

## CHAPTER 7

# Symbolic Emancipation in Authoritarian Cuba

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*Abstract: Since 1989 experts have analyzed Cuba as a society in transition. But almost twenty years later, it seems that Cuba has not undergone a transition. The question is therefore why and how the socialist regime has managed to survive despite the fall of the USSR. Indeed since the economic crisis of the 1990s, some logics at work in the Cuban society question the regime's capacity to generate a homogeneous revolutionary socialization. There exists striking dynamics in groups of young artists. They try to emancipate from the revolutionary norms and to recall a political, historical and artistic heritage distinct from the one which is promoted by the leaders of the country. Their objective is to socialize the capacity for creation in order to promote diversity and the plurality of thought and of social experience.*

*«Because democracy is not just about voting. In its original Greek sense, democracy is the power of the people, and it is reached only when citizens actually and directly participate in the process of decision making, especially when it is about business that interests and affects them. The process of construction of a genuinely democratic society, in which the rights and freedoms of every citizen are guaranteed, must be based on the development of social, civic and political organizations, in which democracy is a daily practice. It is not possible to democratize a society that does not experience democracy every day! ».*

Since 1989 experts keep analyzing Cuba as a society in transition. Analysts focus on “dissidents” as seeds of the future democratization of the country (Hidalgo, 1994; Del Campo and Peralta, 1998). Others analyze the emerging civil society as made of the new self employed workers, workers in the joint venture sector, afrocuban religious believers or Cath-

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1. Max Puig, “La transition démocratique dans la région de la Caraïbe,” in *Les Transitions Démocratiques*, sous la direction de Laënnec Hurbon, Actes du colloque international du Port-au-Prince, 1996, 127-138. (My translation).

olics (Javier Corrales, 2005; Ariel Armony, 2005; Létrilliart, 2005), young blacks (de la Fuente and Glasco, 1997) or members of new NGOs (Gillian Gunn, 1995). Others study “informal dissent” (Eckstein, 1994; O’Bryan and Otero, 2002). Most studies focus on a transitional approach to the actual processes, emphasizing the emergence of new actors, since the fall of the Soviet Union (Gunn, 1993; Domínguez, 1997; Centeno and Font, 1997; Del Campo et Peralta, 1998; Mesa Lago, 2005; Tulchin, Bobes, Espina, Hernandez, 2005; Perez-Stable, 2006; Habel, 2006).

But almost twenty years later, it seems that Cuba has not undergone a transition. The question to be asked is therefore why and how the socialist regime has managed to survive despite the fall of the USSR. Few analysts have dedicated their research to that question. Klepak (2005) insists on the emphasis made on education and health care throughout the worst years of the economic crisis, to the detriment of the army budget. According to him, it shows that the Cuban State continued to bet on socialist values instead of organizing repression. Daniel Ortega (2006) says that the dissemination of political billboards, which picture the revolutionary norms to be enforced, creates a distinct urban landscape and a nationalist, revolutionary and socialist “normalized community,” from which it is difficult to dissent. Bloch (2006; 2007) describes and interprets Cuban everyday life so as to show how the Cuban population is entangled in competing norms (the official revolutionary norm and the unofficial survival norm) and how their social experience therefore becomes meaningless, which prevents them from uprising and claiming their rights, thus helping to maintain the status quo.

My focus draws from those visions, with a critical perspective. The concept of civil society has, since the fall of the USSR, been used in a normative sense, which discards it to understand actual Cuban dynamics. The notion of transition is used in a similar way, as if there were a specific path Cuba was supposed to follow to finally reach democracy. My experience is that dissidents in Cuba are quite marginalized and generally unable to discuss strategic issues with their fellow citizens who more often than not know very little about the alternatives they try to elaborate. As far as self-employed workers, they are new actors indeed but since market reforms have been quite limited, their role is minor in Cuban politics today. There is no status quo, but changing dynamics, which cannot be understood without close scrutiny and extensive fieldwork. To show

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the complex interactions between the resilient Cuban State<sup>2</sup> and the emerging actors in the Cuban society, I propose to focus, using some Foucauldian concepts, on the lively web of distinct political, cultural and social groups working from *within* the regime, fighting for space *within* the regime, so as to try and implement new ways of doing or thinking politics in Cuba.

I have identified four groups<sup>3</sup> of people who have managed to push boundaries and experiment freedom through the objectification of their daily reality, that is the transformation of that reality into an object of knowledge and the experimentation of modes of subjectivation of that reality.<sup>4</sup> Although there are many more, I focused on those four groups because they are the only ones which have stood the test of time (in this case, about ten years), and managed to maintain a semi-autonomous position within the socialist political order. Though they, like all Cubans, have an ambivalent relationship with it, they share one particular goal: making the dissonant Cuban social experience more coherent, give it meaning (or in other words, harmonizing it). I am interested in analyzing the way in which those Cubans experience what I would call civic principles, and the way in which they secure space for that purpose in a hostile authoritarian context. I would like to demonstrate that it can be more efficient to produce an analysis in terms of collective action inside the Cuban authoritarian regime than to look for dissidents or a Cuban civil society acting against the regime.

I will demonstrate through the description and interpretation of semi autonomous collective action in Cuba the ambivalence that links Cubans

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2. Richard Baum (2006) proposes the concept of resilience to analyze the Chinese State. I draw from his work since the concept seems particularly suited for Cuba: Cuban leaders have managed to maintain a strong centralized political authority while implementing sets of reforms.

3. I decided to keep the anonymity of the studied subjects, therefore no names (either of the groups or of individuals) will be provided.

4. For Foucault, subjection is a positive mode of subjectivation because the individual obeys the norm, and therefore exerts his liberty. Resistance is consequently not the opposite of subjection, but a complementary part in every kind of subjective experience. There is always a tension between the two. See Michel Foucault, "Deux essais sur le sujet et le pouvoir," in Hubert Dreyfus et Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault, un parcours philosophique*, Gallimard, Paris, p.297-321, 1984.

to the regime and how this explains why dissidents do not have much echo inside the island, but on the other hand I will show that this ambivalence does not necessarily entail political and social apathy. Indeed some groups manage to partly emancipate from both what I call the revolutionary socialization (the revolutionary norms, what we can understand as a moral economy, in Foucault's words, are embedded in their construction of self) and from norms linked to the logic of survival (illegal traffics, black market, prostitution, etc.) though their activities do not escape from the State 's *trompe l'oeil* liberalization tactics.

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Post-1989, the Cuban social experience is chaotic for the Cuban people since laws and norms keep changing. Economic reforms were implemented in the 1990s (Monreal, 1994; Dominguez, 1997; Mesa Lago, 2003) but the economy has since then been recentralized (Mesa Lago 2005). And we can wonder if the permanent semi-illegality in which people have to live in order to obtain basic goods isn't just another mode of social control (Bloch, 2006). Political reforms were also implemented (Roman, 1995; Valdés Paz, 1999; Dilla, 2000) but practices still remain quite vertical (democratic centralism) and bureaucratic. We therefore do not face a linear process of liberalization but cycles of opening and repression with limited changes that can always be reversed. Cuban people have therefore learnt to cope with two competing norms: the revolutionary official norm and the survival unofficial norm. It is impossible to survive without engaging in illegal activities but at the same time it is impossible to keep one's status without abiding by the official rules, or claiming to do so (Bloch, 2006). Such a regime<sup>5</sup> incites to lie and bend rules and norms. The social revolutionary experience is therefore that of "cognitive discordance" (Festinger, 1957; Hirschman, 1983), since there is a fundamental disruption between the revolutionary discursive logic and everyday-life practices of survival. The absence of trustworthy infor-

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5. I understand "regime" as a set of conditions, which create regular patterns. In the Cuban case, Vincent Bloch (2006) has demonstrated that the existence of two competing norms, with which all Cubans have to deal, entails a social and political status quo.

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mation and the consequent existence of widespread rumors reinforce the loss of meaning (Bloch, 2007).

Such a context reifies individuals and prevents them from attempting to organize themselves collectively. Every citizen suspects others of watching and possibly denouncing his illegal activities, and this fear encloses people into silence and passivity. Moreover, 70% of Cubans were born after 1959. They have only experienced State socialism and their knowledge of the outside world is extremely partial and distorted by tales told by travelers and images shown on Cuban television. They have been shaped by certain values and norms, the revolutionary socialization, from which it is difficult to emancipate. That is why ambivalence towards the regime is a fundamental characteristic of the Cuban social experience. We would expect dissidents to manage to frame that reality and emerge as a voice for the silent Cuban population but they have thus far been unable to do so. Essentially for two reasons: they are disconnected from everyday life since they are permanently controlled by the Cuban State, and their political choice is one of systemic opposition to the socialist regime. Their discourse is consequently inaudible to the majority of the people.

There is a problem in terms of reality framing which partly explains why though most people agree on what should be changed, nobody rises to do so. Yet though the odds seemed against it, some groups of people do manage to objectify their social experience and be creative so as to find a new grasp on their individual and collective reality. I've focused on groups, in the arts world, that try to push boundaries and experiment freedom in their daily practices.

## **The Possibility for Collective Action**

Though artists and intellectuals did experience repression, the arts world in the revolutionary period has produced quite a lively and critical voice. The fact is that Fidel's famous speech in June 1961 located the arts in a sort of blurred zone: *dentro de la revolución todo, contra la revolución nada*. That motto made it possible for artists and intellectuals to interpret the rule with a certain degree of freedom. But it also gave censors a certain degree of freedom to determine who was counter-revolutionary and who was not.

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The beginning of the Special Period allowed for more freedom of expression, but Raúl's speech in March 1996, accusing some intellectuals to be a fifth column inside Cuba, seemed to close the possibility to coin alternative forms of expression in Cuba. Paradoxically it is at that moment that new social, cultural and intellectual spaces started to emerge. Different reasons explain these dynamics. The creation of the *Asociación Hermanos Saiz* (AHS), in 1986, allowed for young artists and intellectuals to be integrated into institutions while being protected from more conservative and dogmatic authorities, and the changing legal framework, in the 1990s, created new possibilities for semi autonomous associations to emerge. Moreover although Raúl's speech<sup>6</sup> made it very clear that autonomous thinking and action would not be permitted, no explicit criteria were put forward. He only mentioned socialist values without defining them. Since limits are not clear and since Cuban authorities claim there is no censorship in Cuba, artists and intellectuals can decide to experiment and try to push boundaries. To do *as if* there existed freedom of speech and action.<sup>7</sup> And this is what the groups I have identified have been doing since then.

They are rappers, popular educators, poet-performers and libertarian socialists. What do they have in common? Such a question might at first glance seem preposterous. But in Cuba they share both a common vision of resistance against the paternalistic control of the leadership and what we can call common practices of emancipation (from paternalism, authoritarianism, vertical hierarchies, sets of norms, and censorship) in order to harmonize their social experience and assert their individuality. The practices they devised and implemented in their everyday life single them out. I will analyze them through the example of the poets-performers.

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6. "Por supuesto, debemos distinguir (...) entre el investigador cubano que puede pensar de modo diferente al vigente en torno a cualquier asunto, pero desde posiciones desde el socialismo, y en los marcos apropiados para ellos, de aquel que de hecho se ha vuelto un cubano con ciudadanía cubana y hasta con el carné del Partido, divulgando sus posiciones con la complacencia de nuestros enemigos." Speech pronounced on the 23rd of March, 1996.

7. Goldfarb (2006) analyzes the Solidarity Movement in Poland as people defending freedom by acting freely: "In the words of the most articulate leader of this movement, 'they acted as if they lived in a free society' and a free society resulted. They presented themselves to each other as independent citizens and in the process they created an independent public." p. 33.

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One of the main characteristics of the four groups is their focus on the reconstruction of the individuality in order to emancipate it from the regime propaganda of self and collective sacrifice.

The group of poet-performers was created in Alamar in the 1990s. It is a heir to many previous artistic endeavors. Their idea was to link different kinds of artists, autodidacts or not, and try to promote news forms of expression in the community. They started by creating a new identity for the city through the painting of graffiti, wherever it was possible to do so. Indeed, Alamar, which used to be a model city for Che's "new man," is built in soviet-style architecture. It lends it a sad and impersonal atmosphere. One specific sign is particularly significant of that will to "re-coin" their daily reality. The "Alamar" graffiti, made of playful shapes and colors is to be read as a counterpoint to the very austere "Alamar" sculpture which indicates the entrance to the city. Another graffiti says "revolución del ser". It can be read as an alternative to Fidel's definition of revolution, which is shown on huge panels everywhere in the country. Instead of promoting a normative vision of revolution, they propose to reflect on the revolutionary state of being, instead of promoting an ideological scheme, they propose to question the reality in which they live. They also organize workshops (poetry, multimedia, sculpture, graffiti and ceramic) literally in the streets, or in building halls, so as to attract people and show that anyone could be creative if let free to express oneself. I interpret this practice as a way to recognize individual knowledge and know-how as individual characteristics and not only as elements of a whole. It is also a way to reflect on the constraints and norms they have incorporated as subjects of the revolutionary socialization, thus allowing them to assert the possibility for an semi autonomous self, capable of self transformation. Foucault's notion of subjectivation is useful again to understand how those Cubans accept themselves as subjected beings, and at the same time become subjects through the production of their modes of existence. That process allows for the reconstruction of a new collective identity, made of singular subjects, and far from the leadership's monolithic vision of the Cuban nation.

Another characteristic is their self-organization and self-experimentation within communities in order to actively reconstruct the citizen's relationship to polity with a vision from below.

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In Cuba nearly all forms of collective action must be organized from above by the concerned official organizations. People are supposed to voice their complaints during mass organizations meetings, and not to take steps by themselves to solve their problems. But they often receive little response from their leaders and therefore resort to illegal solutions. The poet-performers have put forward alternative ways. They neither promote official nor illegal means to solve issues. They instead become public protagonists, claiming their rights through public action. During some of the worst years of the economic crisis, garbage was not removed from the streets of Alamar. To protest against that state of things, which had been denounced for months in mass organization assemblies, they threw themselves in the garbage and acted as if they were dead. The image of bodies in the garbage drew attention from the whole neighborhood, local authorities and the police. The police detained members of the group but they were finally let free and the garbage removed within the next days. This action epitomizes one of the group's main objectives: to attempt to do away with the fear (of repression, of social stigma, etc.) and show that it is possible to do things collectively *outside* of official organizations. That kind of action goes against political apathy and people's beliefs that they cannot change their everyday life reality. It demonstrates that it is possible to address social, political and artistic questions in an autonomous and unofficial way, with a concrete positive impact.

They practice what I call symbolic rituals of emancipation,<sup>8</sup> such as direct actions, poetic performances, collective lectures and readings or cathartic shows, to get rid of top down imposed social attitudes.

The poet-performers organize performances, directly tuned to the Cuban everyday life experience, and which constitute another way to appropriate spaces. One of them is about freedom of speech. It was performed in Santiago de Cuba, during an official festival, but the group chose a central public space to perform instead of the officially designated area. In that performance, a few men are literally wrapped up in a narrow

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8. I define the "symbolic rituals of emancipation" as a ceremony, with a succession of established sequences, using symbolic elements (signs), in order to gain access to another dimension of human experience, in which one can understand and accept the norms and constraints of their socialization and at the same time learn to do away with fear.

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nationalist vision of the world (their costumes are made of newspaper and flags that symbolize nationalism). They can only get their information from very restricted sources (they breathe through a pipe linked to a suitcase which embodies Information). They manage to break free from that yoke (they get rid of their costumes and burn them). They are therefore born anew and become free men and citizens. A whole meditation ritual follows. The performance took place without any action from the local police because the group always plays with their uncertainties: art or counter-revolutionary action? While the policemen contact their hierarchy, there is time to perform, though members of the group have been hassled by local authorities and sometimes even by the police or the state security. But they have never stopped working. A member of the group once told me that he would not stop unless he was in physical or mental danger.

Taking that example as representative of the other groups, I conclude, for now, that their members act together with intentional will, in order to get a grasp on their reality and invent new meanings to it, what we could call “reality framing”. They put emphasis on the re-coining of their reality and on direct actions to defeat the prevailing social and political apathy. The spaces they create are collective and they share common objectives while cooperating and sometimes competing with other spaces. They can therefore be analyzed in terms of collective action (Erik Neveu, 1996; Daniel Cefaï, 2007) though they don’t always have specific claims but rather propose an alternative way of experiencing reality, what a poet called the quest for *una cívica*, civility. That is why I call those experiments arenas of symbolic resistance to the local hegemony, and of emancipation from it, or in other words “emancipation spaces,” rather than social movements. Indeed in the Cuban context the notion of social or political movements are not quite efficient because, as Xuegang Zhou<sup>9</sup> puts it: “the communist state claims a monopoly of the public goods and denies the legitimacy of interests at the individual level. An important consequence is that any behaviour outside State control is seen as a challenge to the state.” Collective action is therefore seen as a threat. The question that comes to mind is then: how are these experiments possible

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9. Xuegang Zhou, “Unorganized Interests and Collective Action in Communist China.” *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 58, No. 1. (Feb., 1993), pp. 54-73.

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in a Cuban society in which we know that any attempt at challenging revolutionary norms meets almost immediate social disapproval if not outright repression?

### **Being In and Out, Playing with the Limits**

With the Special Period new ways of dealing with such experiments are implemented. Since the Cuban leadership has more difficulty in dealing with the growing social and economic complexity that followed the fall of the Soviet Union, it adopts *laissez-faire* tactics in order to control those dynamics in a different and less costly way. In the cultural sphere, it means that artists and intellectuals can express themselves quite freely as long as they do not structurally criticize the socialist regime. Since artists and intellectuals are offered what can be considered privileges such as a better house, a car, the right to travel and even publish works abroad, they are very vulnerable to State control. After experiencing a privileged life (in Cuban terms), it is hard to renounce it. Daily life economic hardships in Cuba are significant enough to be used as a means of pressure for political conformity. Most artists and intellectuals are co-opted that way. Authorities can also count on the revolutionary socialization. Its values and utopias have shaped Cubans' vision of the world and it is hard for them to extricate themselves out of it.

Members of the studied groups have all experienced co-optation, repression or marginalization. The relationship between cultural authorities and the hip hop movement epitomizes the cooptation and marginalization strategy. To cope with the emerging movement the AHS was first summoned, in the late 1990s, to integrate most rap artists, though it is supposed to accept only vanguard artists. But when the hip hop movement emerged, it seems that no cultural institution knew how to cope with it. This membership helped the movement to develop and at the same time provided the authorities with means of pressure and control. The situation dramatically changed for rap artists when the National Rap Agency was created in 2002. The 'best' rappers (only nine groups) became professional artists, with official recognition, promotion and wages, while the others were turned into 'amateurs'. A few years afterwards, the then president of the AHS, decided that most rappers should belong to local *casas de cultura* while only the 'best' artists should remain in the AHS. The definition of 'best artist' has been an issue of contention ever since

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between cultural authorities and rappers, and between rappers, since they were not asked to give their own point of view on the issue and quite a few think that the selection of the ‘best rappers’ was not fair. Those decisions created more divisions inside the movement and contributed to establish more hierarchical lines among rappers. We can here see clearly how some gained recognition and institutional status while the others were on the contrary pushed into the background.

Cooptation and marginalization are the main strategies used by the Cuban authorities. Repression remains at low levels. Control more often takes the face of prohibition than that of repression (rappers have been prohibited from performing for some time after they have had a critical behavior towards the State, through attitudes or lyrics). Only the poet-performers have actually experienced more serious repression: local authorities, party members, the police and the State Security have all, at one moment or another, intervened to curtail the group’s activities, trying to prohibit it to receive any financial help from abroad, detaining some of its members in police stations, trying to convince them to put an end to their experiments and become more mainstream artists. But it is important to mention that none of its members ever went to prison and that they were never physically threatened.

On a general basis, members of the studied groups have resisted cooptation and repression. This resistance comes from the specific configuration of the groups. Formed during dark times (the beginning of the Special Period), they have learnt to survive together, helping out one another. They have built what Mark Granovetter (1973) calls “strong ties,” trust and affection, and have generated a common organizational culture made of shared beliefs and strategies. Working together has contributed to affording meaning to a disillusioned social experience, and creating feelings of solidarity cemented in shared experience (including repression). The medium size of groups has conjured a sense of “family,” as group members themselves put it. Last, “selective incentives” in Olsonian terms are also an important element. The groups have managed to attract attention and resources, especially from foreign counterparts, which individuals alone would not. The capacity to generate collective autonomous sources of income certainly explains the relative stability as far as involvement is concerned (that is, the slim turn-over).

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All groups have also created “weak ties,” (Mark Granovetter, 1973) i.e. more or less loose networks, both locally and internationally, which are regularly activated in order to ask for support or participation in a special event. This prevents them from feeling isolated when pressured or stigmatized. It makes it complex and potentially costly for the Cuban authorities to exert power too harshly upon them.

That relative resistance to State pressure does not mean that the groups broke free from the revolutionary socialization. They indeed show quite an ambivalent attitude towards the regime. They articulate their action from *within* the regime, using what Jason Lyall (2006) names the mechanism of “entrapment,” i.e. the gaps in the State’s rhetoric, to call attention to certain “focal points.” They never structurally criticize the regime, they rather point out the discordance between the epics of sacrifice celebrated by the leadership and everyday life struggle, between the claimed rhetoric of equality and the actual discrimination at work, or between the free access to education and health systems and their deteriorating capacity. They have no apparent systemic claims and most of them are organized *within* State institutions. Rappers belong to the AHS or to local cultural institutions. The collective/group of poets has its own workshop, inside the gallery of a local culture house/house of culture, which pays its electricity bill. The intellectuals also belong to the AHS. Though it is probably one of the most “liberal” institutions in the Cuban regime, its function is to legitimate State politics. And the popular educators are organized in NGOs that show allegiance to the Cuban leadership, defending it in international social forums all over the world. The price of semi-autonomy is the acceptance of imposed limits. If rappers were not in the AHS it would be quite difficult for them to organize concerts in cultural places. At the same time, the AHS membership card can become a resource for audacious cultural undertakers: if some official authority wants to curtail their initiatives, they use it as a protective umbrella, arguing they have official authorization for what they are doing. The whole game consists in never exactly declaring what the events are about, obtaining the official paper and then being audacious within certain limits.

Eventually, I must also mention that those four groups are all based in suburban Havana. Most of their members live in popular districts of the periphery (Alamar, Guanabacoa, Marianao, etc.), where they generally

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perform. I have noticed that it is generally far easier for the groups to obtain the authorization to organize events in the periphery than in central hot spots. (It is not as clear for the hip hop movement, which has managed to gain access to central venues in Havana through the Rap Agency).

The Cuban State's cooptation and marginalization strategies represent new ways of control, but they are not always optimally effective. Indeed the groups I've studied have managed to maintain a certain unity and have generally not allowed for individual promotion or repression. It is quite noticeable since most informal groups do not resist such pressure (many other cultural and intellectual endeavors have ended up in fights, splits and dissolutions). It does not mean that State tactics have not provoked tensions within the groups and between them. But up to now they have managed to keep on working for more than ten years, which must be considered as quite an achievement in a country where freedom of association is not guaranteed.

Pressure, cooptation, marginalization can also be used to demonstrate, especially to the international community, that there indeed exists freedom of expression in Cuba. In changing times these new modes of expression could also be used as possible resources for later purposes. Those daring Cubans represent social and cultural capital and could become allies in troubled transition times since they have strong roots in their local communities and are quite respected both locally and in the artistic sphere, and they have created international networks. We are facing a game in which the regime tries to control and monitor more 'liberal' spaces, and in which the protagonists of those spaces have understood that they can play with borders and therefore constantly try to expand the spaces they have managed to create.

## **Conclusion**

These groups are not representative but significant of the existing possibility to organize resistance inside the socialist Cuban regime. The strategic interactions between the State and what I called "spaces of emancipation" show that the game is quite complex and that different cards are being played. The regime strives to control and monitor more "liberal" spaces in which the protagonists have understood that they can play with boundaries and therefore constantly attempt to expand the spaces they have managed to create. Of course those spaces do not escape

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the State's orchestration of a *trompe l'oeil* liberalization but they work in a somewhat autonomous way, which allows them to objectify their social experience. Those spaces also epitomize the Cubans' ambivalence toward the socialist regime. Since this regime constructed them as men and citizens, they are completely entangled in the "revolutionary socialization." However, the protagonists of those spaces try to emancipate themselves from it, in order to re-shape and re-coin their social reality.

A negative hypothesis is that those spaces are only "pocket protests" that have little impact on the course of Cuban contemporary history. A positive hypothesis would be that those spaces constitute social capital and that their protagonists are actually constructing the possibility for a new political imagination in Cuba. They could be an alternative (something not expected by the regime) to the monolithic socialist imagination though they incorporate elements of that socialist imagination (something not expected by Western observers). We must indeed understand that the revolutionary imagination must be considered as an essential part of Cuba's contemporary history and social experience. The necessary change should not overlook that aspect of Cuban contemporary history and politics.

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