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Lonely planet: affect and authenticity in guidebooks of Cuba

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ABSTRACT

Record numbers of international visitors to Cuba in recent years amidst dramatic political and economic shifts have reinforced the island's reputation as a destination to visit urgently, 'before it changes'. In foregrounding a normalised framework of affect and authenticity and directing tourists towards intimate experiences and encounters, bestselling English-language guidebooks contribute towards a selective interpretation of Cuba and of Cubans. However, their recommendations obscure the work, stresses, inequalities and political implications on which touristic encounters rest. This study emphasises the influence of texts in the mediation and management of affect in tourism, challenging the dominance of ethnographic methods in this field.

KEYWORDS

Affect; tourism; Cuba; identity; authenticity; encounter

Introduction

Travel journalists, just as commentators more broadly, are quick to insist that Cuba is on the brink of radical, irreversible change, prompted by recent events such as shifts in the island's relations with the US and the death of Fidel Castro in November 2016. Highlighting Cuba's reputation as simultaneously untouched, trendy and in flux, tourists are urged to 'experience the Caribbean island in all its unspoilt glory before it's too late ... Now that America and Cuba are friends, the race is on to see 2016's most exciting destination before it changes forever' (Jowaheer, 2016, no page). Such narratives are typical of a broader depiction of 'Cuba in transition' common to both academic and popular discourses – at least, outside the island. Unsurprisingly, it is a framing that is eagerly appropriated by tour operators. The Cuban state's most recent tourism promotional campaign, 'Auténtica Cuba', also appears to tacitly recognise this tendency, with an emphasis on authenticity as the island's unique selling point.

The very notion that Cuba risks becoming inauthentic has been partly fuelled by record numbers of tourists in recent years. Accelerated development of the industry during the 1990s amidst an extreme economic crisis known as the 'Special Period' was designed to rapidly generate hard currency, capitalising on the island's many geographical advantages, highly qualified and low-wage workforce and a growing global fascination with Cuba in general (Babb, 2011, p. 54). By 1999, the tourism sector had generated \$2 billion US and had become 'the motor of the economy' (Saney, 2004, p. 29). Related reforms since this period have sanctioned a number of tourist service businesses, permitting Cubans to rent rooms in their homes to tourists (as *casas particulares*), to run restaurants (known as *paladares*) from their homes, to sell artisan crafts and to operate private taxis. Since then, numbers

of tourists have continued to rise dramatically, with an accelerated rush in recent years: in 2015 alone, there was a 16% increase in visitors to a total of 3.5 m; this figure is expected to rise to 10 m by 2030 (Feinberg & Newfarmer, 2016, p. 1).

Cuba has become a trophy destination, revealing plainly tourism's capacity to commodify national identity and culture. Scholars emphasise the significant authority that tourism holds in articulating the established understanding of places and identities (Hollinshead, 2004), or in other words, its representative or 'worldmaking' value. For Keith Hollinshead, this value is generated through the multiple intentional and unintentional ways in which tourism discourse and practice may 'authoritatively announce or freshly affirm the felt "true" character of places ... [and] the preferred vision held by or about a particular local people' (2004, p. 25). As such, the focus of this paper is not the extent of their apparent accuracy or inaccuracy in reflecting an underlying 'true' or 'authentic' culture; rather, it challenges the basis of authenticity by instead emphasising that the notion of places and peoples is constructed – to a great degree by tourism and through touristic texts. Moreover, such representations may dialogue directly with local constructions of national identity, as some researchers have explored (Cohen, 2010). In this way, the framing of Cuba employed in texts such as guidebooks, which mould tourist expectation and behaviour, are highly relevant as the island becomes more exposed to ever-increasing flows of tourists and capital.

Authenticity, affect and tourism

Despite the dominance of authenticity as a buzzword in tourism marketing and the intense critical attention it has received in tourism research, the concept's complexity is reflected in scholars' multiple, differing interpretations and challenges in the literature to its validity (Wang, 1999). Ning Wang's intervention distinguishes the authenticity of toured objects with the authenticity of experience (1999), the former involving engagement with products and scenes that are believed to be attributable to 'traditional' people and ways of life. Authenticity of experience, by contrast, is rooted in the (temporary) fulfilment of the 'real' self, which emerges when the trappings of modern, daily and working lives are transcended – for instance, through travel (Wang, 1999, p. 360). The pursuit of authenticity has thus been described as a modern pilgrimage in search of the sacred (Graburn, 1989). Backpacking, volunteer- and independent tourism, in particular, have been understood as emerging from a drive to explore profound experiences rooted in opportunity for intimate contact with the visited population (Cohen, 2003; Conran, 2011; Uriely, Yonay, & Simchai, 2002). Tourists often seek to have intimate contact with the host environment, associating access to its 'back spaces' with culturally authentic experiences (MacCannell, 1973; MacCannell, 1999, p. 95). The valued status of 'traveller' (rather than that of the inferior, inauthenticity-accepting 'tourist'), for example, is distinguished by 'behaviours of exploring places privately and experimenting with local food' (Pearce, 1982, p. 31).

As such, the experiential aspect of tourism – the spirit of a place, the meaning of its people and history – can be sold and consumed just as any tangible goods (Rothman, 1998, cited in Hollinshead, 2004, p. 27). Reflecting the broader affective turn in the Humanities, there has been a shift to include affect in tourism research, to consider the sensing, experiential tourist body (Crouch, 2002), and for greater attention to be paid to 'the other touristic ways of seeing the world ... the sonic, the tactile, the aromatic' (Edensor, 2006, pp. 26–27). Indeed, it is clear that affect organises the discursive and lived experience of tourism to a significant extent. Amalia Cabezas argues that tourism in the Caribbean draws on and perpetuates an imperial extraction of affect from the region, by the West, proposing that intimate forms of labour continue to be exploited by both large tour operators and individuals on the ground (2009, p. 11). In conceptualising affect as circulating intensities or forces experienced in

and through the body, and in particular the interpersonal resonance or 'stickiness' of affect (Ahmed, 2015), ethnographic research has drawn attention to the complex emotional negotiations performed by tourists and service providers in sensing and interpreting each other's feelings (Simoni, 2016; Tucker, 2009). However, with some notable exceptions (McGregor, 2000), the meditation of feeling and bodies by tourism texts has tended to be disregarded.

Guidebooks: affective maps

One proposal made by this article is that guidebooks are key texts that participate in creating an affective landscape of Cuba in the tourist gaze, the latter being the largely unconscious force by which peoples, places and pasts are labelled and classified through tourism (Urry, 1990). The notion of place is built up long before travel takes place, as an anticipation or fantasy that does not appear autonomously but rather is generated by a constant, palimpsestic layering of media signs and images (Urry, 1990, p. 13). Indeed, the authoritative myth-making of the anticipatory gaze is well developed in the literature. It has been convincingly argued that tourists treat guidebooks as devotional texts, faithfully following their directions towards authentic sites and experiences (Horne, 1984, p. 10). Guidebooks create a 'cognitive framework' (Bhattacharyya, 1997, p. 372), 'replete with cues about what to look at, what information to consider' (Edensor, 2004, p. 340), despite appearing, paradoxically, to liberate the tourist towards individual decision-making, and allowing the affirmation of the intrepid 'explorer' self-identity. Within the competitive marketplace of international tourism, choices of where to eat, stay or spend money rest largely on the information made available to the tourist-consumer (Fodness & Murray, 1999, p. 510). Guidebooks are often the main source of such information.

Beyond simply directing the tourist towards certain consumer choices, guidebooks' methodological usefulness to tourism research is underscored by the significant ways in which they regulate and mediate the tourist experience (Peel & Sorenson, 2016, p. 3). As such, they exert substantial influence in touristic tastes and attitudes, and therefore, social change (Mazor-Tregerman, Mansfeld, & Elyada, 2017). However, in spite of the clear usefulness of analysing texts such as guidebooks in order to interrogate the normative appropriation and management of feeling in tourism contexts, scholars in this field have tended to favour ethnographic methods (see, for example, Hochschild, 2012; Simoni, 2016). Such ethnographies generally centre any discussion of affect on the face-to-face navigations of informal host-guest interactions, and may draw heavily on the researcher's personal reflections. Studies on the use and influence of guidebooks themselves may also be primarily interview-based (McGregor, 2000; Young, 2009), rather than a textual analysis approach. However, the normalising and authorising frames produced and sustained by tourism texts are of vital significance, and demand serious critique (Bender, Gidlow, & Fisher, 2013) as mechanisms that construct the world, especially for countries such as Cuba where tourism has come to occupy large economic, social and cultural weight.

Indeed, despite the increase of tourism information online, the hard-copy guidebook has a pronounced relevance to tourism in Cuba. Due to the slow and limited development of internet access, Cuban service providers have only recently had the opportunity to exploit online marketing fora, such as private guesthouse advertisement on Air BnB and mycasaparticular.com. State agencies' engagement with online advertising is also very limited in comparison to its competitors. Despite the recent emerge of Wi-Fi hotspots across public areas in Havana, roaming internet access for the tourist is not currently possible, ruling out popular tools such as TripAdvisor, Google Maps and other apps and web-sites. Moreover, modern independent tourists may express a particular reliance on

guidebooks in Cuba. First, the authentic/inauthentic binary that is seemingly produced by tourism overexposure is commonly seen as being more pronounced in Cuba than in other destinations. Frequent references to the 'real' Cuba that lies beyond its tourist resorts in Varadero highlight both the sense that tourism's social impact has cleaved Cuban society in two, and the real demarcation and policing of tourist spaces by the state in order to limit damage to revolutionary ideals and protect tourists from crime (Taylor & McGlynn, 2009, p. 409). Travel bans for US visitors, its resulting status as a 'forbidden fruit' and a general sense of Cuba's political, cultural and geographic isolation since 1959 have also contributed to its apparent unknowability. Second, the established perception of the Cuban government as censorial or repressive may encourage tourists to seek an ostensibly impartial guide in guidebooks and to avoid the beaten path promoted by the state's Ministerio de Turismo (MINTUR).

A total of 12 Rough Guide to Cuba and Lonely Planet Cuba editions were consulted as part of this research, 6 from each publisher, covering the period 1997–2016. These two titles were selected on the merit of being, by a wide margin, the bestsellers in the UK – in the US, Lonely Planet tops the ranking and Rough Guide is fourth (Mesquita, 2016) –and are therefore significant for tourists of English-speaking countries. After Canadian tourists (who overwhelmingly choose the so-called fly and flop, resort-based style of tourism), the UK is the second largest 'sender' of tourists to Cuba (Oficina Nacional de Estadística e Información, 2016, p. 8).¹ The date range chosen correlates with the re-emergence of international tourism in Cuba since the early 1990s, including the island's recent tourism 'boom' and related increase in guidebooks sales.² Although tourism was eventually considered a necessary safety raft in the economic storm of the Special Period, there was limited activity, strategy and investment in the sector before this time. In each new edition, much of the guidebooks' text was republished with only slight alterations, and to content that was irrelevant to this study, such as addresses, prices and opening times. A period of four months of fieldwork in Cuba in 2012 plus two shorter research trips (in 2016 and 2017) during which time the researcher carried out interviews with tourists, policymakers and service providers and completed extensive participant observations of sites and tours, served to corroborate the analysis; some references to anecdotal evidence are cited in the paper.

Cuba in the global affective geography

Just as other popular tourist destinations in the Caribbean, Cuba may be located within a global affective or sensual geography (Crouch, 2010; Törnqvist, 2012), in other words, a cultural mapping of places associated with sexual and sensual potential. For Mimi Sheller, 'the Caribbean has been repeatedly imagined and narrated as a tropical paradise in which the land, plants, resources, bodies and cultures of its inhabitants are open to be invaded, occupied, bought, moved, used, viewed and consumed in various ways' (Sheller, 2003, p. 13). For Sheller (2003), these historically inscribed imaginings, narrations and material extractions continue to inform the practices of tourists today.

Guidebooks provide an interpretation of Cuba through specific affective terms, selectively framing embodied and sensory experiences. Havana, for example, exists in the sensory experience that surrounds the individual who walks through it: 'Havana is a visceral place. The best sights can't be located on any map. To find them you'll need patience, spontaneity and a sturdy pair of legs' (Sainsbury & Waterson, 2011, p. 92). Echoing the style in which nineteenth-century writers narrated scenery in terms of their personal movement through it (Pratt, 1992), their 'commanding view' framed as proof of their mastery of unknown, peripheral and non-Western worlds (Spurr, 1993), tourists may understand 'authentic' Havana simply via their embodied passage through its streets. The pursuit of

authenticity, such as accessing spots 'off the beaten track', is a crude, instinctive experience involving an embodied movement through space, which involves the tourist's physical effort as much as their attention. These constructions place the tourist at the centre of the scene, commanding the site before them through their sheer physicality and gaze. Underlying these examples is the transformative promise of such sensory immersion. In creating physical distance from the mundaneness of home, and immersing the body and senses in the sights, smells and sounds of an exotic climate, tourists may 'lose themselves' and 'go native'. These discourses naturalise the identities involved in these constructions (the perceived civilised self contrasted with the passionate Other) and assume the right of the tourist to traverse new spaces as they desire.

Informal contact also emerges as a valued aspect of contemporary tourist experience. As the authors of the 2010 edition of the Rough Guide recommend, 'a street party can be one of the most serendipitous and enchanting aspects of your trip ... These state-organized and funded events, often arranged through politically oriented community groups called CDRs, create an ideal opportunity to rub shoulders with locals' (McAuslan & Norman, 2010, p. 12). This unique aspect of Cuban political and social life is presented as an uncomplicated (even 'ideal') gateway to pleasurable and authentic contact zones in which the tourist's physical presence ('rubbing shoulders') requires no formal permission or invitation. The Rough Guide's focus on this 'back space' as a key intersection of authenticity and intimacy reveals a value placed on contexts in which the dynamics of host and guest are less clearly defined by mobility and economic privilege, or servility, as would be the case in a hotel for instance.

In further examples, the pursuit of intimate experiences seamlessly draws in discourses of sensuality, recalling Cynthia Enloe's assertion that sexual desire is a central component of the tourism ideology in general (1990, p. 28). Following this paradigm, guidebooks inscribe Cuba itself with erotic value through romantic and sexual innuendo: the Lonely Planet invites tourists to 'fall in love with classic Cuba in Havana', and to 'be charmed by [María la Gorda]' (Sainsbury & Waterson, 2015, p. 34). Similarly:

Havana, city of jarring paradoxes and unfathomable contradictions where seductive beauty sidles up to spectacular decay and revolutionary iconography is juxtaposed with sun, sea, sand and sex and a diluting slice of austere socialism. (Sainsbury & Waterson, 2011, p. 45)

Far from presenting an alternative perspective of Havana concerned with authenticity, this narrative reworks hackneyed images of exotic sensuality, mysteriousness and a lack of logic which have long been associated with the Caribbean (Sheller, 2003) and Cuba in particular (Babb, 2011; Schwartz, 1997). Representations such as these coalesce to present a kind of affective landscape, in which people and places, crudely drawn through stereotypes of exotic sensuality, lie open to discovery, with the rich and uncomplicated potential for intimate encounters. In addition, they assign designate specific sites with the potential for hedonistic, spontaneous and/or sexualised contact between tourist and hosts. For example, the 2011 edition of the Lonely Planet features the Malecón (Havana's famous seawall) in its top 24 recommended experiences of the island, a site which 'acts as a substitute living room for tens of thousands of cavorting, canoodling, romance-seeking habaneros ... tackle it at sunset with a bottle of rum in your hand and the notion that anything is possible come 10pm' (Sainsbury & Waterson, 2011, p. 7). Indeed, the Malecón is given particular symbolic charge in other cultural representations, as a site of liminality: it forms a border to a larger contact zone between Cuba and the world on both micro and macro levels, for example, as the site at which *balseros* have launched rafts to reach Florida. This liminality is expressed in the way that the Lonely Planet frames the seawall as both public and private, a domestic 'living room' where bodies come into intimate contact in the dark. While the Malecón is indeed a site of encounter, the significance of this passage is that it

encourages tourists to adopt spontaneity, recalling and perpetuating the hedonistic, 'anything goes' piquancy that characterised Cuba's appeal to North American tourists in the first half of the twentieth century and has lingered beyond (Schwartz, 1997).

Guidebooks provide information about local culture in ways that similarly reinforce stereotypes through affective terms. Caribbean tourism has been particularly noted for normalising crude constructions of emotional traits, 'of happy, carefree, fun-loving men and women, colourful in behaviours, whose life is one of daytime indolence beneath the palms and a night-time of pleasure through music, dance and sex' (Patullo, 1996, p. 142). Guidebooks' seemingly factual representations do little to contradict the Latin lover myth. In a section titled 'national personality', the Lonely Planet declares with heavy-handed euphemism that Cubans are 'tactile ... nobody's shy about giving it a go' (Sainsbury, 2009, p. 53). Its placement in the basic information pages problematically normalises these constructions as useful contextual material. Moreover, since it is mentioned amongst other national personality traits, including sense of humour, the naturalised everydayness of sexual promiscuity is essentialised as an inherent way of being.

Female tourists are advised to expect sexual attention and macho values deeply embedded in everyday culture. Based on the blunt declaration that 'casual sex is a staple of Cuban life', the Rough Guide advises that '[female tourists] should brace themselves for quite a remarkable level of attention' (McAuslan & Norman, 2010, p. 71). Sexual attention – unequivocally heteronormative – should be interpreted as 'flattering' and 'chivalrous' (Sainsbury & Waterson, 2011, p. 510), since 'Cuban men manage to combine a courtly romanticism with wit and charm' (McAuslan & Norman, 2010, p. 71). In this sense, whether inviting sexual encounter or not, the female tourist body must be negotiated within fixed assumptions of local masculine hetero-normativity and *machismo*. Readers are therefore encouraged to expect sexual attention through *piropos* (cat-calls) because it is represented as an inherent element of everyday culture, rooted in an essentialised difference and understood as an expression of Cubans' casual attitudes towards sex.

In contrast to the representations of Cubans' apparently hyper-sexualised dress codes, however, female tourists are instructed to minimise attention by avoiding eye contact, choosing modest clothing and inventing an absent husband by wearing a wedding ring (McAuslan & Norman, 2010, p. 71). The terms framed by these guidebooks reinforce the idea that women's safety is solely their own responsibility; they also reveal the careful balancing act that the tourist body must navigate, in terms of embracing the enjoyable and sensual aspects of cultural difference while maintaining the power differential of the tourist gaze. Rules concerning tourist behaviour thereby further buttress (as a result of direct contrast) the same guidebooks' descriptions of Cubans' inherent tendency towards flirtation, skimpy dressing and promiscuous conduct.

The discourses of these touristic texts are significant because they hold the potential to inform encounters. As Megan Daigle observes, the notion held by Cubans and foreigners alike of hypersexuality in everyday Cuban culture has a self-fulfilling dialogism: tourists come to expect 'desirable and sexually energetic' locals, and Cubans who seek these tourists out 'become all the more sensual in the knowledge of what is expected of them' (2015, p. 7). Guidebooks are one of the ways that these often gendered and racialised stereotypes are mapped out and perpetuated. It may follow that tourism texts contribute directly to the subtle configurations of certain places as sex tourism destinations, as well as justifying or neutralising the wider phenomenon. This is a problem for various obvious reasons. While some scholarship has challenged the accusation that sex work is inherently exploitative, citing the relevance of personal motivation, agency and financial terms (Agustín, 2007; Ryan, 2000), it is clear that sex tourism is a demand- rather than supply-driven industry, and that in conditions of poverty (as is often the case in Latin America and the Caribbean), sexualised labour is

rarely an empowered choice (Kempadoo, 1999) and may result in serious issues such as the abduction of children into prostitution rings (Bandyopadhyay & Nascimento, 2010, p. 940).

Interior spaces, intimate encounters

A touristic quest for cultural authenticity is satisfied by both intimacy and interiority (Cohen, 2010, p. 162). Policy changes beginning in 2007 under Raúl Castro that permitted the conversion of domestic spaces into tourist businesses have facilitated this quest in Cuba to a greater measure. Given that housing had been a responsibility of the state as part of welfare provision since 1959, allowing homes to be used for private tourism profit was a significant compromise, and since then has been heavily regulated through inspections and taxes. Casa particular owners have profited from their increasing popularity, and have in turn been able to accommodate growing numbers of visitors faster than the construction of new hotel rooms. Tourists' desire to enter the domestic, interior spaces of everyday life in Cuba has been instrumental in shaping the informal market, opening up new contact zones in which the potential for encounter is multiplied. In tandem, the opportunity represented to Cubans by these ventures has increased the number of options available to consumers. In Havana, a proliferation of boutique guesthouses form the newest evolution of the market, such as 'Suite Havana',³ which charges a steep €200 per night. Air BnB began local property recruitment in April 2015. New mobile apps such as Junky and A la Mesa, which direct tourists towards *casas* and *paladares*, respectively, in any given area (albeit dependent on Wi-Fi downloads due to the impossibility of roaming data) has also capitalised on the market.

As the availability of *casas* has grown, so too has their mention in the pages of guidebooks. Alongside word-of-mouth recommendations, endorsements of specific guesthouses in guidebooks are influential, since online advertising is only increasing slowly. Guidebooks typically recommended them on the basis of interiority, describing them as 'an ideal way to gain an insight into the country and its people' (McAuslan & Norman, 2009, p. 145). The heightened contact with locals that they allow is central to their perceived authenticity. The Lonely Planet recommends private guesthouses with the following passage:

Picture the scene: there are two rocking chairs creaking on a polished colonial porch, a half-finished bottle of rum being passed amiably between guest and host, and the sound of lilting music drifting ethereally through the humid tropical darkness. It could be any casa particular on any street in any town, they're all the same. Shrugging off asphyxiating censorship and Cold War-style totalitarianism, Cuba can be one of the most candid countries on earth if you opt out of the government-sponsored resorts and stay in a casa particular. (Sainsbury & Waterson, 2011,p.7)

The tourist reader is invited to open their gaze onto a highly sensory scene based on the central, uncomplicated friendship between host and guest. The guidebook offers a guarantee of finding an emotionally involving, intimate experience at any Cuban guesthouse ('they're all the same'). Whilst simultaneously reinforcing the inauthenticity of the resort space, ordinary Cubans – those who rent their homes to tourists, rather than those who work in the 'government-sponsored' formal sector – are cast as gatekeepers to the 'real' Cuba. These examples reinforce the binary between authentic and inauthentic experiences rooted in close contact with locals and access to private, often domestic spaces. The candid contact afforded by the casa stands in contrast to the 'asphyxiating' state hotel experience; the faceless official version holds little symbolic value against the prioritised individual narrative accessed through one-to-one contact. Paradoxically, there has been discussion amongst scholars of Cuba regarding the pervasive *doble moral*⁴ in some parts of Cuban society, which means that people are rarely perceived to be 'authentic' and 'candid' to all interlocutors (Suárez Salazar,

2000, p. 245): what is true or correct depends to a great degree on the context of the action or the audience to whom a person is speaking (Hansing, 2011). In other words, the shift in social relations that is symbolised by the concept of *doble moral* would suggest that one-to-one contact is not as authentic as it is portrayed in these accounts.

Representations such as these set up expectations of unrestricted immersion not only in the Cuban domestic space but also within the Cuban social and political system. It is clear that a large number of tourists are drawn to Cuba because of their curiosity regarding revolutionary politics. As a result, as Florence Babb notes, those working in the industry are called on to field questions of a sensitive, political and often critical nature, and do so with 'coy ambivalence', playful allusions and cynicism (2011, p. 58). Such tactics are evidence of the sorts of negotiations and work concealed in the descriptions of the Cuban home as a candid space. According to the scene described in the Lonely Planet, renting rooms to tourists seemingly involves providing an uncensored narrative of revolutionary life to each paying guest, extending their role to unofficial political tour guide. In this way, guidebooks inform expectations that involve covert forms of labour.

Today, tourists have encounters with Cubans at an increased frequency than in the past. Studies indicate that the government initially sought to isolate tourists from the population based on a perceived threat to revolutionary ideals (Sánchez & Adams, 2008, p. 32) and has continued to limit and police host-guest contact in various ways (Cabezas, 2009, p. 145; Padilla & McElroy, 2007, p. 656; Roland, 2013). The demarcation of tourist spaces during the early 1990s may be interpreted as an effort by the government to minimise the troubling consequences of tourism, including the return of sex tourism and indicators of social inequality. The more recent opening up of spaces such as the home, as part of a series of economic model updates, has allowed contact to increase in staggered stages and in regulated ways. As such, the host-guest encounter in Cuba has political and moral entanglements that are glossed over by touristic texts. The examples cited in this article, such as the recommendation to join in with local CDR parties or to *maleconear* (socialise on the Malecón at night) do not elaborate on this complex context.

Furthermore, guidebooks' mediations of intimacy in private spaces such as homes render invisible the forms of work carried out in these sites. For *casa particular* owners, the financial reward for renting rooms is considerable (typically \$30 pesos convertible⁵ or more per night in Havana, plus extra potential income from meals, laundry and bicycle hire). Yet, unsurprisingly, this practice involves extensive labour – cooking, cleaning, dealing with the significant administration demanded by state regulations – as well as emotional labour, such as responding to potentially difficult questions about revolutionary ideology and spending social time with guests, experiences to which guidebooks assign special value. It is also worth remarking that Cuba's home-based businesses tend to signify gendered work, given the widespread intensification of women's domestic responsibilities during the Special Period (Hernández Hormilla, 2011, p. 113; Pertierra, 2008) and beyond. However, these issues and the broader constructedness of the host-guest dynamic in the domestic space appear to be concealed by guidebooks.

Challenging the common view that the intimate and the market are either distinct or mutually corrupting zones, the framing of the tourist as a guest or family member, rather than a paying customer, is central to service industry rhetoric (Hochschild, 2012, p. 105). Of course, in the case of small-scale Cuban entrepreneurs using their homes and appropriating affective labour for income, this is literally true: the home becomes the workplace. However, an emphasis on Cubans' inherent hospitality and generosity implies that the economic profit that *casa particular* and *paladar* owners stand to expect from such business ventures is secondary to their genuine desire to welcome visitors into their homes. Beyond the domestic space, tourists are not welcomed in bars simply as paying

customers, but instead, according to one guidebook, as 'long lost friends' (Sainsbury, 2009, p. 18). The construction of the notion of the tourist-as-friend has problematic implications for Cubans working in the informal sector. Across the island, Cubans may approach foreigners with the Cubanised-English greeting 'my fren', a solicitation often used by *jineteros* to lead customers to a commission-paying restaurant, for example, as well as any individual 'chancing it' to see where their encounter may lead. Tourists who seek out contact with the host population often express most enjoyment when those interactions are friendly but during which no money crosses palms, in which case, Cubans seeking to earn (and sometimes eke out) a living through contact with tourists walk a fine line between 'friend' on the one hand and, on the other hand, service provider whose services carry a deserved charge. In light of this dilemma, the guidebooks' representation of Cubans as inherently hospitable and generous as well as normalised notions of interiority and intimacy brings both economic opportunity and the risk that the real effort and labour involved will be rendered invisible by those same discourses.

Conclusion

The perceived threats of encroaching global capitalism and digital connectivity to Cuba in the contemporary period have accelerated and defined the pursuit of authenticity for tourists. In the context of these wider political, economic and socio-cultural changes, guide-books encourage and normalise the pursuit of intimacy and interiority as the cornerstones of authenticity, and in this way, respond to and fuel the dominant narrative of 'Cuba in transition'. The value that guidebooks attribute to affective experiences discussed in this article as the gateway to really 'knowing' Cuba, such as sensory immersion, access to unofficial, domestic spaces and unmediated contact with the host population, normalise and neutralise these tourist practices. However, in the specific context of Cuba, where tourism development has been adopted in cautious steps, with complex social consequences and accompanied by extensive political and public debate, it is imperative to engage a more critical reading. The Lonely Planet and Rough Guide texts tend to gloss over this specificity.

The discussion of Cubans as gatekeepers to authenticity holds the potential to move the discussion of the host-guest encounter beyond the question of how identity categorisations, and ideas of mutual agendas, social mobility, commerce, romance and friendship are dialogically, reflexively and spontaneously navigated 'on the ground' (Daigle, 2015; Simoni, 2016). Instead, textual 'mappings' of identities and encounters could contribute significantly to anthropological and sociological study, particularly in recognition of the established context of worldmaking that tourism now occupies between Cuba and the wider world. While ethnographies reveal the complex and often spontaneous affective negotiations performed by host and guest in intimate contexts, this article shows that such affective dynamics may also be organised to a certain extent by tourism texts such as guidebooks, for instance in informing specific expectations of local attitudes to sex, the body and clothing. As such, this study contributes to scholarship that illustrates the authority of touristic texts (not limited to guidebooks but including broader forms of marketing, travel journalism and travel literature) to legitimise and define a place, to reinforce or contest understandings of national and regional identity, and to shape tourists' expectations and behaviour.

Notes

1. The second largest group in the report is in fact cited as ‘comunidad cubana en el exterior’, that is, Cuban émigrés, who may be residing in the US, Europe or other parts of Latin America. The classification of nationality employed here provides an indication as to the changing landscape of tourism markets in Cuba, but also provokes new complex questions of nation (i.e. as an imagined community), given the table’s title as ‘Visitantes por países / Visitors per country of origin’.
2. According to personal correspondence with Nielsen Bookscan analyst Stephen Mesquita, UK sales of guidebooks of Cuba rose by 5.32% in 2016, and by 48.82% in the US.
3. The name choice of such an expensive accommodation choice is ironic, considering the association made with Fernando Pérez’s 2003 film of the same name, which showed the deterioration of public and private urban space in Havana during the economic crisis of the early 2000s.
4. The notion of *doble moral* may, therefore, be understood as a sort of political double standard: for instance, a *doble moral* exists in the common knowledge that goods circulate on the black market when the national wage is not enough to meet the needs of a family.
5. The CUC, or *peso convertible*, was introduced as a second currency in 1994. Tourists usually deal exclusively in CUC. The introduction of *pesos convertibles* was designed to allow the state to generate hard currency from paying visitors, and to protect Cubans’ access to goods in local currency through their state salaries.

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