few people who were devoid of images of the island, participants who expressed that they had a less than informed image of Cuba had the option of grouping two places that were familiar to them and stating how they felt these differed from Cuba. This was useful for the few participants who had a strong affective image of the island but a weak cognitive image. For instance, Cindy expressed a strongly negative feeling about Cuba but only had vague images of phenomena related to the island. Therefore she was able to juxtapose her feelings of safety in Mexico and Jamaica to her feeling of insecurity in Cuba.

With Cuba – I just get a whole, not as nice feeling about Cuba. I can see more of a crime rate. Not as safe I guess. I don't know if it's just word-of-mouth, but you hear things. I just don't feel as like – if I had the choice between going to Cuba and the other two places [Mexico and Jamaica] I would pick the other two because Cuba I just don't feel like I'd be as safe going to. (Cindy, 26-35, Clerical, US<sup>3</sup>)

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<sup>3</sup> This format will be used throughout the text as a brief descriptor of the participants. A more complete description can be found in Appendix A. The format entails Name, Age Range, and Residency and Travel Experience.

This was an appropriate technique to elicit a rich description of places because study participants assigned their own labels and values to the places on the card, but it did present challenges. First of all I quickly learned that the triad elicitation technique alone would not provide the rich descriptive information that I was attempting to obtain. Other tourism researchers have used this technique to garner descriptive terms or words but this was not sufficient for the purposes of this study (Naoi, Airey, Iijima, & Niininen, 2006; Waitt, Lane, & Head, 2003). After realizing the limitation of this technique I adapted it to include probing questions. So the triad elicitation technique provided a method for eliciting words or terms from which I was able to ask probing questions to better understand people's meanings of their images. The coupling of the triad elicitation technique with probing questions was instrumental in obtaining rich descriptive and meaningful images from participants.

### *Scenario*

The triad elicitation portion of the interview was followed by a scenario portion. While the former technique was designed to allow study participants to express their image of Cuba as a place, the later was meant to elicit images that might be construed as being of a tourist nature. In this portion of the interview I read participants a scenario that asked them to imagine an impending trip to Cuba (Appendix A). I adapted the scenario for this study from one used by Govers, Go, and Kumar (2007). They used this method to elicit images of destinations and the sources that inform them through an online questionnaire. The scenario I developed asked participants to describe to me a trip

to Cuba, in particular what they “would expect to see, feel, hear, smell, or taste there?” Participants were also assured that their images could be positive or negative.

This portion of the study often resulted in a more detailed description of cognitive and affective images of Cuba than what were garnered from the triad elicitation portion of the interview. I was surprised by the scenario portion of the interview. Initially I thought I would receive images from participants, especially Americans, which were different than those expressed during the triad elicitation portion of the interview. This, however, was often not the case. This is what reinforced my use of the frame analysis approach rather than the content analysis approach which I was initially going to use in my data analysis presentation.

Although participants’ images became more descriptive during the scenario they did not differ significantly from the images that they expressed during the first part of the interview. This indicated to me that people processed their images through something more than just information about attributes and their feelings towards them, which was my initial understanding of TDI before conducting my interviews. There seemed to be an overarching or underlying element that transferred over from “place Cuba” to “destination Cuba” that was not connected just to information and feelings about the island. American interviewees constantly referred to the Cuban government in their images while Canadians frequently referred to phenomena related to vacation in Cuba. These perceptions seemed to influence people’s response no matter what type of questions I asked them.

*Probing.* In concert with all of the above elicitation techniques I used probing questions to draw-out meanings related to remarkable images. I conducted a literature review on TDI formation and on Cuba to develop several relevant themes for probing. During all three phases of the interview, when a study participant indicated or alluded to any of these themes, I generally asked them probing questions to clarify their statements. Also, if they made unique statements that I felt needed to be elaborated upon I asked them probing questions. For instance, if a person mentioned Cuban people I would ask them to describe their image of them.

*Probing themes*

- Where they receive their information
  - Image Formation Agents?
    - Their impact: How they feel about these sources (biased, reliable, unperceived)
  - Other sources
    - How these affect image
- Image Phenomena
  - People, Place, Government, History, Safety
    - How participants feel about the attributes
- US Government's Blockade of Cuba
- Travel intentions
- History of their images
  - Participant's image change
  - History of Cuba

Finally, if I felt a theme was not discussed but the participant may have had alluded to it in the first phases of the interview I would ask them follow-up questions aimed at illuminating their thoughts on the theme. For example, when participants would describe their image of Cubans as censored or oppressed but not mention who was

censoring or oppressing these Cubans I would ask a follow-up question such as: You mentioned that Cuban people were censored. What do you feel is censoring them?

#### *Open-ended questions*

Following the triad elicitation and scenario portions of the study, I asked participants from both the US and Canada a series of open-ended questions. I used the open-ended question phase to elicit information relating to a study participant's image of Cuba, or what types of information they used to inform their image. Since the first two portions of the interview often exhausted participants' images of Cuba the open-ended question portion was often much shorter, consisting of only one or two questions. Significantly, the questions that most often needed to be asked in the open-ended question portion were those pertaining to the US blockade of Cuba. Most of the participants from both Canada and the US would imply, through hesitation, voice inflections, and other non-verbal cues, thoughts concerning the US government blockade in the first two phases of the interview but few would make explicit comments about it in relation to their image of Cuba.

#### **IV. Data analysis**

The audio recordings of participant interviews were transcribed after the completion of all the interviews. This was not ideal but it is a circumstance that is often a consequence of a busy schedule. Also, as Miles and Huberman (1994) recommend, field notes on the context, setting, and non-verbal cues were also written-up after the

completions of all the interviews. I then used the qualitative data analysis software NVivo 7 to store, organize, and code the transcribed interviews and field notes.

It would be folly to suggest that this research was entirely inductive. I had chosen to examine Cuba because it is a politically contentious destination and therefore was examining the data for how politics manifested in people's image of Cuba. In that sense it was deductive though I took caution to let the data speak to me and to not use the data to prove my thesis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). I endeavored to produce a quasi hermeneutical approach to the interview data whereby I tried to situate and interpret the participants' voices in the broader discursive context.

#### *Coding and memoing*

The data from the interviews were examined using a qualitative analysis framework to determine relevant themes that emerge from the data. I used an iterative process for coding and analyzing the data collected from the interviews. The analysis of the data was based on the techniques described by Miles and Huberman's (1994) and Strauss and Corbin (1998). These techniques included field notes, open coding, code notes, memos, and theoretical notes. By using some of the more blunt tools in Nvivo 7 I was able to accomplish these tasks electronically. Many of the field notes were transcribed and attached to the participant to whom they related. General field notes were kept in a separate file. Memos were made throughout the analysis process beginning with the transcription phase. Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 72) define memos as "...primarily conceptual in intent. They don't just report data; they tie together different pieces of data into a recognizable cluster, often to show that those data are

instances of a general concept.” While I used these as an initial way of making sense of the large amount of data I had garnered from the 43 interviews, many of my memos were later used to reexamine the data to develop the signature matrices (to be discussed in the analysis chapter).

As I briefly mentioned in the discussion of the scenario phase of the interviews, my analysis technique allowed me to investigate the cultural milieu along with the cognitive practices of informing TDI. Schön and Rein (1994, p. 23) define frames as the “underlying structures of beliefs, perceptions, and appreciation [a readiness to distinguish some aspect of a situation rather than others]”. Exploring peoples’ TDI as a practice of framing destinations provides me the opportunity to not only examine the policies and practices of mediating information but also the “appreciation” tourists give to said information.

The frame analysis approach allowed me to investigate how politics and ideologies influence the formation of TDI. I began my research with the hopes of discovering how politics shapes peoples’ image of Cuba. My feeling going into this study was that while both Canadians and Americans had access to similar information about Cuba, the discourses that are formed by their respective political cultures shaped the frames of individual tourists. Since the theory for framing dictates that peoples’ ideologies and beliefs shape the information that they chose to engage I felt that the approaches taken by other researchers investigating how these constructs influence other behaviors such as organizational behavior or media studies, would be appropriate for this

study. My theoretical notes were instrumental in helping me explore and develop the frames used in this study.

I began my analysis and coding of the data with the interviews that I had conducted with Americans in the summer of 2008. As I proceeded through the interviews I assigned open codes, initially based on my field and theoretical notes. During the open coding phase I was mostly searching for statements in which participants expressed images of phenomena related to Cuba. As the analysis progressed, the coding became more refined. The open codes were broad categories like Cuban Society, Communist Cuba, Cuban People, and Destination Cuba. I have incorporated a list of open codes in Appendix B.

After transcribing and open coding the American interviews I proceeded to perform the same process with the Canadian interviews that I had conducted throughout the fall and winter of 2008-9. While I initially examined each interview in the respective groups separately using an open coding technique, in the ensuing rounds of coding I explored the data for cross case similarities and differences (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Jennings, 2001; Yin 2003). From the open coding I found four general themes, or phenomena. These phenomena became the basis for an examination of how American and Canadian study participants framed their images of Cuba.

In the first round of coding I found that both American and Canadian interviewees perceived similar phenomena about Cuba. In particular, both sets of interviewees had images of Cuban people, Cuban place, poverty in Cuba, and Cuban governmental influence. I felt that interviewees' perception of these phenomena would be a good

starting point for the exploration of the framing of Cuba's TDI. During the interviews and transcription process I began to recognize a significant difference in the way participants ascribed meaning to these phenomena. After the open coding round I started to explore the way study participants framed these four phenomena.

I began this phase of the analysis by using axial coding techniques to explore meaning making of phenomena related to Cuba. I used axial coding as a means of exploring the implicit assumptions made by study participants about Cuba. The technique I used for this round of coding was borrowed from Strauss and Corbin's (1998) coding paradigm. They posit that this technique can be used to, amongst other things, explain social actions. Strauss and Corbin (1998) posit that by breaking statements into phenomenon, context, conditions, strategies and consequences meanings, can be better understood. For my study I employed their technique to infer how participants felt about phenomena they perceived to be related to Cuba. As a means of illustrating this technique I will give an example that I will revisit in the analysis portion of this paper. Vicki (46-64, Waitress, US<sup>4</sup>), an American participant made the following statement: "I don't think it's anywhere I'd want to go [to Cuba]... I guess just because I've heard bad things about it. You know the dictatorship I don't know if I'd want to go there. Is Castro still in power? It wouldn't be a place that I would want to visit." This statement can be deconstructed to decipher greater meaning. First, Cuba is the phenomenon. Next the

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<sup>4</sup> Following the requirements of the Wilfrid Laurier University Institutional Review Board all names presented in this study are pseudonyms.

context is the desire not to travel to Cuba. The condition she defined was that she heard bad things about Cuba/Castro. The action she took was to not go to Cuba. As a consequence she will be able to enjoy her trip to the Caribbean because she will not be afraid of the government of the island she eventually visits.

After the axial coding phase, the emergence of one dominant theme or frame for each group of interviewees suggested that selective coding would be an apt analysis technique for this study. For the purpose of this frame analysis, where one dominant theme emerged from the data, I followed the axial coding phase with what Strauss and Corbin (1998) term selective coding. They suggest using this approach when looking for an underlying element to which all other categories can be related. This technique proved to be congruent with the aims of a frame analysis, which is often focused on uncovering a unifying central element that facilitates people's designation of meaning to various phenomena.

The analysis of my interviewee data consisted of coding discrete statements regarding various phenomena (e.g. place attributes), then agglomerating them into themes (e.g. unsafe...), and then exploring whether there were common rationales for their images amongst individual interviewees (e.g. military presence...) and then exploring whether interviewees who held similar feeling/attitudes/images held similar feelings/attitudes/images for other phenomena (e.g. poverty...) and then exploring whether each participant had continuity within their image (e.g. did interviewees share the same meaning of all four phenomena as the other interviewees?). Through this

process I was able to identify the dominant frames both held by the American and Canadian interviewees.

In addition to the dominant frames I also explored the contested meaning held by the participants to explore the dynamic and contested nature of TDI. I categorized contested meanings or contesting images as those that did not fall within the dominant framing of the group to which they belonged.

### *Frame analysis*

At its most basic definition framing is the way in which people understand the world around them. This is accomplished through individuals privileging certain information over others, ignoring or disregarding information, or the interpretation of information in a distinct manner (Nelson, Oxley, & Clawson, 1997, p. 221).

Frame analysis has been applied in image research in the past. For example Santos (2004) used a frame analysis approach to examine how journalists and travel writers framed Portugal in a way that reproduced stereotypical binaries such as traditional/contemporary. As Goffman (1974) notes, the underlying assumption of a frame analysis is that a frame is a necessary property of a text (Creed, Langstraat, & Scully, 2002). As her texts, Santos chose travel writing pertaining to Portugal featured in the major US daily newspapers. In addition to examining the framing of newspaper articles, frame analysis has been used to explore the ways policy is framed to garner support for a particular cause (Creed, Langstraat, & Scully, 2002). The texts utilized for this type of frame analysis are often policy statements and policy documents proffered by various competing organizations that have a direct stake in policy creation. Still others

have used less homogeneous texts to conduct frame analysis. Gray (2004) uses one-on-one interviews with various stakeholders, as well as meeting minutes and newspaper reports as texts for her frame analysis of the conflict surrounding the creation of Voyageur National Park in Minnesota. Frame analysis has been employed on a wide variety of texts in order to explore disparate phenomena, yet the function of this approach has always been to explore how individuals and/or organizations use information to construct meaning.

A frame analysis approach is an ideal method for examining TDI because instead of simply eliciting attributes and feelings about places, as traditional TDI research has done, a frame analysis compels the researcher to explore the missing link between attributes and feelings. That link is meaning. As Creed, Langstraat, and Scully (2002) demonstrate, using techniques such as Gamson and Lasch's (1983) signature matrices to illustrate the unifying elements of texts along with an examination of broader societal discourses can help researchers produce a contextualized understanding of the information that is emphasized or deemphasized to create meaning within a particular frame. This process provides a method for examining the dynamic, socially constructed nature of TDI since it encompasses the elicitation of cognitive and affective images, an examination of the broader societal discourses within which TDI is situated, as well as the silences and contradictions that punctuate the meanings of place. For instance, we could measure the TDI of Cuba that Canadians and Americans have using traditional TDI research methods and conclude that they hold two different images. However we would not be able to understand why this TDI is proffered by the majority within these two

groups nor are we able to ascertain the dynamic and contested nature of these images. By using a frame analysis approach to exploring Canadians' and Americans' image of Cuba I am able to step beyond the confines of traditional TDI research and take advantage of the unique situation of Cuba in order to explore the role of power and politics in the evolution of tourist destination image.

In addition to understanding the meanings ascribed to the phenomena that form TDI, I feel that a frame analysis is a good approach for exploring Anglo North Americans' image of Cuba since it provides a framework to examine the silences and contradiction within a frame. This approach is particularly suited for the examination of a place like Cuba since the discourses that surround the island are extremely polemical. By examining silences and contradictions in the framing of Cuba I can illuminate those powerful actors or interests that are privileged by the dominant framing as well as those who are disadvantaged and marginalized. By also incorporating a discussion of the Anglo American discourses related to Cuba my analysis draws linkages to the broader political and economic forces which shape the image people have of Cuba.

Creed, Langstraat, and Scully (2002) note that a good frame should have a comprehensive unifying logic that allows those who sponsor and adopt it to make sense of the myriad phenomena that they encounter. The format through which this unifying logic is best articulated in framing research is the one proffered by Gamson and Lasch (in Spiro & Yuchtman-Yaar, 1983) and later adopted and modified by Creed, Langstraat, and Scully (2002). They term this medium a Signature Matrix and within it lay a summation of the core tenets which act to produce, reproduce, and proffer a particular frame. Creed,

Langstraat, and Scully's (2002) addition to the matrix is a secondary matrix designed to articulate the assumptions that dominate the frame. I have used the selective coding process to create matrices that illustrate all participants dominant framing of Cuba's image. These matrices demonstrate a unifying logic, or as Santos (2004 p. 123) terms them "organizing narratives" which provides those adopting and sponsoring the dominant frame the ability to make sense of the information about Cuba that they encounter. The primary signature matrix can be treated by the reader as a systematic rendering of a linguistic conceptual model of the signs and signifiers that represent a frame while the secondary signature matrix explicates the implicit ontological assumptions that make the statements plausible.

Creed, Langstraat, and Scully (2002) posit that these matrices serve two significant functions in a frame analysis. First they facilitate the identification of a unifying structure of the frame, allowing the researcher and reader to identify and scrutinize core assumptions and contradictions within the frame. Their second function is to serve as a check against the researcher losing sight of the participant's voice and turning the research into a polemic. By providing the researcher with a matrix as a reflexive tool, it assures that she/he maintains narrative fidelity of the reiteration of the frame that would be recognizable and agreed to by the interviewee. The authors stress that the process of creating narrative fidelity through a signature matrix is not a relativist endorsement of the participant's existing frame but instead a clarification of the unifying structure of the frame that creates an entry point for further critical evaluation of the frame.

## V. Reflexivity

One of the most significant aspects of a constructivist study is reflexivity. Reflexivity, as Flanagan (1981) succinctly notes is “the unique capacity of humans to engage in the self-conscious inquiry into their own condition.” The role that reflexivity plays in this study is two fold. This dual function is labeled by Nightingale and Cromby (1999) as personal reflexivity and epistemological reflexivity. Personal reflexivity is the internal conversation that I have as a researcher that examines how my personal identity and belief system shape me and the research. This compels me as a researcher to concentrate on the ways the research I am conducting impacts me and the participants of my study. Epistemological reflexivity is the acknowledgement that my values, experiences, interests, beliefs political commitments... and social identity” shape the assumptions that I my ontological, epistemological, and methodological inclinations (Nightingale and Cromby, 1999p. 228). These inclinations drive the design of my study, the research questions that I ask, the finding that I seek, along with myriad other choices that I make in the course of producing research. Epistemological reflexivity requires me to question how my research would look if I had chosen different paths of inquiry into the phenomena I was examining (Ryan, 2005). When both of these types of reflexivity are incorporated into a study they contribute to a more comprehensive account of the research by including and important, and often absent, aspect of the study, the researcher.

For qualitative tourism research to move towards social constructivist epistemology, researchers must address the myth of objectivity by recognizing their role, not as a neutral observer but as a participant in the making of knowledge (Denzin and

Lincoln, 1998). This necessitates not only constant reflexivity but also a willingness to allow the voices of those being researched to be heard. It also recognizes that knowledge making is more than just observing one objective reality; it incorporates the reader, the researcher, and the “other” into the process of “knowing” or knowledge making.

The marrying of the researcher and participant’s voice is a key component to creating a trustworthy account of the social construction of destination image. To be unreflexive or to portray the study participant as a passive vessel from which to extract ‘knowledge’ would betray the purpose of using a qualitative approach to investigate Anglo North American images of Cuba. The political nature of Cuba and this methodological approach necessitates reflexivity to assure that I provide a trustworthy, transparent account of the research findings. By providing the reader with pertinent information, through reflexivity of my situatedness, the readers are able to judge for themselves the trustworthiness of the findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Reflexivity throughout the research process will act as a safeguard against this research becoming polemical and infringing on the voice of the participants.

## CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

### **I. Introduction**

For a particular frame to garner support it should present a plausible ontological representation for complex phenomena. To achieve this, as well as maintain adherence to a unifying logic, certain information must be ignored or obscured (Gamson & Lasch, 1983). This is what produces the significant silences and contradictions that are inherent in any framing exercise and which is the purview of any good frame analysis to explore and deconstruct (Creed, Langstraat, & Scully, 2002).

A well conducted frame analysis should incorporate not only those things that are seen within the frame but also those that are ignored or dismissed by the frame holder. I will use Creed, Langstraat, & Scully's (2002) frame analysis technique to situate interviewees' frames in context by exploring the silences and contradictions and issues of domination that are implicit in their statements.

I have chosen to use a frame analysis as an alternative to the traditional approach to researching TDI because it allows me to examine diverse ideas or images and ask what holds these ideas together. I found that the majority of interviewed Canadians and Americans shared similar cognitive images (perceived knowledge about phenomena) of Cuba but had different affective images (feelings about the phenomena). The Canadian interviewees imagined Cuba to be primarily an all-inclusive, budget tourist destination. The Americans I interviewed felt that Cuba was less a destination and more akin to a

“tropical version of Moscow” (Anne, 46-64, Manager, CC<sup>5</sup>). I wanted a method of analysis that provided greater insight into how these differing affective images of Cuba were constructed.

In the following analysis and discussion of the study findings I have used the transcriptions of the semi-structured interviews and field notes as the ‘texts’ that I have examined for unifying central elements (frames). To provide a detailed examination of the framing of Cuba I have separated the analysis into two main sections; American frames and Canadian frames. Within both sections I will first present the signature matrices that I developed to concisely illustrate the unifying elements of the dominant framing by each group of interviewees. The signature matrices are the tables that represent a unifying theme, which binds together a particular frame.

After discussing the signature matrices I will then explore the dominant images and frames that emerged from each set of interviews. I have separated these images into categories that represent the different phenomena that emerged from the interviews. The shared phenomena perceived by both Canadian and American study participants were Cuban people, Cuban place, poverty in Cuba, and Cuban government/security. In addition, a significant phenomenon that arose in the Canadian interviews and not the American ones was a discussion of the US blockade and the American tourists and government. To draw attention to the shortcomings of conventional positivist/postpositivist TDI research as well as better understand the insights that a frame analysis

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<sup>5</sup> The code CC connotes Canadians that have been to Cuba while CNC connotes Canadians who have not been to Cuba.

of TDI can produce, I will examine how I developed the framing of the aforementioned phenomena by the interviewees.

Following my analysis and discussion of the dominant images and framing of Cuba by American and Canadian interviewees I will illustrate the dynamic and contested nature of these images. I will do this by exploring the alternative framing and images that some study participants held of Cuba.

This will lead into an exploration of the silences and contradictions that I found in each group's framing of Cuba. From there I examine these and draw linkages to the broader discourses that inform these frames. Finally I will explore key similarities and differences that highlight the differing frames and discourses that form and inform the Anglo North American TDI of Cuba.

## **II. Analysis of American interview data**

None of the 22 Americans who participated in my study had traveled to Cuba. Two participants believed their grandparents might have traveled there before the Cuban Revolution, however they were not certain of this memory. Most American interviewees demonstrated a mildly ambivalent or negative overarching feeling towards Cuba in general. There were a few study participants who felt either strongly positive or negative about Cuba. All of interviewees expressed a deficiency in their knowledge about the island. They felt that these deficiencies stemmed from not visiting Cuba, nor knowing anyone who had travelled there, and/or not having easy access to marketing material that promoted tourism to the island. In lieu of these image formation sources American study

participants relied predominantly on mainstream news sources to inform them about Cuba. Also, many garnered images of the island from movies, documentaries, television dramas, and books. Most of the people in my study evidenced the idiosyncratic nature of TDI formation. Several utilized knowledge of Cuba garnered from their occupation, dining experiences (such as Cuban themed restaurants and Cuban inspired food), and/or product purchases to inform their TDI.

A small number of study participants (those who held ambivalent or positive feeling towards Cuba) felt that their images were ill-informed and expressed their desire to visit Cuba to see for themselves. These interviewees often felt that Cuba would be an interesting destination because they would like to see how a communist society functions. However, the vast majority of American interviewees had no desire to visit Cuba, often stating that they vacationed in the Caribbean to relax and enjoy a tropical setting and felt that they would not be able to have this same experience in Cuba.

Many participants harbored positive feelings about some Cuban phenomena such as its people and the place yet they felt that the Cuban government would inhibit their enjoyment of these experiences if they were to travel to Cuba. This sentiment punctuates the dominant framing of Cuba that American interviewees evinced. The Cuban government and Fidel/Raul Castro were not only the dominant visuals for American study participants, they also provide an apt metaphor for the dominant American framing of Cuba. In the following section I will discuss this frame using Creed, Langstraat, and Scully's (2002) signature matrices.

*American participants' dominant framing of Cuba*

The signature matrices are meant to concisely articulate the unifying idea elements that bind the images together and facilitate interviewees' sense making of the phenomena of Cuba. They represent the discursive practices of the American interviewees' social construction of Cuba. In other words, these matrices depict the shared meanings of phenomena that American interviewees associate with Cuba. I also used the matrices as a reflexive tool, in order to maintain narrative fidelity with study participants' voices (Creed, Langstraat, & Scully, 2002 p. 41). In other words, I use the matrices to ask the question "if I gave this to the people I interviewed, whose voice I endeavor to present/interpret, would they agree with the depictions in the matrices?" I strongly feel that I would meet little or no resistance from my interview participants if they were presented with this signature matrix.

I developed these matrices from the explicit and implicit statements of the people I interviewed. For example, for the Roots category of the primary matrix I used a variation of the axial coding process discussed earlier to examine statements that explicitly referenced a perceived dictatorship or authoritarian government in Cuba to determine the context within which they were made: did the participant feel that a dictatorship was a good thing? What did they imply should be done about it? Who is responsible for it? I then explored similar statements (nodes) to determine whether similar assumptions were made by other participants. Michael is an illustrative example of an *explicit* statement that I utilized in the construction of the Roots category. In the statement below he identifies the problem as he perceives it; Castro has impoverished

Cuba. Then he provides a solution; agents of change should seize the opportunity provided by the ineptitude of a new Cuban leader in order to revolt against the repression that has brought poverty to the island.

I think Castro has just impoverished the country, as far as I know. I feel some anger towards him and his regime. You know, his brother, who is now the acting president or whatever – even though he had some type of significant role before becoming acting president – is supposedly just a dolt, he's not very bright. Hopefully that will allow people who want Cuba to be open, even if it's still communist, to kind of influence him in that direction. (Michael, 46-64, Psychologist, US)

An illustrative example of an *implicit* statement that I used to inform the construction of the *Roots* category is the following quote from Vicki. While not explicitly asserting a specific problem or solution like Michael, she uses language that embodies rich discursive meanings such as “dictatorship” and “in power” to imply that the current system of government is a significant factor in her desire not to visit Cuba; thereby stating the problem. She then offers her solution to this problem; not visiting Cuba until Castro and/or the dictatorship are gone.

I don't think it's anywhere I'd want to go... I guess just because I've heard bad things about it. You know the dictatorship I don't know if I'd want to go there. Is Castro still in power? It wouldn't be a place that I would want to visit. I don't know if Cuba is tropical... I mean, I guess it's like a warm weather place... I just think it would be somewhere where I would not want to go. I would not compare it to either a Mexico or Jamaica, because I don't think it [Cuba] would be a vacation resort place.” (Vicki, 46-64, Waitress, US)

Table 5.1 presents the unifying idea elements of the dominant framing of Cuba by Americans. Creed, Langstraat, and Scully (2002) explain:

the first five elements – metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, visual images – accentuate a given frame, making it noteworthy, vivid, memorable, and easily communicated. For familiar frames, any of these accentuating idea elements can function much like a soundbite, triggering mental associations and rendering a situation quickly interpretable. (Creed, Langstraat, and Scully, 2002, p. 40)

The catchphrases, depictions, and visual images represent explicit language used by American study participants to describe their perception of phenomena related to Cuba. *Metaphors* are those concepts or constructs that were repeatedly expressed by participants as having a self explanatory quality. These were perceived as an uncontested taken for granted condition of Cuba which needed no evidence or elaboration to prove. These were statements that were often presented as emblematic of the feelings participants had of Cuba. For this study *exemplars* are the person(s) and/or phenomena that represent the focal point(s) for the frame. These are expressed by a frame holder as a physical manifestation which embodies a particular frame.

I garnered the *roots*, *consequences*, and *appeals to principle* through an iterative axial and selective coding process. From this I developed the implicit value assertions that were often made in conjunction with participants' explicit descriptions. Creed, Langstraat, and Scully (2002) note:

The last three – roots, consequences, and appeals to principle – serve as argumentative devices to justify or support the preferred perspective of the speaker or frame sponsor. They offer causal attributions and the bases for judging a situation, event, or position (Creed, Langstraat, and Scully, 2002, p. 40).

The *roots* category depicts an ontological stance of the frame while the *consequences* and *appeals to principle* express causal relationships.

Table 5.1 Primary signature matrix for dominant American framing of Cuba

| <i>Idea Element</i> | <i>Primary Signature Matrix of Dominant American Framing of Cuba</i>                                |
|---------------------|---|
| Metaphors           | Castro, dictator[ship], militaristic, repressed, censored   |
| Exemplars           | Cuban government that limits the individual freedoms of the Cuban people and visitors to the island |
| Catchphrases        | Castro, Cold War, communism, poverty  |
| Depictions          | A draconian force imposed on a helpless Cuban populace  |

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Visual Images        | Soldiers, Castro, lush, tropical landscapes, white sand beaches   |
| Roots                | All people should be allowed basic human rights and the ability to choose their leaders through democratic processes  |
| Consequences         | The poverty, censorship, and repression of human rights in Cuba are a result of not being able to have a succession of government through democratic means. |
| Appeals to Principle | American/Canadian people should advocate a regime change that brings about a 'democratic' government in Cuba  |

The secondary signature matrix (Table 5.2) illustrates the implicit problem that undergirds the political frame of Cuba and at the same time draws our attention to the broader American discourse on Cuba. Creed, Langstraat, and Scully (2002, p. 40) define the idea elements within this matrix as functional categories because they illustrate the “purposive and instrumental goals ...that guide action” of a frame holder. The following passage from their article best describes what each idea element represents.

...frames serve to punctuate, elaborate, and motivate action around a given issue. In other words, those who are sponsoring a frame will *punctuate* the issue by attempting to define what a given problem is and why it is important. The *elaborative* function of a frame serves to attribute responsibility for the issue and to prescribe potential solutions to it. Furthermore, the elaborative function can be broken down into diagnosis and prognosis (Snow et al., 1986). Finally, in social movements, the object of ideational activity is to *motivate* people to take action. (Creed, Langstraat, & Scully, 2002 p. 40) (emphasis added)

In addition to their functions within the frame, questions of punctuation, elaboration, and motivation guide the researcher beyond the boundaries that often confine traditional empirical research on politically-relevant and contentious topics. These questions compel the researcher to examine not only the contradictions within a frame or a frame sponsor (those groups or individuals who identify most completely or benefit directly from a certain frame) but also silences and issues of power that allow the frame to manifest in broader social discourse.

Table 5.2 Secondary signature matrix for dominant American framing of Cuba

| <i>Idea Element</i>   | <i>Secondary Signature Matrix Dominant American Framing of Cuba</i>  |
|---|--|
| Punctuation: What is the problem?   | Illegitimate Cuban government opposes western style concepts of freedom and democracy/Tourists are considered suspects   |
| Elaboration: Who is responsible? What outcomes can be projected with or without intervention? | The Cuban government's adherence to the failed economic regime of communism coupled with its brutal repression of internal dissent is responsible for the situation of the Cuban people/Leads to inefficient use of tourism attributes |
| Motivation: What action should be taken?  | Empathy for the Cuban people and scorn, condemnation, and regime change for the Cuban government/No support for the communist government through tourist dollars.  |

I have developed these signature matrices to summarize the unifying element of the dominant American framing of Cuba. This unifying element allows interviewees to cognitively interpret and make sense of information pertaining to Cuban phenomena.

I utilized a modified axial coding in conjunction with selective coding to construct the primary and secondary signature matrices in this study. In the following section I will discuss the American interviewees' images and framing of a number of phenomena as they relate to Cuba. I encourage the reader to use these matrices to guide them in scrutinizing the following presentation of the images and framing of Cuba.

Since I posit that these matrices represent the dominant frame of Cuba by Americans and that this dominant frame unifies many of the images and perceptions of Cuba, it is important for the reader to use these matrices, as I have done, to evaluate whether they accurately represent the study participants' voices. I ask the reader to actively engage with my analysis and discussion by scrutinizing it with the following questions: Are these matrices congruent with the analysis I produced? Do I provide enough information about the participant voices for you to evaluate whether I am being truthful in my interpretation? Is the dominant frame of Cuba congruent with what you

know about the image of Cuba from an American or a Canadian perspective? Is my interpretation of the contesting narratives equally as truthful? In this way I can engage with you, the reader, to provide a trustworthy exploration of Anglo North American's TDI of Cuba.

### **III. American images and frames of the four phenomena related to Cuba**

In this section I will examine in detail the images that American study participants had of Cuba as well as the ways that the dominant American framing of Cuba shaped these images. To provide a clear format for later comparison, I have separated my analysis into the four themes which emerged in both the American and Canadian interviews. These themes are: Cuban people, Cuban government/security, Cuban place, and Cuban poverty. I produced these themes after transcribing the interviews during my initial open coding phase of analysis (Jennings, 2001; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). They represent broad categories where statements pertaining to similar phenomena were grouped as they emerged from the analysis. I developed the dominant and marginal images through a series of axial coding phases discussed at more length in the Methods chapter of this thesis. Next, I examined these phenomena to find unifying idea elements that would indicate whether there were one or more frames that could be used to explore the meaning and context which undergird the interviewees' images. What I found was that there was one dominant element that influenced all of the American study participants' image of Cuba. As I illustrated in the signature matrices, the Cuban government provided the central element that dominated every American

interview to a greater or lesser extent. This element influenced most interviewees' framing of the phenomena that emerged during my research.

*American participants' images of Cuban people*

The visual images of Cuban people that American interviewees expressed were mostly of a “multicultural people, Spanish people, black people, white people kind of just a mix, like a Caribbean mix (Joe, 25-36, Engineer, US).” Also, Cubans were perceived by these interviewees as speaking Spanish. Several of the American study participants professed their lack of knowledge for what the Cuba people would look like and equated the Cuban people with people in other places in the Caribbean they had traveled to such as Jamaica or Trinidad and Tobago.

Many of the interviewees felt that Cuban people would be friendly and welcoming. There was also a theme within these interviews that Cubans would have large, close knit family units. Some interviewees also imagined Cuban people to be very patriotic. Interestingly, several of the Americans that I interviewed felt that Cuban people did not harbor ill feeling towards Americans. Although these participants felt that the Cuban people were generally friendly and welcoming, they also felt that the Cuban government would have an impact on Cuban people's lives, their interactions with visitors, or their opinion of Americans. This perception was evidenced in the manner in which the majority of American interviewees framed the Cuban people.

*American participants' framing of Cuban people*

A considerable number of American interviewees view Cuba through a frame that is dominated by their perception of the Cuban government. The way in which they

perceive this impacting the people of Cuba is twofold. The binary of warm and welcoming or hostile and inhospitable is the best way to describe the way the Cuban people were framed by most of the American interviewees. While some interviewees who evinced the dominant frame perceived that the Cuban people would be warm and welcoming they felt that Cubans were oppressed by their government. To these interviewees the Cuban people had severely curtailed civil liberties. The Cuban government limited its people's economic and spatial mobility as well as access to information. There was a sense that most Cuban people would not be allowed to talk to Americans and that those people who were allowed to interact with Americans would either censor themselves or be indoctrinated into the communist system.

Secondly, images of happy or smiling Cubans were framed as, to use a poignant term from a Canadian interviewee, "brainwashing" (46-64, Manager, CC) or not knowing how bad their condition really is. These participants felt that to keep their people from recognizing how oppressed they were the Cuban government might block tourists from interacting with all but the most indoctrinated Cubans. The statement below by Rose suggests that as an American, her level of contact with Cuban people would be limited by the Cuban government if she were to visit the island.

Cuba... I think if you had the chance to get to know somebody they would be warm and welcoming. But I'm not sure how much access you would have to the people. But I have a feeling they may be very warm welcoming people... Just because the military has a larger presence there as far as their government being a little bit more repressive and individual freedoms not being allowed. You would probably have a more difficult time getting to know the locals in Cuba because of that. Especially as an American... (Rose, 46-64, Travel Agent, US)

The other perception of Cuban people as it relates to the dominant American frame represents a possible transference of images from Castro and the Cuban government onto the people of Cuba or an extrapolation of affective image (their feelings) onto the entire island, including its people. For instance, Cindy and Carla (Table 5.3) who imagine Cuba to be a dangerous, unfriendly place attribute their images directly and solely to information garnered from mainstream news sources in the US. This is further evidence of what Barbara Carmichael and I documented in our paper on the political economy of Americans' TDI of Cuba (Canally & Carmichael, 2007). In this paper we theorize that the US government, through its blockade of Cuba, severely limits the volume and quality of information pertaining to the island that US residents have access to. This limited access/exposure to information about Cuba leaves Americans with few sources of information that present a perspective of the island different than the negative, confrontational images which dominate US mainstream media (Soderlund, Wagenberg, & Surlin, 1998). This lack of access may explain Joan's rather cartoonish image of the Cuban people:

Culum: "Do you have any other images of the people or the place?"

Joan: [laughing] "A bunch of Castros running around... that's terrible [that I said that]." (36-45, Consultant, US)

Previous research on Americans' opinions of Cuba may help to explain why study participants like Joan had a negative image of Cuban people. In two separate surveys of opinion polling data, Fisk (1999) and Mayer (2001) found that Americans' opinions of Cuba are closely correlated to the news media's portrayal of events on the island, which they conclude, almost entirely focused on actions of the Cuban government.

Table 5.3 provides some of the more remarkable quotes that illustrate the ways in which the dominant framing of Cuba impacts how American study participants imagine the Cuban people.

Table 5.3 American participants' framing of Cuban people

|   |
|---|
| What images? I don't know, people not being friendly. I don't know, people in the streets fighting. It seems like it would be dirty to me. I think I would hear gunshots... (Carla, 36-45, Waitress, US)  |
| I think of Cuba as you know, you find the drug lords... and these criminals... I know I shouldn't have these images... I think I get these images from the magazines and the news shows... they never portray nice things about Cuba... it's always the negative. (Cindy, 26-35, Clerical, US)  |
| Jamaicans are free to travel, Cubans are not and only the very upper echelons of Mexicans will travel (Astrid, 36-45, Barista, US)  |
| ...like they treat you very well [in Mexico]. I just think the way they treat us like when you go there, there is nothing that they cannot do for you. And I just don't think I would get that in Cuba... (Lyn, 46-64, Education, US)   |
| Culum: do you get a positive image or a negative image... what sort of feeling do you get about these places?<br>Rosita: I would say specifically because my image is very much from a law enforcement perspective it's a negative image. Because all of our governmental efforts that I am familiar with are countering the efforts of the people from these countries [Haiti and Cuba] to either traffic people or traffic illegal drugs. (Rosita, 36-35, Military Officer, US) |
| But the people seemed happy there [in Cuba]. I don't know if that's because it's all they know. Or maybe they don't have it as bad as what I am led to believe. [Participant had watched a program on Cuba on television](Seth, 26-35, Farmer, US)  |

*American participants' images of Cuban government/security*

“Castro” was the dominant image that American interviewees had of Cuba. Throughout the interviews Castro (it often did not matter whether it was Fidel or Raul) was constantly invoked to represent the interviewees’ dominant image of Cuba and the Cuban government. Another visual image that the American interviewees had of Cuba was the ubiquitous presence of soldiers on the island. They felt that Cuba was a very guarded and repressed society. Dictatorship, communist, and militant were often ways that American interviewees described their image of the Cuban government. This perception made most of the participants view Cuba in an unfavorable way. Many

participants felt that they would be nervous to travel to Cuba because its government would constantly be watching them. This perception dominated Americans framing of Cuban government/security.

*American participants' framing of Cuban government/security*

A perceived repressive Cuban government dominated many American interviewees' image of security on the island. They often felt like they would not be welcome by the government and that, if they visited the island they would be constantly shadowed by Cuban military personnel which would cause them to censor themselves lest they were put into a "Cuban jail" (Dan, 46-64, Manager, US). Either through their tone of voice or by relating these jails to other situated pejorative constructs such as "Mexican jails" (Dan), a Cuban jail was imbued with a foreboding ominous meaning.

Interviewees, if they were to visit Cuba, felt that they would not be welcomed by the Cuban government. I found that some interviewees like Lyn and Peggy (see quotes in Table 5.4) identified strongly with the US government's discourse on Cuba and felt that because they were Americans they would not be welcome in Cuba due to what they perceived as a hostile attitude that the Cuban government had towards the US. Other interviewees evidenced a less strident attitude towards the Cuban government but still felt that it would hamper their experience on the island. There was the sentiment that they would be treated as interlopers at best, or in a worst case scenario, spies. All of this translated into a general feeling of insecurity and fear regarding Cuba for many of the American interviewees.

For many American interviewees the perceived government repression translated into stability and structure for Cuban society. In particular when Cuba was compared to Haiti, participants felt like they would be safer in Cuba because its authoritarian government provided stability; whereas Haiti's perceived lack of governance made it inhospitable to island visitors.

Table 5.4 American participants' framing of Cuban government/security

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|--|
| ...you know, I guess because of Castro and all the rest of that you think of danger at the same time. So I guess I wouldn't know what to expect... I would be a little leery with communism and all that. Also, a structured society, I guess a controlled society... controlled by the powers that be – Castro or whatever. I don't like that part of Cuba... You know Cuba certainly has not been on my list to go to. And again, it gets into the fear factor. And it's like if I got there, how would I get back... or is someone going to take me to jail [in Cuba]. If I speak up and say the wrong thing. So I think it's lack of freedom or fear of lack of freedom. (Florence, 46-64, Business Owner, US) |
| I mean guarding the airport, guarding the location. I feel a very military presence in and around Cuba. And that of course again is the American media portraying Cuba in that light. You always saw Castro with his guardsmen around him. So of course that's the image I come up with when we talk about Cuba... So I would go into Cuba being very cautious and I would do what I have to do not to wind up in a Cuban jail. (Dan, 46-64, Manager, US)  |
| I feel like the government would keep an eye on me – the Cuban government and the American government would be worried about where I went and who I visited. (Rosita, 36-45, Military Officer, US)   |
| Cuba I just don't feel like I'd be as safe going to. It's just the whole urbanization...I think my heart would be in my throat. I don't think I would feel safe going there at all. (Cindy, 26-35, Clerical, US)   |
| Because Cuba, as much as I don't agree with their government, I think it's pretty stable... I would imagine that Cubans are even more suppressed than Mexicans or Jamaicans... Cuba is just very foreign to me, a very very foreign... (Peggy, 46-64, Farmer, US)  |
| I think I would be nervous. I think more so because of the negative connotations that I hear on the news about Cuba. Their leader, and that whole... I guess it's so anti-... their government seems to me to be so anti-American. So that in itself would just get me upset. Like that, I would be concerned. (Lyn , 46-64, Education, US)  |

*American participants' images of Cuban place*

Due to its location in the Caribbean, most of the American study participants felt that Cuba would possess qualities similar to those of tourist destinations they had previously visited in the region. They perceived Cuba to have warm, sandy beaches, clear ocean water, palm trees, lush vegetation, and tourist resorts. They also had visual

images of old cars and old colonial architecture both in advanced stages of disrepair. Once again, the Cuban government impacted the way that American interviewees framed these images.

*American participants' framing of Cuban place*

Most American interviewees were dubious of who would visit Cuba and the quality of experience a tourist should expect there. Some felt that, as a result of the Cuban government controlling the tourism sector in the same fashion they were perceived to control all other sectors of the Cuban society, the resorts would be bleak. Others felt that the resorts would be nice but the rest of the island would be uninviting. While the possible presence of resorts was acknowledged, the most dominant framing of Cuban place was that it was stuck in time due to the Cuban Revolution. For some interviewees the Cuban Revolution had seemingly sealed Cuba in a vacuum since the 1950s except now Cuba was not as exciting as it was before the Revolution. Some people, possibly influenced by popular culture, (evidenced below by Michael and Astrid's quotes) desired to travel to a Cuba of the 1920s 30s and 40s when it was a popular hedonistic getaway for Americans living on the East Coast of the US (Schwartz, 1997). These desires seemed to be inspired by American popular culture media like novels and movies. Movies such as The Mambo Kings, The Godfather, and Dirty Dancing: Havana Nights were cited by some study participants as informing this pre-Revolution nostalgic image of Cuba.

An additional image that related to the political impact on place was the perceived omnipresence of Cuban military. As Michael notes "...they still have armed guards on the streets down there, I'm assuming." Lyn also presents an illustration of this framing

when she imagines Cuba to have “military helicopters flying down the beach.” This image exemplifies the way in which someone can perceive two seemingly contradictory phenomena such as a beach, normally a signifier of a relaxing holiday, and a military helicopter, often a signifier of a militaristic society, in order to produce a frame that is able to make sense of the two seemingly contradictory phenomena.

Table 5.5 American participants' framing of Cuban place

|  |
|--|
| I would've loved to have gone to Cuba a long time ago, but not right now. (Astrid, 36-45, Barista, US)   |
| When I say “Old Cuba”, I juxtapose that with Fidel Castro’s takeover in 59, 60, 61...you know there are these images in my head of... I read this book called the Mambo Kings...and a lot of it took place in Cuba prior to the revolution...I read this book 15 years ago and I really enjoyed it and it just gave this picture of Cuba as somewhat of a Las Vegas or a Reno, Nevada quality to Havana... (Michael, 46-64, Psychologist, US)  |
| Well, I think of Jamaica and Cuba... like a lot of military helicopters flying down the beach. Not as free, maybe or comfortable I would be a little bit more uptight in those places. But I would feel better going to Jamaica than I would Cuba. (Lyn, 46-64, Education, US)   |
| ...but it would be more of an adventure to travel to Cuba to see what it's like to live in the 50s. (Dirk, 46-64, Sales, US)   |
| ...once I clear that [heavy security in the airport] I’m going to see sights and sounds very similar to Jamaica. So the landscape is going to be very tropical with the palm trees and the lush rich vegetation. Going to be near the ocean and we’re good to go there. Beyond that, I don’t know much about their infrastructure as far as getting beyond the airport whether they are a true metropolis, whether they’re a straw market? I’ll be honest with you. I don’t know that much about Cuba. (Dan, 46-64, Manager, US) |
| ...she said it was very – you know, not old – but you get the idea like when you're in old San Juan. The older buildings. A lot of stuff isn't really maintained. She said the hotels are nice... you know, even when I went to Italy, the four-star hotels were not as nice as the four star hotels in the United States. It was old Venice and you know, the hotels are different, and she said that's what Cuba was like. (Peggy, 46-64, Farmer, US)  |
| I feel, I mean tropical, beachy, rainforest, sugar plantations to me that would speak more to the Caribbean... I would expect to see soldiers in uniform... peeling paint off of the buildings because every picture I've ever seen of Cuba... they just have a really bad problem with paint. (Rose, 46-64, Travel Agent, US)   |
| I would guess that there are some similarities [between Bahamas and the Virgin Islands and Cuba] just in terms of the coastal geography of it... beaches and so forth. What I don't know about Cuba is the degree to what the resorts are, or what they look like or anything like that. (Ryan, 26-35, Researcher, US)   |
| I've never seen pictures of beaches on Cuba or heard of anybody going there... all you hear about Cuba is cigars and Fidel Castro. (Carla, 36-45, Waitress, US)  |

*American participants' images of Cuban poverty*

There was an overwhelming feeling that Cuba is a poverty-stricken country. Almost every American study participant felt that poverty manifested itself on the island in one form or another. Most of the images of Cuban poverty discussed by American interviewees were those of poor people and poor areas yet there were very few visual images expressed. Amongst these study participants, Michael was one of only a few interviewees that elaborated on his image of Cuban poverty: "I would see some extreme poverty in terms of how people are dressed and what they are living on." More often the statements made by American interviewees were similar to this quote by Rose (46-64, Travel Agent, US): "...to me Cuba and Haiti would probably be more similar, because in my mind they're just poor."

*American participants' framing of Cuban poverty*

Often, issues of poverty that study participants envisioned in Cuba were seen as a result of the corrupt or ideologically-driven Cuban government's adherence to a failed economic system. Also, as with the government/security phenomenon, repression and censorship kept the poor people in Cuba from rebelling.

While interviewees made vague allusions to images of affluent resort areas, they often juxtaposed them with images of impoverished Cuban society. The reason for this perceived poverty often rested with the repressive Cuban government which somehow misappropriates the resources of the island that rightfully belong to all Cuban people. Several American interviewees felt that these resources were channeled to a few wealthy government officials. Michael, (46-64, Psychologist, US) an American interviewee that

exemplifies this dominant framing of Cuba succinctly demonstrates this image: “I think I would see buildings in disrepair. I think I would see some very very wealthy homes of people who belong to the Revolutionary party.” Another illustrative quote that summarizes how poverty was often associated with the Cuban government is produced by Florence. In her interview she imagined Jamaica to be a desirable tourist destination and contrasted her image of Jamaica with Cuba. She associated the perceived poverty of Cuba with the Cuban government, in particular Castro.

You just hear all kinds of things about Castro. Now I would imagine that Cuba would be very similar to Jamaica in its landscape, and its culture. But again, I think it would be impoverished... (Florence, 46-64, Business Owner, US)

The Cuban people were perceived to have limited influence on government policy and this somehow contributed to the high level of perceived poverty on the island. Another image that manifested itself in interviewees responses was that those in the upper echelon of the autocratic Cuban government were prospering while the mass of the Cuban populous was “expected to live on” (Seth, 26-35, Farmer, US) a small allowance given by the government. These study participants often made an implicit link suggesting that Cuba’s authoritarian regime would utilize its omnipresent military apparatus to force Cuban people to accept their poverty.

Table 5.6 American participants' framing of Cuban poverty

|   |
|---|
| My ideas of Cuba, is that it's a little backwards more maybe Costa Rica, that type of, not Third World, but not fully advanced. (Clark, 46-64, Tradesperson, US)  |
| I guess images of Cuba, what comes to my mind is communism – images of poverty – you know, people driving around in old Soviet busses. (Joe, 26-35, Engineer, US)   |
| Whereas to me Cuba and Haiti would probably be more similar, because in my mind they're just poor. And their people are just not doing that well. As far as having a say. It's more of a political thing. By political I mean repressive governments, not having a lot of freedoms, and therefore I just feel that that's why people are really poor... I mean definitely Third World. The difference between Haiti and Cuba is |

that Cuba has a very good medical system and leaps and bounds ahead as far as Naturopathy and stuff like that. (Rose, 46-64, Travel Agent, US)

I mean in the Dominican there was huts that they lived in. I don't know how they lived there. Obviously, it never gets cold there... I think Cuba would be a little more developed than that... Some of the downtrodden areas I guess for what people are expected to live on per day in Cuba. I don't have a real feeling for if there is tourist areas totally separate from that. If there's a high-rise right here and poverty there (Seth, 26-35, Farmer, US)

#### **IV. Contesting the dominant American frame**

The American interviewees' images of Cuba were generally influenced by the perception that a totalitarian dictatorship oppressed the Cuban population and enriched itself from the islands resources. This image of Cuba framed, to a considerable degree, the way most American interviewees perceived phenomena related to Cuba. This framing however was not holistic, static, or unchallenged. Several contestations of this dominant frame were evidenced amongst most, if not all, interviewees. While these contestations emerged in myriad and subtle ways too numerous to discuss in this paper, I will explore those idea elements shared by more than one participant or were remarkable for the unique way in which they contrast the dominant framing of Cuba.

##### *Contestation of the US government discourse on Cuba*

I found a strong similarity between the US government discourse on Cuba and interviewees' framing of the island. Much of the adversarial stance of the US government's policy and rhetoric was reflected in the way American interviewees' frame the phenomena of Cuba. While most of these study participants adopted language and concepts congruent with the US government's discourse on Cuba, many challenged their government's diplomatic stance towards the island.

It was generally perceived amongst American study participants that the situation in Cuba needs to be changed to a more democratic and prosperous society and it is incumbent upon the US government to facilitate this change. Some participants felt that the US government was taking an incorrect or inappropriate approach to encouraging this change. Some study participants like Zeke felt that the blockade was the wrong tool to accomplish the change that they perceived was needed in Cuba. These participants thought that opening relations with Cuba would encourage or force economic reform on the island.

I think it's just kind of a remnant of politics that – it's 50 years old. I think that at this point in time with Castro out of the picture, or pretty much out of the picture, I think that there is a lot more that this country [the United States] could do to change the situation over there; and maybe a different method than we have tried before. You know, maybe it's time to engage with them and maybe start thinking about lifting the ban. And I think maybe with something like that, some kind of positive step. You would see some kind of positive change down there. At this point, obviously communism's kind of an archaic system and it's not lost on anybody. It's time our policies changed. (Zeke, 46-64, Artisan, US)

Also, much of the contestation within this framing of Cuba focused on a perceived hypocrisy of the US government's foreign policy. While not refuting the dominant US discourse on Cuba, several American study participants felt that the preferential treatment towards China (another perceived communist country with poor human right practices) over Cuba represented a contradiction in the US policy towards the island. These interviewees noted similarities between Cuba and China both in terms of their communist economic regimes and their perceived poor human rights records. While Ryan (26-35, Researcher, US) felt that the US government's policies towards Cuba

were “laughably inconsistent”, Dirk’s quote vividly summarizes the sentiments of the few people who perceived this hypocritical diplomatic stance:

I am sympathetic to the Cubans. ... I think that we should've lifted the embargo many years ago, decades ago and brought Cuba into the fold. I mean, if we are able to offer/extend most favored nation status to the Chinese, who are notorious for executing people and harvesting their organs, the least we could do is open up trade between Cuba and the US. Especially since we are such close neighbors. I think the embargo is a great injustice to all the people of Cuba and that it has all been for political purposes. Cuba has defiantly, more or less, gone on its own; even when the Soviet Union collapsed. So, I admire their spunk. (Dirk, 46-64, Sales, US)

Moreover, the perception that Cubans have a universal healthcare system for all citizens provided fodder for contesting the dominant framing of Cuba. Several people cited the documentary Sicko by film maker Michael Moore as a source of information about Cuba and its healthcare system. For one participant, Florence (46-64, Business Owner, US), this was set within the dominant American framing of Cuba as a measure taken by the Cuban government to alleviate popular discontent on the island but for others, like Ed, it evidenced a reframing of the Cuban government (Table 5.7).

Table 5.7 Contesting images: healthcare in Cuba

|   |
|---|
| <p>...but then, on the other side you read about how well they're doing with healthcare, and how modern their facilities are with the latest and greatest with technology and all the rest of that. And it's like I guess that's what sort of works for that particular society (Florence, 46-64, Business Owner, US)”</p> <p>So now you tell me... this horrible vicious, amoral, godless society and Cuba apparently gives the best medical care they can afford to their people. The other thing that amazed me is that when Katrina hit New Orleans and there was a severe lack of medical personnel Cuba offered to send 3000 doctors and 4000 nurses because they said "If you can't get there, we can". That tells me that perhaps the Kafka type society that we have been led to believe exists there [in Cuba]. I don't think so. (Ed, 46-64, Semi-Retired, US)</p> |
|---|

There were also a few American study participants who challenged the hegemony of the US government’s discourse on Cuba. These participants were skeptical of the US government’s and US news media’s portrayal of Cuba and more broadly about

international events. These interviewees felt that the information they receive from sources within the US were often one sided and have a political agenda. Those interviewees who contested the US government's discourse on Cuba purport to utilize international media to inform themselves about world events yet very few stated that they seek out news about Cuba in these sources.

I don't know enough about Cuba, to say it's definitely more positive than I hear. My guess or my feeling is that it's much like other places... even our country, extreme wealth versus extreme poverty – more poverty than wealth actually from a demographic standpoint, in terms of sheer numbers of people... [But] I get my information about the embargo and the politics relating to Cuba from mainstream news sources, cable news and so forth. But again, those are limited. Most of our news these days only gives 30 second sound bites... [so] I just don't know. I just don't hear nearly enough about Cuba as we do other places. (Ryan, 26-35, Researcher, US)

Zeke indicated that his image may be hampered by his inability to travel to the island. He stated that he uses travel to educate himself about places. In this way he can contextualize the information that he receives from US news sources:

Culum: "How do you go about counteracting that [the bias that he perceived in US media]?"

Zeke: "I travel a lot, so it is more experience, I think. You just kind of learn from experience. You get a certain perspective on things... the more you travel, the more you learn that this country and the rest of the world are on two different planes. So I take into consideration that there is the rest of the world and the American plane – there's definitely a disconnect." (Zeke, 46-64, Artisan, US)

These significant contesting interpretations of Cuba were evidenced by a few of the Americans I interviewed and they indicate that the US discourse on Cuba is not hegemonic. While these people's contesting frames of Cuba mark the boundaries of the dominant framing of Cuba, I found several significant silences and contradictions that were not acknowledged by any of the participants in this study. Exploring these aspects

of the dominant framing of Cuba can help us better understand the power and politics inherent in the formation of the TDI of Cuba.

#### **V. American interviewees' silences and frame contradictions**

The dominant frame of Cuba evidenced by most of the Americans that I interviewed was contested in various ways indicating the idiosyncratic nature of the social construction of TDI. Although these contestations signified the dynamic nature of Cuba's image and punctuated the boundaries of the dominant frame, I found several significant silences and contradictions within the interviews I conducted. I explored these silences and contradictions within the texts of the study participants' interviews, as well as field notes taken during the interview. I illustrate these silences and contradictions using information garnered from a literature review and research relating to the US government's blockade of Cuba. I explored academic journals, policy documents, and news sources to produce a rubric of salient issues relating to the impact the US blockade of Cuba has had on both Americans and Cubans. This was then used to determine how interviewees addressed the phenomena relating to Cuba. For instance, a theme in the literature that I reviewed related to the impact that the blockade has had on residents of Cuba. I then explored this material to the interview data for references to the impact of the blockade on Cubans.

Because the blockade of Cuba inhibits certain sources of information about the island from being readily accessible to most Americans, exploring silences is particularly appropriate for my study of the TDI of Cuba. Since the US government discourse on

Cuba appeared to inform and dominate most of the American study participants framing of Cuba, I feel it is important to explore the information that has been omitted or deemphasized in the discourse and framing of Cuba. By doing this I hope to provide a account of the dominant framing of Cuba by the American participants I interviewed as well as illustrate the political nature of the formation of Cuba's tourists destination image.

I make no claim that this portion of the analysis is either absolute or reflective of a 'reality' in or of Cuba. This section is meant to illustrate those elements that may be hiding behind the wall or just off to the side of the window frame through which American study participants view Cuba.

*Silences and contradictions within the dominant American framing of Cuba*

Generally, study participants who evidenced the dominant framing of Cuba had an image of Cuba as a poor, third world country. As illustrated by some of the above interview excerpts, the poverty of Cuba was often attributed to Castro's (or the communist Cuban government's) obstinate adherence to the failed communistic mode of resource distribution. This poses two fundamental contradictions with the broader political context of Cuba. First, it ignores the impact of the nearly 50 year US economic blockade on the Cuban economy. While the scale and scope of the negative impacts of the US government's blockade are an area of scholarly, journalistic, and political debate, the belief that it has and continues to have a significant deleterious effect on the economy of Cuba is widely agreed upon (Barry, 2000; Morgan & Bapat, 2003).

From participants' framing, the omission of the widely held belief that the US government's economic blockade impacts the island of Cuba draws our attention to the

US government discourse on Cuba. Using a political economy approach to exploring TDI formation Barbara Carmichael and I detail the silences in the US government's discourse regarding Cuba (Canally & Carmichael, 2007). Instead of acknowledging the effectiveness of its own blockade, the US government instead relies on a narrative that blames the Cuban government for forcing them to impose economic sanctions while simultaneously blaming communism for the perceived poverty on the island (Canally & Carmichael, 2007).

This fits well with another aspect of the dominant American framing of Cuba. The American participants believe that the onus is on Cuba to open up and accept American tourists. Most, but surprisingly not all, of the participants knew that the US blockade is a law imposed by the US government that makes it virtually illegal to travel to Cuba. American study participants used terms to suggest it was Cuba's responsibility to allow Americans access to the island. Language commonly used in the interviews like "I want it to open up. I can't wait for Cuba to open up" (Michael 46-64, Psychologist, US) or "In Cuba, I would feel like I wasn't very welcome. Like it was like 'alright, we'll let you in'. I would rather have them open the doors and say "come on in, everybody" (Peggy, 46-64, Farmer, US). However, the implication that the onus is on Cuba to "open up" overlooks the US government's role in restricting the access of Americans to Cuba.

The second contradiction of the economic aspect of the Americans' dominant frame of Cuba was that American study participants often attributed the poverty within Cuba to communism, however they were at a loss to attribute the poverty in destinations they had visited such as the Dominican Republic or Jamaica to a capitalist economic

system. In addition, the colonial past of these countries was often mentioned as a virtue (Schwartz, 1997). However, in contrast to the perception of poverty in other Caribbean countries, Cuba's economic misfortune is perceived to be the result of a political leader whose ideology and corruption has bankrupted the island.

Finally, the contradiction within the political frame that is most striking, but least acknowledged amongst interview participants was the perception of political repression and censorship. This image is pervasive in the American interviewees' framing of Cuba yet it is never acknowledged that their own government is possibly violating their constitutional right to travel (Nichols, 1998) and, as a corollary, significantly censoring the amount and types of information that they have access to (Canally & Carmichael, 2007; Nichols, 1998; Morgan, 1994). Again, this is not to say that people were not skeptical or cynical about the US government, they were, but in the unifying logic of American interviewees' dominant frame of Cuba, empathetic criticism or reflection by these study participants of US government modes of repression was negligible.

The exploration of the silences and contradictions within the dominant framing of Cuba mark a contrast to how TDI has been researched in the past. Where traditional positivist/postpositivist TDI research focuses on the images tourists express about a place, the frame analysis approach encourages an examination of the images the tourists do not articulate. This allows for the contextualization and politicization of tourists' images. It is not only examining what was not said, but explaining why what was not said is important that is the significant contribution of examining the silences and contradictions with tourists framing of a place.

*Conclusion of American interviewee data analysis* As I have demonstrated above, the dominant frame that pervades American study participants' image of Cuba is shaped by their image of the Cuban government's influence on the island. The influence of the perceived repressive Cuban government, in particular Fidel/Raul Castro, manifest in most images of Cuba. For instance, when study participants discussed the poverty in Cuba they often felt that it resulted from the government's adherence to communism. Or when they discussed Cuban people they felt that they would be friendly but censored and distanced for fear of government reprisal. This framing produced significant silences and contradictions, which mostly pertained to the US government's blockade of the island. Though participants were vocal in their perception of Cuban government's influence on the Cuban people, they were often silent on the impact of their own government on them as potential tourists to Cuba.

There were, however, alternatives to this dominant framing presented by some study participants. These alternative frames often contested the dominant American discourse on Cuba. Several participants felt that the US government's blockade of Cuba was an incorrect political strategy for engaging Cuba. There was also a significant distrust of the US government's rhetoric on Cuba. Some participants felt that the statements made by the US government were proffered as part of a political agenda.

The examination of the images, framings, and silences and contractions of American study participants might appear unnecessarily complex. This complexity is however necessary to portray a static representation of the dynamic construct of TDI. Though Americans' image of Cuba may appear to be an exceptional case where politics

influences TDI, I will now analyze and discuss the data collected from 20 Canadian residents to illustrate, in part, that politics is inherent in the formation of all tourist destination images.

## **VI. Analysis of Canadian interview data**

Most of the Canadians that I interviewed had a positive feeling about Cuba. They felt that they would go to Cuba to visit an all-inclusive resort sun, sand, and sea destination. These participants' main motivation for travelling to Cuba was to be in a warm relaxing environment. Some of the most significant images that Canadian interviewees had of Cuba were of beaches, white sand, and tropical settings.

Of the 20 Canadians that I interviewed 13 had been to Cuba yet all of them knew someone who had vacationed on the island. Amongst those interviewees who had not traveled to Cuba, all but three indicated that they would vacation there if the opportunity presented itself. The majority of study participants who visited Cuba relied on word-of-mouth information to inform their pre-visit image of the island. Word of mouth information was also the most significant source of information about Cuba for those who had not visited the island. Canadian study participants also used other information sources such as the internet, travel agents, guide books, school, restaurants, and brochures to inform their image of Cuba. Several participants acknowledged obtaining information about Cuba through various news media sources. Although some participants recalled images of Fidel Castro and the Cuban government in these sources, most of them conveyed to me that the information most often obtained through news media was related

to extreme weather such as hurricanes. This was possibly due to Hurricane Ike, a storm that hit Cuba shortly before many of these interviews took place. The participants who used marketing material to inform their image of Cuba felt that it presented a reasonably accurate image of the resorts and the island.

Although many Canadian interviewees that had been to Cuba felt their pre-trip images were accurate, several did not expect to witness what they perceived as significant levels of poverty in Cuba. They expressed negative feelings about the perceived poverty on the island and felt that knowing that poverty existed outside of their resorts slightly diminished the enjoyment of their vacation. These interviewees' image of Cuba changed little after their trip to the island but there were a couple of cases where interviewees' image and framing of the island shifted significantly. I will discuss these cases later in this analysis.

Cognitive and affective images were shared by most of the Canadians that I interviewed for this study. While it is important to analyze the specific information sources and images they inform, it is also crucial to explore how the broader discourses inform TDI. I will use the same method employed to examine Americans' TDI of Cuba, to explore how Canadians framed Cuba.

#### *Canadian participants' dominant framing of Cuba*

As with the dominant American framing of Cuba, Table 5.8 represents the unifying central element which impacted the framing of Cuba by Canadian study participants. The same technique used to develop the signature matrices for the dominant American framing of Cuba was used to explore the way Canadian interviewees framed

their images of Cuba. The metaphors, catchphrases, and visual images represent explicit language used by Canadian participants to describe their perception of phenomena related to Cuba. I garnered the exemplars, depictions, roots, consequences, and appeals to principle from the implicit value assertions that were often made in conjunction with these explicit descriptions.

The dominant theme around which most Canadians framed Cuba was mass tourism. Interviewees who evidenced this particular framing of Cuba perceived it as an all-inclusive Caribbean tourist destination above all else. This framing manifested in the way interviewees, both previous visitors and non-visitors, perceived the various phenomena associated with the island.

Table 5.8 Primary signature matrix for dominant Canadian framing of Cuba

| <i>Idea Element</i>  | <i>Primary Signature Matrix of Dominant Canadian Framing of Cuba</i>  |
|----------------------|---|
| Metaphors            | Tropical paradise; Garden of Eden; playground   |
| Exemplars            | Friendly, servile Cuban hosts; pastoral landscapes, all-inclusive resorts   |
| Catchphrases         | Grateful, smiling, safe, relaxing, friendly, great service, warm, colonial  |
| Depictions           | Smiling Cuban hosts fulfilling the wishes of tourists in a warm, sunny, exotic but comfortable atmosphere   |
| Visual Images        | Sun drenched white sandy beaches; grateful, smiling Cuban people; colonial architecture; old cars   |
| Roots                | Cuba's worth is determined by its value in a global economy which is its ability to provide relatively affordable all-inclusive tropical resort vacations to Anglo North Americans; Cuba's most valuable commodity is its place/culture |
| Consequences         | Cuba's civil society/government should adapt to better suit the needs of visitors to the island   |
| Appeals to Principle | Tourism brings wealth and prosperity to Cuba so the better Cuba fulfills its role as a destination the less its people will suffer from poverty   |

The secondary signature matrix (Table 5.9) illustrates the implicit problem that undergirds the dominant Canadian framing of Cuba and at the same time draws our attention to the broader postcolonial discourse of Cuba. As with the American signature matrix, questions of punctuation, elaboration, and motivation guide the researcher beyond

the boundaries that often confine traditional empirical research on politically relevant and contentious topics. These questions compel the researcher to examine not only the contradictions within a frame or a frame sponsor but also silences and issues of power that allow the frame to manifest in broader social discourse.

Table 5.9 Secondary signature matrix for dominant Canadian framing of Cuba

| <i>Idea Element</i>   | <i>Secondary Signature Matrix Dominant Canadian Framing of Cuba</i>   |
|---|---|
| Punctuation: What is the problem?   | Cuba's tourist industry lacks the savvy and amenities of other Caribbean destinations   |
| Elaboration: Who is responsible? What outcomes can be projected with or without intervention? | The Cuban government and the US government; The blockade of Cuba (regardless of which government is responsible for its continued imposition) hinders Cuba's tourist industry from providing adequate tourism amenities to tourists |
| Motivation: What action should be taken?  | Conflicted: if blockade is removed Cuba can provide better amenities but if it continues Cuba retains its charm and sense of exclusivity  |

As I discussed earlier in this chapter, we can look at these matrices as the “frame of the house” which most of the Canadians interviewed used to structure their images of Cuba (Gamson & Lasch, 1983). For these interviewees, the wooden planks that form the skeleton of the house frame of Cuba are the discursive practices that produce the Western practices of mass tourism.

Using Gamson and Lasch's (1983) “window frame” metaphor I explore how information and phenomena related to Cuba is privileged or dismissed in building interviewees' image of Cuba. For Canadian interviewees imagining Cuba through this dominant “window frame”, various non-tourism related phenomenon related to Cuba are ignored or marginalized. Unless a perceived Cuban phenomena was directly relevant to tourism or the tourist it is not deemed important. For example, Trish (18-25, Healthcare,

CC) used the news media to inform her regarding how the weather in Cuba would impact a potential vacation to the island.

You hear it on the news and stuff, but I don't even know where. I know it's down there... but I don't know exactly where Cuba is in relation to Jamaica... did the hurricane hit all of the areas, I am not really sure. I would have to look into that and I would look into that more if I was going [to Cuba]. (Trish)

This is not to suggest that every Canadian study participant is only concerned with the all-inclusive resort function of Cuba. I use this example to illustrate how the window frame metaphor is applied to the receipt and processing of information about Cuba. Canadian participants were more apt to use tourism to frame phenomena related to Cuba. The following is a detailed exploration of how this frame shaped the images that Canadian study participants had of Cuba.

Again, it is important for the reader to use these matrices to actively engage with my analysis and discussion by scrutinizing it with the following questions: Are these matrices congruent with the analysis produced? Do I provide enough information about the participant voices for you to evaluate whether I am being trustworthy in my interpretation? Is the dominant frame of Cuba congruent with what you know about the image of Cuba from an American or a Canadian perspective? Is my interpretation of the contesting images trustworthy?

## **VII. Canadian images and frames of the four phenomena related to Cuba**

I employed the same methods to analyze Canadian interview data as I did to explore American interview data presented in the previous section. From my analysis of the Canadian interview transcripts and field notes I found one theme which dominated

Canadian study participants' image of Cuba. Cuba's role as a tourist destination framed many Canadians' image of the island. They perceived Cuba as a destination first and foremost and in particular one that almost exclusively catered to tourists traveling to inexpensive all-inclusive resorts. Cuba's perceived function as all-inclusive resort destination figured prominently into the way many of the Canadian interviewees framed phenomena related to Cuba. For these interviewees Cuba's government was acknowledged but it was often perceived as a backdrop to a tourist experience of the island. Below I present my analysis of the dominant Canadian images and framing of Cuba by participants in my study.

*Canadian participants' images of Cuban people*

None of the Canadians that I interviewed expressed any image of Cuban people's physical appearance. Cuban people were identified through the actions that they were performing such as smiling, dancing, singing, and serving. Also many of the study participants imagined that the Cuban people were poor but knew how to "enjoy life" or "live life" at a slower pace than people in Anglo North America. They felt that Cubans took time performing tasks and were not rushed by work or any of the trappings that an Anglo North American lifestyle entails.

Study participants also had the impression that Cuban people were musically inclined and enjoyed singing and dancing. Participants who had not traveled to Cuba commented that they might experience local musicians playing Cuban music in the resorts. Others, like Roger (46-64, Clerical, CC) who had traveled to Cuba, felt that the music pervaded the Cuban culture:

I would hear a lot of music. Like everybody in Cuba dances and sings... music everywhere. So you hear that it as soon as you landed to the time you left unless you are in a quiet spot. (Roger)

The Cuban people were mostly described using adjectives such as happy, content, grateful, generous, giving, welcoming, nice, well mannered, and friendly. Only one study participant, Yuri (36-45, Planner, CC), had a feeling that the Cuban people were resentful towards him as a tourist when he went into what he perceived as a local bar. However his overall image of Cuban people was positive.

*Canadian participants' framing of Cuban people*

Interviewees who evidenced the dominant framing of Cuba perceived the Cuban people as poor but contented (Table 5.10). Cuban people were often perceived as friendly, smiling, welcoming, servile, and genuine hosts. Canadian interviewees felt there was no animosity or “jadedness” (46-64, Clerical, CC) towards tourists. There was also an overwhelming sense that Cubans were eager to please their foreign guests and show off their country and way of life.

In addition to their penchant for hospitality, Cubans were perceived as knowing how to “enjoy life”. Interviewees felt that Cubans had a more relaxed attitude and did things at a slower pace than in Anglo North American culture and even other resort destinations that had a larger tourism industry.

Many of the Canadians that I interviewed felt that the Cuban people had a slower pace of life because of Cuba’s communist economic system. They expressed that the lack of a “consumer culture” (Anne, 46-64, Manager, CC) made Cubans less focused on money. This, to them, produced a feeling that Cuba was less “hustlier and bustlier”

(Anne) than other Caribbean tourist destinations like Mexico, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic. The lack of commercialism in Cuba was perceived as a virtue because it fostered an atmosphere where visitors to the island could relax without being solicited by merchants. The perception that Cuban people were less motivated by the attainment of commercial goods also fostered the feeling amongst interviewees that had previously visited Cuba that Cubans were grateful, welcoming, and genuinely friendly to tourists and that they would “give you the shirt off their backs” (Shelly, 26-35, Healthcare, CC).

Table 5.10 Canadian participants' framing of Cuban people

|  |
|--|
| I love Cubans. They are amazing people, they are so happy they are wonderful they are grateful people (Carol, 35-46, Education, CC)  |
| So I just got the impression that these people let us into their home and they didn't speak very good English but they were always very happy and they were like “thank you thank you for coming”. They were just smiling and showing us through the sugarcane process. (Erin, 18-25, Undergrad Student, CC)   |
| I feel the people who travel to Cuba, their common comment is that people there seem very happy, okay...my impression and what I've been told from other people is that most people are quite content living in Cuba (Helen, 26-35, Education, CNC)  |
| ...but the people were there, and they wanted you to come and they wanted you to share their country with them. So that was the perception I had and when we went to Cuba I found that. So, my image didn't change very much from what I had thought it was like. (Mary, 46-64, Clerical, CC)  |
| As for the hospitality in Cuba the people you did ask for help, they were amazing. We asked two people to take us to Havana instead of taking the bus tour and they were amazing they were very well mannered and nice and they would give you the shirt off their backs. (Shelly, 26-35, Healthcare, CC)  |
| Cubans are very poor but they know how to enjoy life. I have seen people on the resorts, when I was staying in the resort's – like workers – they would buy their sandwich for lunch, and their beer for lunch. They go to work and then at lunch time, they take an hour or a two-hour break. They have their lunch, their sandwich, they take a rest and then go back to work... they enjoy their life even though they're poor they take time to enjoy life. They take a couple hours off for lunch, sandwich, beer, relax but in Canada you don't see that. (Tariq, 26-35, Engineer, CC) |
| Cuba to me, my impression, very friendly, very open people that just seem to be carrying on like they always had. There is no jadedness... (Roger, 46-64, Clerical, CC)  |
| Their little outfits, their little skirts and tiny tops and sometimes spandex and actually both male and females are very talented, very flexible and I think the dancing is just very much part of their culture and they learn it at a very young age, the men and the women. (Julie, 26-35, Healthcare, CC)   |

*Canadian participants' images of Cuban government/security*

Similar to the dominant American framing of Cuba those who evidenced the dominant Canadian frame felt that the Cuban government would be heavily involved with the day to day activities of both the Cuban people and visitors to the island. The visual image expressed by interviewees was the omnipresence of police, soldiers, and other agents of the Cuban government. Many of the interviewees that had been to Cuba recounted their images of soldiers on their resorts, following their tour busses from site to site, and seeing the “police everywhere”. Those who had not been to Cuba felt that there would be a significant government presence around the resort areas but their visual images were less specific than those who had visited.

Cuban government buildings and historical markers were perceived as a significant tourist attraction for previous tourists and non tourists to the island. Many people expressed images of the government buildings and significant historical sites of the Cuban Revolution. These sites were often perceived as stops on an organized sightseeing tour and were not of special points of interest to any particular interviewee. A few participants who had not previously visited Cuba expressed curiosity about the communist Cuban government although they were not interested in specific government sites as much as how its economic regime influenced the island (Table 5.11).

*Canadian participants' framing of Cuban government/security*

The highly visible police and military presence on the resorts and in the cities and towns made many Canadian interviewees feel safe and secure. These government officials were perceived as being there to protect tourists both on and off the resorts.

Several participants indicated that the Cuban authorities were there to protect tourists from being threatened, accosted, and/or annoyed by the Cuban people. These interviewees felt that the presence of armed guards resulted in them not being bothered by solicitors or beggars. Some expressed their sense of security and safety due to the perceived authoritarian Cuban government which they felt would impose draconian measures to punish Cuban people for molesting tourists:

Culum: "Did you experience anything like that [crime in Mexico] in Cuba?"

Julie: "No. I don't know what it was with Cuba, I just felt safe. I don't know if it was just because you hear, if they [Cuban citizens] were to steal or do some sort of crime, it's a communist country so it would just be so horrible that it's not worth it for them to even attempt something like that. So yeah you just feel safe." (Julie, 26-35, Healthcare, CC)

The implicit, and sometimes explicit, assumption for why these government actions were perceived as conducive to a safe environment was that Cuba's communist government relies on tourism and therefore they would use the apparatuses of state power to protect tourists from the Cuban population. While they imagined the Cuban government to impose austere measures on their citizens, study participants perceived the government as nonthreatening to tourists. Many felt that having to follow innocuous, bureaucratic procedures would be their greatest concern when dealing with the Cuban government. As Tariq notes:

...it's communist they want to know what's going on. But I didn't feel intimidated or discouraged I just figured it's a communist country... it's the process. Everything is controlled under the government, they own everything. (Tariq, 26-35, Engineer, CC)

Table 5.11 is composed of selected quotes that illustrate how Canadian study participants' framed Cuba's government. It exemplifies the perceived role of the Cuban

government as the protector of foreign tourists as well as producing an exotic and novel atmosphere for them to consume while on a vacation to the island.

Table 5.11 Canadian participants' framing of Cuban government/security

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| ...when we went to Havana on the bus trip, we stopped beside where the government buildings were. And it was in a couple of square block area. And they showed us where Fidel's office building was and a few other buildings and that. (Donald, 36-45, Custodian, CC)   |
| ...we also did some sightseeing. Like they showed us where Che Guevara hid during the revolution. (Erin, 18-25, Undergrad Student, CC)   |
| ...well the military, those guys on the resort, I don't mind them having the guns because they are going to keep other people out ... they are not there to protect the tourist from the tourist. It is not like I am going to start robbing the guy from England or something like that. (Henry, 26-35, Grad Student, CC)   |
| ...politically they are different. In Cuba, whenever we were off the resort there was some sort of paramilitary person discreetly behind us... just following. One day we were touring around areas in Cuba and at every stop we made there was the same vehicle that would stop when we stopped. And I took that as being a security measure.<br>Culum: So you felt safer having them there?<br>Anne: Yes. They would get out of the car and they would stand there and watch. And as soon as we got back on the bus they would follow us. (Anne, 46-64, Manager, CC) |
| ... I really don't know about governments. But I have heard about the communist thing. Honestly, I have to say I know nothing about politics. But again, I would imagine it has something to do with being able to protect the tourist – because that's why they are guarding mostly to kind of keep the locals away, right? (Sheila, 26-35, Healthcare, CNC)  |
| I felt more secure knowing that Cuba's only source of income – or most of its source of income is tourism so they want to keep a good thing going. So I felt that they were there for my protection... If a vendor is bothering tourists the police would push them a way. In Havana, where I stayed a couple of times when I went to Cuba, on the beach you have police every hundred feet watching tourists and making sure that nothing happens to them.... (Tariq, 26-35, Engineer, CC)  |
| But I felt safe... oh, and there is police everywhere, not necessarily with guns. But there were cops everywhere. I don't remember if they had weapons just like our cops do, like small. (Trish, 18-25, Healthcare, CC)   |

#### *Canadian participants' images of Cuban place*

The most common visual images of Cuban place expressed by the Canadians that I interviewed were of beaches, clear water, sunshine, white sand, palm trees, and lush vegetation. Also, study participants who had and had not been to Cuba imagined old American cars from the 1940s and 50s as well as ill-maintained colonial architecture. Interviewees' most common images were of what they would experience on a resort.

They felt that the amenities that they would have on these resorts would be of a lower quality than they would expect at other Caribbean destination. Previous visitors felt the food would be plain without many spices, while interviewees who had not visited Cuba generally felt that it would be spicy.

*Canadian participants' framing of Cuban place*

Canadian interviewees felt that the white sand beaches, clear water, sunshine, lush flora, and warmth would produce a relaxed atmosphere and having a calming effect for people who visit the island (Table 5.12). Several of the study participants who had visited Cuba expressed that organic images (the image developed from visiting Cuba) were congruent with those they received from pre-trip sources of information such as brochures, word of mouth, websites, and travel magazines. This was perceived to instill a somewhat familiar feeling in some of the participants. Both visitors and non-visitors to the island stated that they would vacation in Cuba to “get away from it all” (Yuri, 36-45, Planner, CC) and stay at an all-inclusive resort. While there was disagreement over the quality of the food and drinks, study participants mostly agreed that these would be available upon request, around the clock, and in abundance.

Study participants did perceive phenomena that were not in the tourism brochures such as poverty and inadequate tourism infrastructure. Some interviewees stated that they would temper their expectations of the tourist facilities in Cuba since they felt that the communist Cuban government did not fully appreciate the level of quality that Western tourists expected from an all-inclusive Caribbean vacation.

Another dominant perception of Cuba by interviewees was that it was stuck in time. Old cars, colonial infrastructure, and agrarian society were some of the phenomena that made study participants feel as though they had gone through a “time warp” (Carol, 35-46, Education, CC). This was also felt to be a result of Cuba’s communist government. There seemed to be an agreement amongst several participants that the Cuban government was unable to adequately maintain the historic colonial architecture and that the disrepair of the buildings would make Cuba seem more authentic, a quaint relic of a previous time.

Table 5.12 Canadian participants' framing of Cuban place

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|--|
| Well, palm trees and sand and the ocean, the roar of the ocean sand fleas the smell of really good coffee tasted the best orange juice in the world. Fabulous ice cream. (Anne, 46-64, Manager, CC)  |
| That was an amazing experience. What a beautiful beautiful city. Very colonial obviously and the forts that they had were just amazing and the people were just wonderful. That's like a very condensed – like a European city – but again it was like a time warp, you're looking at all the old cars and all the old clunkers that they had because they don't have access to anything else and it's very interesting. (Carol, 35-46, Education, CC) |
| ...we looked at a few travel guides, and we'd seen pictures and that. I guess it's what we expected like you could see the resort and the ocean. (Donald, 36-45, Custodian, CC)  |
| ...images for sure I would see beautiful beautiful beaches. When I have seen images of Cuba you see long stretched beaches that are gorgeous. I think that I would definitely see the strong cultural flair like in the food and the dance. (Helen, 26-35, Education, CNC)   |
| ...if I went I would be expecting nice weather. Sunny warm weather, beautiful beaches, good food on the resorts... I would think that on the resorts they would be catering to more Canadians and Americans and that they would know that people would want all the facilities and all the amenities that we [Canadians and Americans] would expect. So in my mind that's what I expect. (Nel, 46-64, Clerical CNC)                                    |
| Cuba, to me, did not seem to be hermetically changed from what it had been 40 or 50 years ago. Obviously after – I'm talking about the countryside and not what was going on in the casinos with Batista and all that sort of stuff. I think it was just a slower pace... Cuba, the places I was in initially were fairly laid back and fairly pastoral. It wasn't hugely built-up or anything like that (Roger, 46-64, Clerical, CC)                  |
| ...what I picture in my head is it being sort of a less-developed of a country outside of the built-up tourist areas. I picture a poor country with fancier all-inclusive resorts on the beach. (Tim, 25-36, Consultant, CNC)  |
| The sun the friendly people and then snorkeling and some coral reefs and then doing what we enjoy, relaxing, having fun, getting away from it all. That's really what my mind Cuba is all about. It's a place to go where we can enjoy whatever we, unfortunately, don't have here [in Canada]. Besides the scenery, the ocean for one I love the ocean... (Yuri, 36-45, Planner, CC)  |

[the] beaches were ten times nicer than what I ever expected. The white sand, and the water, and the little huts on the beaches and the people coming up to serve you. That was really really nice. The fact that there was food around 24/7... I just thought that was fantastic that they even do that. (Julie, 26-35, Healthcare, CC)

*Canadian participants' images of Cuban poverty*

Many of the Canadians I interviewed imagined Cuba to have a significant amount of poverty. Interestingly, both tourists who had been to Cuba and those who had not discussed seeing images of poverty on the bus ride to and from a Cuban resort. While both tourists and non tourists perceived poverty, the Canadian interviewees who had been to Cuba expressed more vivid visual images of poverty than those who had not visited the island. The most common signifiers of Cuba's poverty were people in rural areas living in shacks with dirt floors or people in urban areas living in overcrowded dilapidated apartment complexes. Other images were of skinny dogs and disheveled children. For many of the study participants this perceived poverty impacted the image they had of Cuba. Most of the interviewees expressed feeling pity for the way Cubans were living and reflected on how it made them feel lucky to live in Canada. Although poverty was a significant image for the Canadians I interviewed it did not significantly hamper their overall positive image of Cuba. Some interviewees reflected on how they were able to enjoy their vacation even with a negative impression of the poverty. They perceived the resorts as an enclave where they were not exposed to the poverty and therefore were able "forget about it" as Jessica (36-45, Education, CNC) explains:

To be honest, I think once you are there [in the resorts] you forget about it. The only time you really think about it is if you venture out and have to go back through those gates. ...so you do, you think about it and then you feel safe after a little bit when it becomes more familiar. (Jessica)

*Canadian participants' framing of Cuban poverty*

Instead of discussing the causes of the poverty that they witnessed, many Canadian interviewees spoke of how it might have a positive impact on a possible vacation to Cuba. One of the consequences of perceived poverty on the island was that it would result in a higher quality of service from the tourism workers. I think one of the more notable statements that exemplified this framing was made by Gordon (26-35, Manager, CNC) who has never been to Cuba:

I hear from friends and family that have gone that there is great service within the resorts. I understand they have a very low income – a lot of these people who are maintaining your room and stuff like that. So they work hard for that 20 bucks, because it's half their pay. So it's worth it for them to do that. (Gordon)

In addition to poverty being perceived as beneficial for the tourist, several interviewees framed tourism as a mechanism for alleviating some of the poverty that they felt pervaded Cuba. These people saw tourism as providing relatively high paying jobs to skilled Cubans who were chronically underpaid because of Cuba's communist economy. This often manifested in interviewees recounting stories they either experienced themselves or heard through word of mouth about highly educated people working in the tourist industry because the gratuities earned from tourists were significantly more than the income they would receive working for the Cuban government.

Also many Canadian study participants expressed that tourists not only brought well paid employment to Cubans, they also brought coveted consumer goods. Many of the tourists who had been to Cuba recounted stories of giving toiletries or clothing to Cubans who worked in the resort. Also, some of those who had not been to Cuba had been told by those who had to bring toiletries, make-up, and clothes with the expectation

that tourism workers would ask for these items. While most Canadian interviewees felt the lack of consumer goods was the result of Cuba's communist government, only a few explicitly referenced the US government's blockade as a contributing factor.

Table 5.13 is a sampling of the statements made by participants that I feel exemplify the way Canadian study participants framed poverty in Cuba.

Table 5.13 Canadian participants' framing of Cuban poverty

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|---|
| If I'm ever going to Cuba – I would always pack up whatever I was not using, complete nail kits or hair clips or toothpaste or whatever and they are just so grateful for anything that you can give them in Cuba because they don't have access to that. (Carol, 35-46, Education, CC)   |
| And again he [a Cuban tourism worker] went on to talk about how we are very lucky and we should take advantage of these type of things and really enjoy ourselves because they don't have that type of luxury [in Cuba] they just hope that people will come and see them because that's really all they have to live for... these three men they kind of just sit around and wait all day for someone to hop on a horse and carriage and come by their place. (Julie, 26-35, Healthcare, CC) |
| I mean, I guess the other side of the coin is – which you end up trying to do in your head to justify the opulence you're in – is that they [the resort] are providing jobs for a lot of local people that... and we tried to – this sounds bad maybe – but we tried to appreciate what they were doing for you with tips. (Jessica, 36-45, Education, CNC)   |
| Like they are really really looking for tips, and actually we had this girl – like the third to last day – she was our housekeeper for most of the week and she asked us for our clothes. Yeah she wanted our clothes, like no shame, they just come right out and ask! (Trish, 18-25, Healthcare, CC)  |
| Even I could go to Cuba or the Dominican and buy a house with the money we have now which is almost nothing ... I would imagine if you had a few thousand dollars and you backpacked around Dominican or Cuba you would never have a problem. You would be able to stay anywhere you wanted and get the food you wanted, water what ever you wanted because you are paying the money for it. (Henry, 26-35, Grad Student, CC)   |
| I think in Cuba there are the poor because the consumer culture, that strata, is just not there (Anne, 46-64, Manager, CC)  |

## VII. Canadian perceptions of the US government blockade

Another interesting aspect of Canadian interviewees' image of Cuba is the extent to which they use tourism to Cuba as a source of identification. Some Canadians felt that travel to Cuba was a distinguishing feature between themselves and American tourists. Other participants, particularly those who identified with the American framing of Cuba,

felt that the blockade diminished Cuba's appeal as a tourist destination because it denied the resorts adequate consumer goods to please Anglo North American tourists. A re-occurring theme throughout the Canadian interviews is a sense of exclusivity whereby many Canadians perceive the US government's blockade of Cuba to be a benefit in some respects for themselves as tourists and also for the people of Cuba.

Most Canadians felt that if the US government lifted its blockade that this would have a significant impact on Cuba though there was disagreement as to whether this impact would be beneficial or detrimental to Cuba; in particular concerning tourism to Cuba. Some Canadians who identified with the American framing of Cuba felt that the level of amenities might improve because American businesses would dominate as they do in other Caribbean countries like Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

Nel: "Americans would go there if they could. Again, it's close. It's a fairly cheap holiday. So if it wasn't under communism I'm sure a lot of things would change there. And who knows maybe the Americans would even take over."

Culum: "If Americans were able to go to Cuba would you be more or less likely to visit Cuba?"

Nel: "Probably more, I would probably go more because we [Canadians and Americans] are similar with what we want and expect. So if there was more Americans there I think the whole concept, the whole island would change because tourism would be one of their biggest things. So they are going to want to attract people, right? So I'm sure a lot would change and I'm yes, probably a lot would change and it probably would change my image. (Nel, 46-64, Clerical CNC)"

Other Canadian interviewees who framed the US blockade as a distinction indicated that the lifting of the blockade would detract from their enjoyment of Cuba as this would lead to higher volumes of tourists. However, it was not only the volume of tourists that concerned some Canadian interviewees; it was the type of tourist that lifting the blockade would result in. Some Canadian interviewees recounted to me experiences

that they had had with “ugly American” (Anne, 46-64, Manager, CC) tourists being obnoxious and disrespectful towards tourism workers. They often juxtaposed these accounts with their (Canadians) treatment of workers in a polite and respectful manner.

Culum: “You are obviously aware of the US blockade on Cuba, does it impact the way you see Cuba?”

Anne: “Yes.”

Culum: “Is it a negative thing?”

Anne: “No, it is a positive thing, because you can go there and there's no Americans. No really, some of the places that we have been to, like we were in Colombia many years ago. And there's not many Americans in Colombia, either because they don't get along real well. There's a difference in the tone. There's a difference – I don't want to sound – it seems sometimes Americans can be pretty demanding and rather imperious with the staff, particularly in developing nations.”

There was also the perception amongst several Canadian interviewees that the US blockade of Cuba was a matter between the US and Cuban governments and had nothing to do with them as Canadians. Some proclaimed regret for not knowing more about it and expressed that the blockade did not impact their image of Cuba. Interestingly others felt that the blockade gave them an unfavorable image of the US because they perceived the US government’s rationale for the blockade to be unfounded.

Culum: “Does the US blockade affect your image of Cuba?”

Jessica: “You know, to be honest, it probably impacts my impression of the States more than Cuba...”

Culum: “In what way does it impact your impression of the States?”

Jessica: “Well, just their policies, they’re hypocritical – sometimes hypocritical and I think it kind of falls into that.” (36-45, Education, CNC)

Many of the Canadian interviewees felt that their ability to easily travel to Cuba differentiated them from American tourists. The perception that Cuba was a place where they did not have to distinguish themselves from American tourists was acknowledged

either implicitly or explicitly by many of the Canadian study participants. This is interesting since it is an image of Cuba that is not directly related to the island but to a nationalistic self-identity.

### **IX. Contesting the dominant Canadian frame**

Canadian interviewees' image of Cuba was significantly influenced by the perception that Cuba was an inexpensive sun, sand, and sea tourist destination. Therefore most Canadian study participants' images of the island were dominated by phenomena related to tourism. Although Cuba's function as an all-inclusive Caribbean tourist destination dominated the Canadian study participants' framing of the island, there were some contesting interpretations. Participants often made qualifying statements indicating that their knowledge about Cuba was only partial and informed mostly through sources they perceived to be biased in favor of the dominant tourism marketing discourse on Cuba (Table 5.14).

Table 5.14 Contesting images: Reflection on dominant frame

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|---|
| I think that is the only thing with going to those all-inclusive, which seems to be the most affordable and fabulous way to go, is you really don't get to taste the culture that much because you're insulated and a lot of those places are delivering what they think people want and they are probably right (Jessica, 36-45, Education, CNC) |
| I guess it's technically not real life because, you know... organize tours. But where you're going into the country of the locals, through their villages and whatnot. (Sheila, 26-35, Healthcare, CNC)   |
| If I didn't have word-of-mouth, I would look it up on the Internet and try to find sources through there. So I guess that would open me up to biases. (Shelly, 26-35, Healthcare, CC)   |

The above statements indicate a desire to know more about Cuba as well as suspicion that the information they receive about Cuba has inherent biases. These subtle contestations of information and tourism practices related to Cuba were present

throughout the Canadian interviews. I see these contestations as demonstrative of the dynamic nature of Cuba's image. To me it signifies a desire to want to know more about the island without the adequate resources to discover another way of knowing Cuba.

These subtle contestations of the dominant framing of Cuba are not the only indicators of Canadians dynamic image of Cuba. The following two significant cases demonstrate some explicit contestations of the Canadian study participants' dominant framing of Cuba.

The first contesting frame relates to those Canadian interviewees that framed Cuba in a manner strikingly similar to the dominant American framing of Cuba. There were two Canadian interviewees that evinced this "American" framing of Cuba. One person, Nel (46-64, Clerical CNC), had not traveled to Cuba and the other, Naomi (46-64, Clerical, CC), had. These cases can be exemplary because they are exposed to different information sources and cultural norms than American tourists, however they appeared to frame phenomena related to Cuba in a manner that was akin to the majority of the Americans I interviewed.

Nel's interview was illustrative because she was a Canadian who had not visited Cuba and had no desire to visit because she felt the communist Cuban government provided substandard tourist amenities. Nel related many of her images of the island as well as her desire not to travel to the island to the Cuban government. However, the most interesting case in this context is Naomi's interview. She is a Canadian who had visited an all-inclusive resort in Cuba with her husband. From her account Naomi's trip was similar to those taken by many of the other Canadians that I had interviewed, including

participating in tourist activities such as staying at all-inclusive resorts and going on organized excursions, yet her framing of Cuba appears to have caused her to have a vastly different interpretation of her vacation than other Canadian travelers. Unlike most of the Canadians that I had interviewed, her images of armed soldiers throughout Cuba made her feel insecure. The stories that she recounted were of encounters with Cuban military and police. Machine guns and military apparatus were very prominent images for her. At one point in the interview she remarked on the military vehicles from the Cuban Revolution that were on display throughout Havana. She went so far as to exclaim that “you don’t see Lancaster bombers in the streets of Toronto.”

Naomi also framed Cuban people as being repressed by their government. She commented that the Cuban people she talked with on her vacation were subjected to “brainwashing” by the Cuban government because she felt they were “so damn happy” even though their government was forcing them to live in poverty while government officials lived in opulent conditions.

...but her [a Cuban resort worker] attitude was Castro can’t afford to give us anything. And that fascinates me, and that to me indicates such extensive brainwashing...just when she said that Castro can’t afford to give us anything, I’m like “wow”; maybe that’s true but I think he is living in palaces of some kind. That struck me as odd that they would have taken in obviously everything – I don’t know whether he speaks in public or how often he does it, certainly not now, now that his brother’s president – but at that time I remember thinking ‘boy, I’ll bet you that Castro is living in some very nice living quarters’. (Naomi, 46-64, Clerical, CC)

She perceived the communist dictatorship of Cuba to be a repressive force for both the tourist and Cuban people. Most of her images were strikingly congruent with the dominant American framing of Cuba. This is significant in the sense that it indicates

that information sources alone do not influence image formation. It seems to point to personal ideology or an identity frame that impacts the way people imagine places.

The other interesting cases that contested the dominant Canadian framing of Cuba are Roger (46-64, Clerical, CC) and Anne (46-64, Manager, CC). Both had gone to all-inclusive resorts in Cuba but reframed their image of Cuba during the trip. They both discussed having a negative image of the Cuban government before visiting but then witnessed Cuban phenomena that caused them to reframe their image while in Cuba.

Anne: "I also thought that – I ended up liking Cuba a whole lot more than I thought I would. At first I was like "I don't know if I want to go to Cuba, because you know it's communist and all." Right? And I ended up liking Mr. Castro a whole lot better when we came home, because the people – while they did not have consumer goods, nothing from the US was there – the people are uniformly well-educated, they have got great healthcare, and they have great dental care. So physically, and intellectually they are very well taken care of."

Culum: "Did you have a lot of chances to communicate or to talk to local people in both those places?"

Anne: "Yeah... And their grasp of the world and world affairs seemed very intelligently based. So I was very impressed."

Not only had Anne and Roger expressed a reframing of their image of Cuba, they both discussed Cuba as something more than just a tourist destination. Their discourse on Cuba seemed to be one that acknowledged its unique political situation.

When you think Cuba... you think political – like politics is a way of life for the people...I think it opened my eyes a little bit that every system – I mean, there's merit to every system. I mean, there's nothing perfect or anything like that. But I certainly saw a way of life that was not what I expected. (Roger)

Unlike many of the American and Canadian interviewees their image of Cuban politics was not dominated by the Western discourse on communism. Their perception of Cuba was more akin to Pérez's (2008) that engages Cuba "on its own terms or as a condition possessed of an internal logic or Cubans as a people of an interior history or as

a nation possessed of an inner-directed destiny (Pérez, 2008 pp. 22-23).” This framing of Cuba was infrequent amongst both Canadian and American study participants.

#### **X. Canadian participants' frame silences and contradictions**

For a particular frame to garner support it should present a plausible ontological representation for complex phenomena. To achieve this, as well as maintain adherence to a unifying logic, certain information must be ignored or obscured by a person (Gamson & Lasch, 1983). This is what produces the significant silences and contradictions inherent in any framing exercise and which is the purview of any properly conducted frame analysis to explore and deconstruct (Creed, Langstraat, & Scully, 2002).

Recall from the introduction of this chapter that Creed, Langstraat, and Scully (2002) argued that a good frame analysis should examine things that are within a frame and also those that are outside the frame. As I did with the American interviewees, I use frame analysis technique to situate Canadian interviewees' frames in context by exploring the silences and contradictions and issues of domination that are implicit in their statements.

By framing Cuba primarily as a tourist destination, Canadian study participants produced several silences and contradictions. Many of the silences relate to Pérez's (2008, pp. 22-23) critique of the Americans image of Cuba but are an equally apt critique for the Canadian study participants' image as well. In this section I will briefly discuss how the Canadian study participants' TDI of Cuba perpetuates a postcolonial relationship which maintains a system of colonial domination through economic rather than political

or military means. By imagining Cuba to possess the traits of an optimal tourist destination and the people to be well suited hosts to Western tourists, Canadian study participants contribute to a discourse that constructs a stereotypical Cuba. This inhibits an image of Cuba “on its own terms or as a [place] possessed of an internal logic or Cubans as a people of an interior history or as a nation possessed of an inner-directed destiny” (Pérez, 2008, p. 23).

My analysis of the silences and contradictions will draw from research on postcolonial readings of the practice of Third World tourism. The works of Adams (1995; 2004), Palmer (1994), Britton (1991; 1982), Urry (1990; 2001), Morgan and Pritchard (1998), and Echtner and Prasad (2003) have been instrumental in illustrating how the marketing and practices of tourism to Third World countries work to dominate local populations by denying them a voice in the representation of their homes to visitors. I use these studies to inform my analysis of the silences in Canadian study participants framing of Cuba.

By doing this I hope to situate power within the First World tourist to form and inform their image of Cuba as something more than simply the stereotyped images that have become the dominant discourse of *destination Cuba*. My study has demonstrated that people’s capacity for imagining place is more dynamic, nuanced, idiosyncratic, and contested than traditional TDI researchers posit. While implying that they felt that their image of Cuba was curtailed to its function as a destination and they desired to know more about the place, most Canadian tourists that I interviewed relied on the dominant discourses of the island to inform their TDI.

*Power of the tourist dollar*

From my interviews with Canadian tourists to the Caribbean I have found that study participants identify with specific discourses that privilege Western domination of the Third World, thus silencing information that might contest Cuba's role as a Third World tourist destination. This framing of Cuba situates the country as subservient to the 'developed' Western countries.

Throughout the interviews I found that people were reflexive of their role as tourists. They often discussed their feelings of guilt or privilege at being a wealthy tourist. Several Canadian interviewees acknowledged the power that their "tourist dollars" (Yuri, 36-45, Planner, CC) gave them in benefiting from what they perceive as an authoritarian regime. They described how conflicted they felt that they were bringing money to the island that the Cuban government would subsequently use to bolster its repressive regime (Table 5.15). This presents a significant silence within this frame whereby these study participants perceived the power of their money to support what they consider a repressive government but few interviewees reflected on the power this money provides them, as tourist, in creation of Cuba as a tourist destination and Cuban people as hosts to multitudes of foreign tourists. Several tourism researchers and theorists have discussed the ability for tourist dollars to shape a destination (Adams, 1995; Britton, 1991; 1982; Urry, 1990; 1995; 2001). As Table 5.15 demonstrates, tourists know the power of "voting with their money" (Yuri, 36-45, Planner, CC) to privilege those phenomena which they approve of and discourage those things that they do not. By explicitly discussing the perceived negative consequences of providing

money to Cuba's government but not acknowledging the impact that their tourist dollar has on the condition of the Cuban people or place, participants demonstrate a significant silence in the framing of Cuba.

Table 5.15 Tourism supports Cuban government

|   |
|---|
| <p>Culum: "You'd mentioned communism and crime, do you think that influences the people there?"<br/>         Julie: Yeah I think it does ...different people have said to us multiple times that we are so... lucky to be allowed to travel and see the world and they said that basically this is what we see [indicating Cubans only see the resort areas or their own country] and we will never have that opportunity to travel. So it definitely... I think it [communism] has affected them and... yeah."<br/>         Culum: "Do you see it impacting your experience there?"<br/>         Julie: "Like you know part of me does not want to go back because I don't want...because I feel that the country – that's what they [the Cuban government] feed off – just the tourism and that the way they kind of run the country so I don't want to support that. But then at the same time I enjoy myself there. Like I said I feel very safe, it's cheap, it's beautiful ..." (26-35, Healthcare, CC)</p> |
| <p>...with Cuba I think it's a place for Canadians to go to where it is a holiday. At the same time you know there is kind of a history behind it that it is this communist island and that's not necessarily a terrible thing. But in the back of my mind I feel bad for the people because they're living under a communist regime and don't have a lot of choices because I've been there and seen the people. I see how people live. I almost don't feel comfortable. I feel bad. I know I am allowed to go on down there but I feel I'm contributing to a communist societal thing there that I feel bad about...I feel guilty when I go to Cuba. (Yuri, 36-45, Planner, CC)</p>   |

Within the organizing narrative of the postcolonial frame tourism is considered to be good for Cuba and Cubans would naturally encourage mass tourism to their island because its benefits far outweigh its negative impacts. This unstated assumption could result from an implicit belief that tourism is an organic function of Cuba's geographic location and its welcoming and friendly native population. Canadian interviewees who have been to Cuba or who had been exposed to information about tourism to Cuba did not reflect on the political and economic machinations that produced Cuba's tourism industry. By implying that tourism is a spontaneous occurrence for Cuba, this framing belies the history of political and economic relations between Canada and Cuba in the construction of Cuba as a tourist destination.

Tourist reflexivity about their impacts is far from being an abstract notion. Current concerns by mass tourists about their perceived contribution to climate change are an interesting example of how tourists' concern for their impacts shapes not only tourist behavior but also the way in which the tourism practitioners adapt to these concerns.

Study participants' unreflexive position regarding the impact of tourism on the island represents a significant contradiction within the postcolonial framing of Cuba. Further emphasizing this silence, many of the participants who imagined Cuba to be primarily a tourist destination acknowledged that tourism fostered a consumer culture in places like Mexico and the Dominican Republic but none of them felt that tourism performed by Canadians in Cuba had a commercializing effect on the country.

The power for tourism to transform a place is well documented by researchers (Adams, 1995; 2004; Britton, 1991; 1982; Urry, 1990; 1995; 2001), however the participants that I interviewed generally perceived their presence on the island as innocuous or beneficial to Cuba. Furthermore several participants felt the characteristic that set Cuba apart from other places in the Caribbean was that, because Americans could not travel there, it was less crowded and commercialized and therefore a more pleasant environment. However these same participants did not reflect on any possible commercializing effect their own actions, such as staying at all-inclusive resorts and taking organized excursions through people's homes, might have on Cuba and Cuban people.

This leads me to my discussion of the postcolonial critique of tourism. Postcolonial critique is pertinent to this study because Canadian study participants are continuing the same patterns that Britton (1982) critiqued in his political economy of Third World tourism. More importantly, interviewees' images of Cuba bore striking similarity to those stereotypical images that postcolonial tourism researchers have explored in marketing material and travel writing (Echtner, 2002; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). This research, in part, lends credence to these researchers' analysis of tourism mythmakers by indicating that the images produced by tourism marketers are very similar to those held by tourists.

*Servile hosts.* The depictions of Cuban people as being uncommonly suited to serve tourists in an indulgent and relaxed atmosphere parrots the postcolonial narrative of the Myth of the Unrestrained that Echtner and Prasad (2003) discussed in their examination of Third World tourism marketing brochures. They posit that binary language acts to maintain the subservience of Third World hosts by First World tourists by defining their conditions from a western colonial discourse and denying the hosts the agency to independently define themselves.

...the myth of the unrestrained takes the tourist to the luxuriant lands of the sea/sand destinations (such as Cuba, Fiji, and Jamaica) ...these are places with both very select natural and built attractions: verdant tropical beaches, the best resorts, and serving, entertaining hosts. Naturally, this surrounding environment entices the tourist to be self indulgent and sensuous... Unlike the myth of the unchanged, these places are not mystical and strange, but completely comprehensible and comfortable. (Echtner & Prasad, 2003 p. 672)

During my initial open coding analysis I began to get a strong sense that many of the statements made by study participants resembled ones made by tourism marketing

literature that were the subject of postcolonial critiques by Britton (1982; 1991), Palmer (1994), Echtner (2002), Echtner and Prasad (2003), Morgan and Prichard (1998) amongst others. Prior to the axial coding phase I re-read some of the core writings on postcolonialism and tourism and while most of the postcolonial critique focused on marketing material's (frame sponsor) representation of a destination, many of the terms and visual images were similar, if not exactly the same, to those made by Canadian study participants. Take for example this passage from Echtner and Prasad's (2003) postcolonial critique of tourism marketing brochures and compare them to the statements made by various Canadian interviewees.

In these destinations, the tourist enters not the opulent past, as in the myth of the unchanged, but a present paradise. These are places where nature is pristine and never harsh, where the people are friendly and never unwilling to cater to every tourist need, and where the resorts offer amenities to satisfy every sensual desire, whether active or passive.... these places are ...completely comprehensible and comfortable. (Echtner & Prasad, 2003, p. 672)

This passage bears a distinct resemblance to the images that Canadians in my study had of Cuba, illustrated below in Table 5.16.

Table 5.16 Servile Cuban hosts

|   |
|---|
| Relaxation comes to mind too... I love the place... the friendliness of the [Cuban] people and they're always there to welcome you. They are very welcoming people. And happiness comes to mind. (Carol, 35-46, Education, CC)  |
| ...people who are quite laid back and relaxed and encourage you to enjoy being on holiday. (Mary, 46-64, Clerical, CC)  |
| So I just got the impression that these people let us into their home and they didn't speak very good English but they were always very happy and they were like 'thank you thank you for coming'. They were just smiling and showing us through the sugarcane process. (Erin, 18-25, Undergrad Student, CC)" |

Or if we compare Palmer's (1994) postcolonial reading of host-guest relationships in the Bahamas we can see that there is a possible racialized dimension of framing people solely as hosts:

Nevertheless, attitudes of "black servitude" may still bubble along beneath this halo of racial harmony, as some white tourists may feel they have the right to treat "blacks in a haughty way...because they are paying for service (and deference)"(Erisman 1983, pp. 357-358 in Palmer, 1994, p. 801)

This resembles Julie's statement about feeling obligated to give money in the form of tips to Cuban tourism workers.

...we took a little boat to this little island which was kind of like a farm and this man was there and he just made us this meal and was almost like couscous with like beans, I'm not sure what was in there, but it was very good. He did some magic tricks and basically I think that's how he makes his living because, you know he does a trick and people give him money because that's what you're kind of expected to do as a tourist. And you know he took us out for a ride on this boat and then again you feel like you have to give him money for doing that. (Julie, 26-35, Healthcare, CC)

*Cuba as a museum in paradise.* Another way in which the dominant framing of Cuba by Canadian interviewees silences a deeper understanding of the island was by imagining Cuba is a hermetically sealed tropical playground with something for every tourist. Tariq makes a poignant observation that alludes to the paradox with this image of Cuba.

...[from the] outside, it [Cuba] has stopped, but inside they are still moving... so inside they are really really growing but the outside image they are still the same – back in the 50s, not much going on... their internal image is different from the external image (Tariq, 26-35, Engineer, CC)

Many Canadians had images of Cuba as a museum where they could visit a society living in the past as demonstrated by Table 5.17. To these Canadian tourists this provided a unique opportunity to gaze at a simpler time.

Table 5.17 Cuba as a museum in paradise

|   |
|---|
| What immediately comes to mind are images of the horse and carriage. (Shelly, 26-35, Healthcare, CC)  |
| I know people that have been there, and they said even their [Cuba] cars and that are so old-fashioned. (Nel, 46-64, Clerical CNC)  |
| ...a farmer had a team of oxen where you wouldn't even see that around here or even in the States. He had a team of oxen and he was walking behind it with a plow. I would've liked right then and there to have the bus driver slam on the brakes and just walk over into the field, and view this, and take a picture. (Donald, 36-45, Custodian, CC) |

However, to these study participants not all of Cuba was stuck in the past. To them Cuba was also a place for over-stressed, sun seeking, tourists to “get away from it all” (Yuri, 36-45, Planner, CC). In Cuba they were able to relax on beautiful, white sand beaches while local resort workers grilled fish and mixed drinks for them to consume “24/7” (Julie, 26-35, Healthcare, CC) or explore the pristine nature by snorkeling through “crystal clear water” (Roger, 46-64, Clerical, CC). These were some of the dominant images of Cuba. What interviewees perceived to be of value on the island were those phenomena which made Cuba an attractive mass tourist destination. Again, this framing of Cuban place directly mirrors Echtner and Prasad’s (2003) *Myth of the Unrestrained*.

These above silences produced in the dominant Canadian framing of Cuba highlight that the power to define Cuba to Canadians is not possessed by the Cuban people but by marketing interests that benefit from stereotypical images of the island. While the postcolonial narrative strongly defines the silences within Canadian interviewees’ framing of Cuba I also found that there was a significant contradiction within the way several Canadians framed the Cuban government.

*Contradiction in framing the Cuban government*

There is contradiction within the perception that the role of the Cuban government is to protect tourists. Most of the Canadian interviewees felt that the role of the Cuban government is to use their military and police to protect tourists from locals as well as have their key government buildings and historical markers function as signifiers of Cuba's novel relics of a communist society.

Even though Cuba's government was perceived as a brutal regime, tourists and potential tourists to Cuba felt secure in the knowledge that tourism is Cuba's bread and butter and therefore the government would let no harm befall a tourist for fear of garnering an unfavorable TDI. This aspect of the framing of the Cuban government can best be illustrated by this statement (cited earlier) from Julie:

Culum: "Did you experience anything like that [crime in Mexico] in Cuba?"

Julie: "No. I don't know what it was with Cuba, I just felt safe. I don't know if it was just because you hear, if they [Cuban citizens] were to steal or do some sort of crime, it's a communist country so it would just be so horrible that it's not worth it for them to even attempt something like that. So yeah, you just feel safe."

While both visitors and non-visitors to Cuba perceived government functionaries to be omnipresent, this was cause to feel secure since the apparatuses of state power were designed to protect tourists. This may not be an absolute contradiction since it follows the unifying central element of the dominant Canadian framing of Cuba however it is interesting to note that tourists can feel safe in an environment where they perceive the government to use brutal tactics to suppress dissent. I surmise that this speaks to the power of the postcolonial narrative of Cuba whereby money trumps ideology as the ultimate form of domination. The possible implicit assumption being that the Cuban

government cannot maintain its domination of the Cuban people without Western tourist money so therefore they apply a different set of laws to foreign tourists than they do to citizens of the island.

### **XI. How dominant is the dominant Canadian framing of Cuba?**

With the above analysis I demonstrated the dynamic, contested TDI of Canadian study participants. Although these Canadian interviewees socially constructed Cuba as a tourist destination, very few participants overtly insisted that tourism was the only element Cuba was known for. Several of the Canadian participants evidenced a strong identification with the dominant Canadian frame of Cuba but even these participants recognized that, to some extent, Cuba possessed an inner-directed destiny. Without adequate resources or cause to seek out alternative framings of Cuba these participants reverted to the dominant marketing discourse on Cuba. By not informing themselves or demanding to be informed of other meanings of Cuban place these Canadians effectively marginalize indigenous interpretations of Cuba.

#### *Conclusion*

The above analysis of American and Canadian image of Cuba presents an interesting contrast of frames between the two groups. For reasons to be discussed in the following chapter I have not directly compared the frame of the two groups of study participants. In an effort to summarize how framing impacts TDI I will, however, present a concise hypothetical example of the differential framing of similar images of Cuba.

While this incident is not extracted directly from the interviews it is illustrative of the dominant framing of each Canadian and American participants.

Let us begin with the phenomenon of a Cuban soldier walking on a beach at a resort. The dominant framing of the Canadians I interviewed would perceive this soldier as being there for their security because the Cuban government relies on tourism revenue from wealthy First World nations and therefore would deploy troops to protect foreign tourists from the rebellious and envious Cuban citizens. However, from the dominant frame of the Americans I interviewed this same phenomenon, the soldier on the beach, would be perceived in a threatening and insecure manner. This tourist would see the soldier's role as twofold; first he/she is there to keep the tourist from escaping the deliberately separate tourist compound and enlightening Cuban citizens about the ways in which their government is brainwashing them and second this soldier is stalking the beach to insure that the Cuban resort workers only portray Cuba in the best possible light and keep them from speaking ill of Cuba's authoritarian government. Within this single image of a soldier on a beach a litany of explicit and implicit assumptions are made about the visitor's and the host's societies. These assumptions also produce/reproduce myriad silences, contradictions, and constraints and can often be traced back to specific institutions which benefit politically and economically from the propagation of specific discourses.

Within this chapter I used various statements made by study participants to demonstrate the existence of a dominant framing of Cuba by Anglo North American interviewees. I also juxtaposed these examples with others that compete and contest the

dominant framing within both the American and Canadian context. Finally, I illustrated the silences and contradictions that punctuate the limits of discourse about Cuba. My goal in using this presentation format was to present an alternative to the traditional positivist/postpositivist way of conceptualizing TDI. By offering the images, dominant framing, contesting frames, along with the silences and contradictions I mean to demonstrate the plasticity and evolution of the image of Cuba embodied within Anglo North American tourists. In the following section I will further elaborate on the contributions that this research makes to the field of tourism research.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The aim of this study has been to present an alternative conceptualization of tourist destination image. To break from the traditional positivist/postpositivist notion of “measuring” TDI I have utilized a frame analysis technique to illustrate how the construct can be explored from a constructivist epistemology.

It was not coincidental that the Anglo North American TDI of Cuba was the focus of this study. Since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the US government has played an active role in constructing an image of Cuba for Americans and Cubans (Pérez, 2008). Alternatively, the Canadian government has maintained a relatively *laissez faire*, pro-commerce stance toward the island. This striking juxtaposition represented a fruitful case to explore how politics influences evolution of a destination’s image.

I feel that it is important to reflect in greater detail on how my situatedness has impacted the study. Reflexivity will not be used as a means of parsing the research setting. Instead, in this chapter, I engage my situatedness as the researcher in the production of knowledge. This can be a powerful instrument for reconstituting situated knowledge.

To conclude this account of my research project I will discuss its contributions to the field of tourism knowledge. I have separated these contributions into sections based on three categories; epistemological/methodological, theoretical, and practical/emancipatory.

### **I. Methodological/epistemological contributions**

This research has demonstrated a different way of examining tourist destination image. I have illustrated two dominant framings of Cuba, American and Canadian, and considered how the situated knowledge within each context influences the different ways of knowing the island. This research contributes to a growing body of tourism literature that aims to present alternatives to traditional positivist/postpositivist epistemologies. By taking as a starting point the existence of multiple situated realities that are constructed through social interaction and personal reflection I endeavored to depart from traditional methodologies which seek to accurately measure the “facts” about peoples’ TDI.

By adapting the frame analysis technique introduced by Creed, Langstraat, and Scully (2002) to examine people’s TDI of Cuba I have demonstrated that it can be a useful tool for exploring the social construction of tourist destination image. While the frame analysis technique cannot provide destination marketing organizations and other industry professionals with generalizable information they can use to promote their places, it is a powerful technique for providing thick contextual descriptions of the political influences on people’s TDI.

Aside from the relativist ontology of the frame analysis approach that I used, two fundamental methodological devices were instrumental in achieving the aims of this study. The ability to explore the discursive practices that manufacture the dominant discourses of the island as well as the freedom to examine silences and contradictions

within the text and context of the interviews were both important tools for understanding how politics influences the evolution of TDI. First, by exploring the dominant discourses on Cuba within the US and Canada as well as the discursive practices that form and reinforce them I was able to show how Cuban discourse on Cuba is formed and how it is manifested in the way people frame Cuba. This is particularly important when Gamson and Lasch's (1983) window frame metaphor is considered. For instance, if a political organization such as the US government has inordinate power to influence the discourse on a potential destination, as it does in the case of Cuba, it can impact the way people frame a destination. This framing is important because it influences the information with which people chose to engage. So if these people are presented with information which does not fit into their framing of Cuba it may be more readily dismissed than information that confirms their frame. In other words:

We have a strong tendency to reject ideas that fail to fit our preconceptions, labeling those ideas as unworthy of consideration, aberrations, nonsense, irrelevant, weird, or mistaken (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5)

Thus, if the US government discourse influences the way people frame Cuba by limiting their exposure to alternative interpretations of Cuban phenomena, they can effectively point the tourist gaze in a different direction as they have done for interviewees like Vicki, Peggy, Dan, and possibly countless other American tourists. This redirection could suit a diplomatic agenda that reinforces Cuba's image as a place in need of intervention. Additionally, if tourism marketers significantly influence the discourse on Cuba, as I have shown to be the case with the Canadian discourse, then tourists may seek to confirm the images that privilege the tourism industry and ignore or

rationalize images and information about Cuba that does not fit within their “house frame” (Gamson & Lasch, 1983). By using the frame analysis to examine discursive practices and discourses, TDI researchers will be better able to understand why and how power and politics influences the images a tourist possesses. While illustrating the discourses was important to understanding what influenced the framing of Cuba, the ability to explore silences and contradictions was instrumental in identifying how the discourses influenced the framing of Cuba.

The ability to explore silences, contradictions, and the freedom to incorporate overarching and underlying social and political issues is the ultimate virtue of this frame analysis technique. By using the frame analysis I was able to examine what participants in my study explicitly said as well as their implicit statements. Also by illuminating silences and contradictions I was able to demonstrate the power that discourse plays in the way people frame the information they have about a destination. For instance, American study participants perceived the Cuban government as a repressive regime that censored the information that Cubans received. However, none of the Americans I interviewed felt that the US government was censoring them by denying them access to Cuba. This silence/contradiction indicates that the US government discourse which presents an American exceptionalism narrative pervades participants’ “reality” of Cuba; thus implying those other nations’ governments censor their citizens but not “my” government. In other words, it is not perceived as censorship when the US government denies Americans access to Cuba and Cuban information but it is censorship when the Cuban government does it to Cuban people.

One of the ways that Canadian discourse on Cuba manifests most importantly is in the framing of poverty. The Canadian silences demonstrate the prevalence of the free market discourse. Several Canadian interviewees expressed that poverty on the island, while abhorrent, can be a mutually beneficial relationship between host and tourist. This however ignores the asymmetrical relationship between the First and Third World that caused and continues to perpetuate these perceived economic conditions.

*Summarizing the dominant American and Canadian frames*

At this juncture I must elaborate and explain a gap in my research. Below I present a brief side by side summary of the Canadian framing and the American framing of Cuba. When I first began my PhD journey I felt that there was something important to be known about how Canadians and Americans perceived Cuba. At that early stage of my graduate career my training, and therefore my paradigm, was firmly situated in the postpositivist paradigm. Even though, or especially because, my background was in leisure and tourism research my ontology would have been classified as objectivist and my epistemology as postpositivist (Crotty, 1998). However I was never satisfied with the results that this type of research produced. Being afforded the liberty and resources for critical exploration midway through my graduate career I found the root of my dissatisfaction was the reductionist approach of the paradigm within which I had been trained. As I proceeded through the later part of my graduate career my paradigm changed. While my paradigm evolved into what I would term critical constructivist, my interest in the image of Cuba held by Canadians and Americans intensified. At the point where I developed the methods and questions for this study I felt that a comprehensive

comparison of the two images could be accomplished. However, as I began to better formulate my critical constructivist paradigm I became increasingly uneasy with comparing the two groups.

By comparing the Canadian and American images I felt I would decontextualize and deny the deep situatedness of the individuals and the groups. To not invalidate the premise of this study, namely that image is formed and informed at multiple scales and contingent on a person or group's situation, a comparison of the two distinct groups of interviewees would have to encompass myriad cultural and political circumstances. These elements which create the differences between Canadians and Americans are too varied and often idiosyncratic to manage in this study. Therefore I invite the reader to primarily engage the analysis of the Canadian and American interviewees separately. However, in an effort to provide closure to the reader and myself within this paper I will briefly discuss the framing of Cuba by both the Canadians and Americans simultaneously.

Those readers who can identify with one or both of these frames or groups can judge the trustworthiness of my findings. Perhaps discussing the frames together will allow readers to better scrutinize my methods and findings. In the article by Creed, Langstraat, and Scully (2002) from which I adapted the frame analysis, the authors use the technique to contrast competing frames within the socially responsible investment community. Therefore, it is within the scope of frame analysis to compare frames. In the case of Creed, Langstraat, and Scully's (2002) study, however, they examine two framings that are in direct competition for dominance within the socially responsible

investment community. Unlike the subject of their research the discourses influencing the framing of Cuba are developed in different contexts for two different audiences.

Table 6.1 American and Canadian frame matrices side by side

| <i>Idea Element</i>   | <i>American Primary/Secondary Signature Matrice of Dominant American Framing of Cuba</i>   | <i>Canadian Primary/Secondary Signature Matrix of Dominant Canadian Framing of Cuba</i>   |
|---|--|---|
| Metaphors   | Castro, dictator[ship], militaristic, repressed, censored  | Tropical paradise; Garden of Eden; playground   |
| Exemplars   | Cuban government that limits the individual freedoms of the Cuban people and visitors to the island  | Friendly, servile Cuban hosts; pastoral landscapes, all-inclusive resorts   |
| Catchphrases  | Castro, Cold War, communism, poverty   | Grateful, smiling, safe, relaxing, friendly, great service, warm, colonial  |
| Depictions  | A draconian force imposed on a helpless Cuban populace   | Smiling Cuban hosts fulfilling the wishes of tourists in a warm, sunny, exotic but comfortable atmosphere   |
| Visual Images   | Soldiers, Castro, lush, tropical landscapes, white sand beaches  | Sun drenched white sandy beaches; grateful, smiling Cuban people; colonial architecture; old cars   |
| Roots   | All people should be allowed basic human rights and the ability to choose their leaders through democratic processes   | Cuba's worth is determined by its value in a global economy which is its ability to provide relatively affordable all-inclusive tropical resort vacations to Anglo-North Americans; Cuba's most valuable commodity is its place/culture |
| Consequences  | The poverty, censorship, and repression of human rights in Cuba are a result of not being able to have a succession of government through democratic means.  | Cuba's civil society/government should adapt to better suit the needs of visitors to the island   |
| Appeals to Principle  | American/Canadian people should advocate a regime change that brings about a 'democratic' government in Cuba   | Tourism brings wealth and prosperity to Cuba so the better Cuba fulfills its role as a destination the less its people will suffer from poverty   |
| Punctuation: What is the problem?   | Illegitimate Cuban government opposes western style concepts of freedom and democracy/Tourists are considered suspects   | Cuba's tourist industry lacks the savvy and amenities of other Caribbean destinations   |
| Elaboration: Who is responsible? What outcomes can be projected with or without intervention? | The Cuban government's adherence to the failed economic regime of communism coupled with its brutal repression of internal dissent is responsible for the situation of the Cuban people/Leads to inefficient use of tourism attributes | The Cuban government and the US government; The blockade of Cuba (regardless of which government is responsible for its continued imposition) hinders Cuba's tourist industry from providing adequate tourism amenities to tourists     |
| Motivation: What action should be taken?  | Empathy for the Cuban people and scorn, condemnation, and regime change for the Cuban government/No support for the communist government through tourist dollars.  | Conflicted: if blockade is removed Cuba can provide better amenities but if it continues Cuba retains its charm and sense of exclusivity  |

*Side by side frame summaries.* Americans framed Cuban people as friendly but inaccessible because they perceived the Cuban government as not wanting Americans to talk to Cuban people. The other dominant framing of Cuban people by Americans was as

hostile and criminals. Canadians framed Cubans as friendly, welcoming, servile, and knowing how to enjoy life. They felt that Cuban people and Cuban culture provide an ideal setting for tourists to relax and enjoy life.

Americans saw the government of Cuba as omnipresent, authoritarian, and repressive. They framed this as creating a place that made them insecure or fearful. Also they felt they would constantly be watched and would have to censor themselves to avoid punishment. Canadians, on the other hand, perceived a heavy presence of government authorities in Cuba but felt that these functionaries were in the resorts, on the beaches, and in the streets of the cities to keep them safe from Cubans who might bother or accost them.

Americans imagined Cuba to have the properties of a tourist destination but felt that the Cuban government would control the tourism sector and therefore it would not be a desirable place to visit. They also framed Cuba as being a stark, dilapidated place where the infrastructure had not been maintained since the 1960s due to the Cuban Revolution. Cuban place was framed by Canadians as being a tropical paradise where all their needs as tourists could be fulfilled at a reasonable price. They also framed Cuba as an historic destination where they could gaze at a poorly preserved past.

For Americans poverty in Cuba was caused by a corrupt, ideologically-driven communist government. Many American study participants felt there were a small number of rich Cuban elites affiliated with the communist government and the rest of the population was poor. They also felt that the government used its power to quash those Cubans who were unsatisfied with their economic situation. Canadians framed poverty

in a different way. Although they perceived a significant degree of poverty on the island they felt that tourism could help alleviate this poverty. They also thought that the low wages in Cuba would bring them more value for their tourist dollar.

In addition, there were several areas of contestation to the American and Canadian dominant framing of Cuba. While assumptions about the need for the US government's blockade of Cuba were unchallenged, some American interviewees contested the use of the blockade as an effective diplomatic instrument. The mainstream media narrative on Cuba was also challenged by several American interviewees. However people who challenged the media portrayals of Cuba often did not have a substantive critique. They mostly evinced a notion that the news was putting either a liberal or conservative bias on the facts. There were a couple of American interviewees who evidenced markedly different framings of Cuba than other interview participants. One person asserted the notion that the US government's depiction of Cuba was purposefully inaccurate. The other participant was skeptical of the US government's accounts of Cuba and discussed the desire to engage with Cubans to inform his image of Cuban society.

Contestations of the dominant Canadian frame often related skepticism of the idyllic images presented by tourism marketers. Canadians expected that the information originating from what Gartner (1993) termed induced image formation agents (marketing) would be embellished. As a result many said they tempered their expectations or relied solely on advice from friends that had been to Cuba. The more

fascinating way that some Canadians contested the dominant Canadian framing of Cuba was by adopting aspects of the dominant American framing of Cuba. Although these participants had access to numerous information sources that Americans were denied, they still framed phenomena related to Cuba as being tainted by the island's communist regime.

## **II. Theoretical contribution**

The above discussion of the dominant framing, contested meanings/interpretations, of American and Canadian images of Cuba demonstrates a different way of knowing TDI. As I discussed in the literature review, the corpus of TDI research presents the construct as a fixed, measurable feature of a person/tourist. These studies often belie the plasticity of TDI within a group as well as the different meanings between groups. The image that Anglo North Americans have may be significantly influenced by discourses within the respective countries however these discourses are not hegemonic. While many of the participants in this study evinced a frame seemingly influenced by a dominant discourse they also demonstrated a subtle skepticism for the information sources that reinforce these discourses. Many also expressed a desire to better understand Cuba from a different perspective. The frame analysis technique I utilized provides a systematic method for exploring and presenting the messy texts that are produced when a tourism researcher attempts to make sense of TDI.

Tourist destination image is more complicated than even the models proffered by researchers like Tasci & Gartner (2007), Buloglu & McCleary (1999), and Gunn (1972). By using a frame analysis approach I presented a static snapshot of a dynamic construct.

This dynamism within the formation of TDI does not happen at one scale or at multiple scales in a systematic fashion as many of the aforementioned models seem to suggest. Also, to reduce the formation of image into discrete variables that interact with each other is both naive and problematic.

As I discussed in the literature review of TDI, models of TDI formation such as Baloglu and McCleary's (1999) present a reductionist conception of its formation. These are often based on dubious assumptions about the "determinants" of a place image. These models and the subsequent studies to confirm their validity ignore the political and economic context within which an image is formed. This is problematic since it presents the formation of image in a contextual vacuum. This denies the influence and existence of power relations in the formation of TDI. Methods such as these would never have allowed me to examine the political nature of TDI. Had I used these methods to "measure" Cuba's TDI, the most fascinating aspects of this study such as silence and contradictions and contesting images and framing would have been cast aside to obtain statistically significant performative data. I would not have been able to explore how the US government's policies towards Cuba influence the image that people have of the island. I also would have been constrained in my critique of the postcolonial narrative proffered by tourism marketers, which masks unequal power relations between Canadian tourists and Cuban hosts. There would have been no discussion of the silences and contradictions which punctuate the boundaries of the people's images of Cuba.

By reducing the myriad influences of TDI to only its most statistically significant variables, positivist approaches to understanding TDI labor under the naïve assumption

that a person's TDI is the static sum of its parts and not a dynamic gestalt within which various power relations play out. Finally, when these researchers operationalize these statistically significant variables they reinforce the marginalization of statistically non-significant variables. This has the effect of reinforcing the salience of only those variables that researchers can statistically measure. Where this is problematic is when marginal and/or unmeasurable variables contribute to the way a person imagines a place.

As I have shown in this research the concept of a frame of a place or destination is inclusive of the dynamic nature of TDI. By focusing on how a person frames a place researchers can explore not simply the TDI a person possesses but also how information about a place is contested, ignored, or privileged. Additionally, through a discussion of the silences and contradictions a better understanding of the plasticity of the discourse influencing the frame can be ascertained.

As a final theoretical contribution to the study of tourist destination image I propose a linguistic shift. Perhaps due to the connotation of the word itself, formation is too positivistic a term for expressing the way people develop their TDI. The word formation implies that a TDI can be fully formed, thus static. Instead, this research has shown that people's TDI is constantly evolving. Therefore the term *evolution of tourist destination image* is a more apt means of expressing the images of place that people possess.

#### *Limitations and future research*

The overarching theme of this thesis is that politics influences tourist destination image. This study demonstrates some of the ways that politics influences TDI and in

doing so addresses the gap in the traditional TDI literature that has overlooked this aspect of the construct. By examining the social construction of image this study has opened up a new avenue of tourism research that contextualizes TDI evolution rather than reduces it.

There are myriad ways of exploring the social construction of Cuba's TDI that could address some of the limitations of this study. For instance, an auto-ethnographic account in which the researcher/writer/researched critically reflects on the personal journey that brings them to perceive Cuba in the way they do could provide valuable insight into the idiosyncratic nature of the formation of TDI. Another avenue for researchers hoping to gain insight into the social construction of Cuba's TDI could be participant action research whereby a researcher works with local Cuban organizations whose voices are not being expressed in the marketing narrative. The researcher could work with them to determine what TDI would best serve the purposes of their community and work to navigate the constraints to having their voice heard by tourists in North America. This approach could incorporate the construction and dissemination of the "projected" image of marginalized voices in TDI formation.

Another consideration is that mass tourism, by most accounts, has helped Cubans survive the ever increasing economic blockade imposed by the US government. Thus, suggesting that the image of Cuba held by mass tourists is harmful to the island is somewhat problematic. Future research, conducted by or with Cubans might focus on where and how to use tourism as a means of economic subsistence. This leads me to another aspect of my study that some may consider a limitation but which I consider an asset. As an American who has never been to Cuba but who is critical of the US

government's policies it would be a risky endeavor to travel to the island. Because of the risk involved two groups were purposely precluded from my research; Cubans and Americans who had traveled to Cuba. I do not feel that this research suffered greatly from only focusing on Canadians and Americans who had been to the Caribbean but I would have certainly obtained different framings of the island if Cubans and Americans who had traveled to the island were included.

### **III. Practical/emancipatory findings**

The foundation of this research is premised on an expanded definition of *tourist*. For this study to be relevant beyond the walls of the academy, a tourist must be understood as a person not only with the means and motivation to travel but also those who have an image of a distant place and can imagine themselves in that place. If TDI research continues to focus solely on those people who have the means and motivation to travel it will persist in marginalizing myriad important actors who form and inform tourist images.

Also, this research was undertaken for an audience different from that of traditional TDI research. My hope is that this research will be received as emancipatory. My audience is the people in my study and those who can identify with their framing of Cuba. By constructing a frame which presents an underlying logic I hope to concisely articulate some of the explicit and implicit assumptions that participants had about Cuba. Also, by reconstituting the images and frames that participants in my study expressed and by situating them in context I hope to illuminate the power structures that are often

obscured in our formation of place image. This is exemplified in the way in which Americans in my study framed Cuba. While their images of Cuba varied to a degree, most of the participants fell back on the underlying assumption that is proffered by the US government discourse on the island. This discourse is based on the idea that Cuba's government is tyrannical and anti-democratic and therefore must be in opposition to the will of the Cuban people. This discourse and framing precludes not only an understanding of Cuba and its people from a Cuban perspective, but also the ability for American residents to obtain independent information about Cuba. An example from the Canadian perspective is how the marketing narrative coupled with the practice of traveling to all-inclusive resorts perpetuates colonial relations. By constructing a myth of paradise through marketing material and then partially fulfilling that myth in the controlled environment of an all-inclusive resort, the tourism industry obscures the cultural, human, environmental, and economic impact of tourism. This not only works to perpetuate domination of the Third World by elites in the First World, it also disempowers First World tourists by obscuring a richer understanding of the consequences of their actions. From a Marxist perspective, it also works to subvert a global solidarity amongst the working class tourists and hosts (better addressed in a future paper).

By illuminating these power structures that produce "truths" by privileging and obscuring information about place I also hope to open a discussion amongst those who participated in my study and those who share a similar framing of Cuba. With this aim I hope to promote a broader discourse on Cuba that is inclusive of the people who are most

affected by the dominant Anglo North American framing of Cuba; the Cuban people. I also hope that my illustration of the framing of Cuba opens a broader discussion of the power that others, within the West, have to define a place.

This research is also emancipatory in the sense that it situates the power to define, contest, and subvert the construction of TDI within individual study participants. Focusing on the study participant as the expert and recognizing their ability to control the way in which they frame information gives them agency within TDI research. This stands in stark contrast to traditional research which has predominately privileged the “tourism experts” and treated study participants as passive vessels of images.

*Reflexivity and my place in the research*

However, it is also important to recognize that the reality that we are analyzing is not simply floating in some meaningless ether, waiting for any interpretation to be imposed on it. For example, the authors of the correspondences we have analyzed here had specific meanings in mind when they were writing those letters. One of our goals as analysts—again, depending on our overall project—should be to come as close to describing that meaning as possible while uncovering the worldviews and larger systems of meaning that underpin it. This approach is only possible when we reflect on our position as both readers of that information and (re)writers of it. (Creed, Langstraat, and Scully, 2002 p. 51)

To posit that association with any of these groups (white male for instance) entails, automatically that one is either privileged or subjugated, is to deny the plasticity within these societal groups. Being a white, middle class (in the liminal area between proletariat and bourgeois), North American male has certainly provided me with myriad opportunities to influence a culture that inordinately influences vast swaths of the global population. However, contesting the narrative of the white male as the one true producer of facts and knowledge from within this group has often marginalized my voice.

Therefore to avoid an elaborate analysis of how the social categories that I (self or otherwise) identify with influences my paradigm I will instead critically examine how my biography influences the silences that I produce within my research.

To deny that I do not have my own image of Cuba would be naive. Though undertaking this research has caused me to constantly reevaluate my image of Cuba. As I interviewed people who had been to Cuba and those who had not, their different perspectives caused me to shift my thinking about the island. As I began to notice distinct dominant framings of Cuba I began to better understand how discourses form truths. The repetition of the same images and assumptions by multiple people within one group has a powerful self-referential function. At points throughout this research I began to believe that perhaps these images *were* Cuba especially since my image of Cuba has been formed through mostly academic writings about the island. Although these academic writings gave me insights into various aspects of the island, the books and articles that I have read on the history, politics, and tourism within Cuba have never provided me with alternative images of the day to day situation of Cuba and its people. Because of my own perceived lack of a satisfactory image of Cuba I have done my best to present a neutral account of the participants' framing of Cuba; in a sense I have partially internalized *their* constructed reality of Cuba as my own. To accomplish this I have done my best to maintain narrative fidelity whenever I presented the explicit and implicit voice of a participant.

It was not until recently (three weeks before writing this chapter) that I had been exposed to images of Cuba which are different than those expressed in my study. While

at the 3rd. International Critical Tourism Studies Conference in Croatia the apartment which my partner and I rented had a satellite for the television. To my delight one of the channels that this dish received was *Cubavision*. From my waning understanding of Spanish I was able to determine that this station was dedicated to presenting news and cultural programming to Cubans within and external to Cuba. From the visual images and my limited comprehension of the Spanish language I discovered an interpretation of Cuba that I felt existed but to which I had not been exposed. The news programming discussed seemingly mundane topics of local importance such as weather, factory production, tourism agreements with Venezuela and various man bites dog stories. Other programs included low production value Cuban soap operas, and coverage of concerts and festivals. What was most striking to me was the mundane. How similar news in Cuba is to that of small towns throughout the US, Canada, and other places where I have had the fortune of visiting. As I have demonstrated with this research, TDI is not static. It evolves and is contested or confirmed with each new bit of information about a place that we cannot ignore and we are forced to engage with. My encounter with *Cubavision* is another illustration of the plasticity of the evolution of TDI.

As is evidenced in the undertone throughout the text I, as a critical constructivist, have an ideal of what people's image of Cuba should be. This ideal is not a specific image per se but a criterion by which people privilege information that forms their image. I would hope that instead of taking for granted the information that is readily available in mainstream sources (like marketing material in the case of Canadians and mainstream media in the case of Americans) people seek out information that emanates from those

who best know the Cuban condition, namely Cubans. In his work on participatory economics Michael Albert (2004) suggest that the people who should have the greatest voice in a situation are those who are most affected by the decisions that are made. In this same spirit I feel that those who should have the most at stake in the formation of a TDI, namely the hosts, be the ones whose voice is loudest in its formation. This means promoting local meanings and not stereotyped caricatures of place.

As I have discussed above, one perspective on the TDI of Cuba that I did not focus on was the image that tourism professionals possessed of Cuba. While I did interview a travel agent the format of the interview and the questions asked were geared towards illuminating her personal (and not professional) image of Cuba. I never asked if she would send her clients to Cuba or how she felt the island should be marketed. This was a purposive silence. I suppose this gets to the crux of who I am concerned with in this study. I do not care much for the opinion of political elites, I can determine their values by the policies they make and support. Nor do I care all that much about the professionals who try to market a place for financial gain. I am most concerned with the people who most academics, politicians, and tourism industry professionals treat as passive vessels and whose consent is manufactured through the manipulation of specific economic, intellectual, and hedonistic phenomena.

In this study I am concerned with offering those tourists whose images are formed through the dominant discourse a contextualized account of the processes and actors who hold sway over the information they use to imagine Cuba. With this objective in mind I hope to revise and disseminate portions of this research to larger, non-academic

audiences. My hope would be to use the internet and public lectures to generate awareness of the findings in my study.

#### **IV. Invitation to dialogue**

Finally, the most important academic outcome that I hope to achieve in writing this paper is to open a dialog on how, why, and for whom tourism researchers study TDI. The ever expanding corpus of TDI research shows only glimmers of change in an otherwise undifferentiated positivist/postpositivist epistemic quagmire. While it is important to keep in mind that this frame analysis is only a claim to a provisional and provincial truth, studies like the one I have just presented offer a way of reconceptualizing the construct of TDI. By shifting the audience of TDI research away from tourism practitioners towards hosts and tourists more provisional truths can be illuminated. Therefore, I offer this paper as an “invitation to dialog and continued unpeeling of layers” of the complex but exceedingly important construct of tourist destination image (Creed, Langstraat, & Scully 2002, p. 49).

## APPENDIX A: SCENARIO

Imagine that next week you will visit Cuba. What do you think your experience in Cuba would be like? What images and thoughts immediately come to mind?

For example, what would you expect to see, feel, hear, smell, or taste there?

Be spontaneous and share whatever thoughts come to your mind, whether positive or negative. Make your response as detailed or as brief as you like, there are no limits. If you know little about Cuba, your story will probably be short. If you already have clear ideas about Cuba, your story might be very long. But remember, there is no right, wrong or best model answer; simply express your own ideas about and not what you think I want to hear.

The ideas that you presented in your story must have come from somewhere. From where? Please list or describe your sources.

Where would you go to find information?

## APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT DETAILS

| <b>Pseudonym</b> | <b>Residency</b> | <b>Identifier</b>                  | <b>Age</b> | <b>Cuba Travel</b> | <b>Education</b> | <b>Gender</b> |
|------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Anne             | Canada           | Manager, Non-profit                | 46-64      | Yes                | University       | Female        |
| Roger            | Canada           | Clerical                           | 46-64      | Yes                | High School      | Male          |
| Mary             | Canada           | Clerical                           | 46-64      | Yes                | High School      | Female        |
| Sheila           | Canada           | Healthcare                         | 26-35      | No                 | College          | Female        |
| Trish            | Canada           | Healthcare                         | 18-25      | Yes                | College          | Female        |
| Tracy            | Canada           | Healthcare                         | 26-35      | No                 | College          | Female        |
| Gordon           | Canada           | Manager, Non-profit                | 26-35      | No                 | College          | Male          |
| Nel              | Canada           | Clerical, Non-profit               | 46-64      | No                 | High School      | Female        |
| Shelly           | Canada           | Healthcare                         | 26-35      | Yes                | College          | Female        |
| Yuri             | Canada           | Planner                            | 36-45      | Yes                | University       | Male          |
| Jessica          | Canada           | Education                          | 36-45      | No                 | University       | Female        |
| Carol            | Canada           | Education                          | 36-45      | Yes                | Post Grad        | Female        |
| Henry            | Canada           | PhD Student                        | 26-35      | Yes                | Post Grad        | Male          |
| Helen            | Canada           | Education Support Services         | 26-35      | No                 | College          | Female        |
| Julie            | Canada           | Healthcare                         | 26-35      | Yes                | Univ             | Female        |
| Donald           | Canada           | Custodian                          | 36-45      | Yes                | High School      | Male          |
| Tim              | Canada           | Environmental Consultant           | 26-35      | No                 | University       | Male          |
| Erin             | Canada           | Undergraduate Student              | 18-25      | Yes                | University       | Female        |
| Tariq            | Canada           | Engineer                           | 26-35      | Yes                | University       | Male          |
| Naomi            | Canada           | Clerical                           | 46-64      | Yes                | University       | Female        |
| Florence         | US               | Business Owner                     | 46-64      | No                 | University       | Female        |
| Dirk             | US               | Sales                              | 46-64      | No                 | University       | Male          |
| Rosita           | US               | Military Officer                   | 26-35      | No                 | Post Grad        | Female        |
| Phil             | US               | Housing Retail                     | 46-64      | No                 | High School      | Male          |
| Dawn             | US               | Clerical                           | 46-64      | No                 | High School      | Female        |
| Seth             | US               | Farmer                             | 26-35      | No                 | University       | Male          |
| Zeke             | US               | Artisan                            | 46-64      | No                 | High School      | Male          |
| Ted              | US               | Tradesperson                       | 46-64      | No                 | High School      | Male          |
| Clark            | US               | Tradesperson                       | 46-64      | No                 | High School      | Male          |
| Joan             | US               | Ethics & Pharmaceutical Consultant | 36-45      | No                 | Post Grad        | Female        |
| Lyn              | US               | Education Support Services         | 46-64      | No                 | University       | Female        |
| Michael          | US               | Psychologist                       | 46-64      | No                 | Post Grad        | Male          |
| Ed               | US               | Semi-Retired                       | 46-64      | No                 | University       | Male          |
| Joe              | US               | Engineer/Project Manager           | 26-35      | No                 | University       | Male          |
| Peggy            | US               | Farmer                             | 46-64      | No                 | University       | Female        |
| Ryan             | US               | Market Researcher                  | 26-35      | No                 | University       | Male          |
| Dan              | US               | Managment                          | 46-64      | No                 | University       | Male          |
| Carla            | US               | Waitress                           | 36-45      | No                 | High School      | Female        |
| Vicki            | US               | Waitress                           | 46-64      | No                 | High School      | Female        |

|        |    |              |       |    |      |        |
|--------|----|--------------|-------|----|------|--------|
| Cindy  | US | Clerical     | 26-35 | No | HS   | Female |
| Astrid | US | Barista      | 36-45 | No | Univ | Female |
| Rose   | US | Travel Agent | 46-64 | No | Univ | Female |

APPENDIX C: AXIAL CODES

| Parent Node             | Child node         | Grandchild node     |
|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Info Sources            | Intermediaries     |                     |
|                         | Internet           |                     |
|                         | Marketing          |                     |
|                         | Media              |                     |
|                         | Organic            |                     |
|                         | Other Info Sources |                     |
|                         | Unknown            |                     |
|                         | WOM                |                     |
| Political Frame         | CommunistNeutral   |                     |
|                         | Negative Politics  |                     |
|                         |                    | CastroNeg           |
|                         |                    | Censored            |
|                         |                    | CommunismNeg        |
|                         | Positive Politics  |                     |
|                         |                    | CommunismPos        |
|                         |                    | Curiosity           |
|                         |                    | MedicalPos          |
|                         | Postcolonial       | Canadian Colonizers |
| Postcolonial People     |                    |                     |
| Postcolonial Place      |                    |                     |
| Postcolonial Government |                    |                     |
| Scenario                |                    |                     |
| Triad Data              |                    |                     |
| Follow-up               |                    |                     |
| Images from the Bus     |                    |                     |

## APPENDIX D: OPEN CODES

|                         |
|-------------------------|
| Open Codes              |
| Americans               |
| Commercialization       |
| Communist Cuba          |
| Cuba Food               |
| Cuba Place Attributes   |
| Cuba Price              |
| Cuba Safety             |
| Cuban People            |
| Cuban Society           |
| Destination Cuba        |
| Interaction with locals |
| Lifting of the blockade |
| Reflexivity             |
| Salient Images          |
| US Blockade             |
| US Government           |

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