THE CUBAN RECIPE FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Investigating the contextual variables that shape Cuba's cuisine and food culture

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the linkages and contradictions between Food Sovereignty and Slow Food's principles within Cuba. The Cuban food system is influenced by external factors including the US embargo, broader international connections, and the tourism industry. This study analyzes the acquisition, preparation, and consumption of food in Havana to understand how food regimes impact everyday life for *Habaneros*. The key question of this thesis asks, how are Food Sovereignty and Slow Food principles reflected through formal and informal culinary practices in Cuba? This study also asks, how has tourism influenced Cuban cuisine and the Cuban food system? Furthermore, how have food regimes and sanctions influenced Cuban recipes in Havana? Methods include participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document review. This thesis argues that Cuban culinary practices and recipes demonstrate cultural and social perseverance against economic hardship as a result of Cuba's centralized food system and the Cuban people's adaptability.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

ANAP— National Association of Small Farmers

COMECON— Soviet Council for Mutual Economic Assistance

CFS—UN Committee on World Food Security

CPE— Cultural Political Economy

CS— Consumer Sovereignty

CUP— Cuban Peso

CUC— Cuban Convertible Peso

FACRC— Federation of Culinary Associations of the Republic of Cuba

FLACSO— Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences

GNAU— National Group of Urban Agriculture

HLPE—The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition

REB— Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board at Dalhousie University

TSRA— Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act

UBPC— Basic Units of Cooperative Production

USD— US Dollar

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In 2019, Cuban food was recognized as part of the country's "intangible cultural heritage" by the Federation of Culinary Associations of the Republic of Cuba (FACRC). In 1981, the Federation formed to unite Cuban culinary activities within a single organization dedicated to preserving and promoting Cuba's national cuisine. This recognition is related to the international Slow Food movement's influence, which advocates for the preservation of traditional regional cuisines.[1] Much of Cuban cuisine results from transculturation, making food part of Cuban national identity and reflecting the ethnic conglomerate of the Cuban people (Paponnet-Cantat, 2003). The term transculturation, coined by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, describes a process throughout centuries of Cuban history, indigenous, Spanish, African, Haitian, Chinese, and American cultural heritages interacting, merging, and converging to create a new unique culture (Ortiz, 1940). Indeed

> "Cuba's native cuisine can be seen as a variant of a general Antillean diet based on the triad of rice, beans, and starchy roots or plantain… national dishes of Cuba exhibit Spanish influences in seasonings and a preference for pork, as well as African preparation techniques and native Caribbean crops" (Dawdy, 2002, p. 50).

Cuban cuisine is an expression of cultural heritage, one that is heavily influenced by the economic hardships of the United States embargo. This heritage includes the knowledge and practices transmitted from one generation to another. This knowledge, and these practices, can include passing down how and where to select ingredients, nutritional information, producing food, preparing and modifying recipes, and setting dinner tables.

[1] The Slow Food movement, originated in Italy, is intended to serve as a foil to fast food and challenge the increasing globalization, standardization and industrialization of food systems and cuisines.

Nitza Villapol, a Cuban cultural icon, illuminates the rich diversity of food and culinary history in Havana. Villapol hosted a televised cooking show from 1947 to 1993 and published multiple editions of her famous cookbook *Cocina al Minuto* ('Cooking in a Minute'). Her show's evolution and the changes in her cookbook's different editions reflect the political, cultural, and economic changes in Cuba that she experienced throughout her lifetime (Garth, 2014). The first edition of her cookbook, published before the Revolution in 1954, reflected the significant American cultural and corporate influence in Cuba. Her first publication includes references to specific brands of Cuban products (Doña Delicias mayonnaise and Bacardi rum) as well as American imported ingredients (Libby's tomato sauce and La Lechera sweetened condensed milk) (Fleites-Lear, 2012). The edition published in 1980, when the USSR and Cuba maintained strong ideological and trade relationships, included Soviet-imported ingredients like oats and Spam (Fleites-Lear, 2012). The last edition, published in 1991, demonstrated the challenges of the era defined by Cuba's economic crisis and food scarcity, which Fidel Castro, the leader of Cuba's revolutionary project, referred to as a 'Special Period in a Time of Peace' (Garth, 2014). [2]

With the publishing of her cookbook's later editions, Villapol sought to help Cubans cope with changes in the Cuban food supply networks and the eventual food crisis (Fuster, 2016). Her efforts ensured the preservation of Cuban cuisine, despite a lack of available ingredients. Historically, "food has been a measure of Cuban well-being, not only in terms of individual nutrition, but also in terms of national political and economic

[2] The Special Period was a decade of scarcity and uncertainty for Cubans in the 1990s following the collapse of the USSR. Cuba was extremely reliant on the USSR for trade and many essential goods were lost during this time. Extreme food, fuel and electricity rationing during this time ensured that this period of struggle remains in the collective memory of Cubans.

well-being. It has been an essential medium through which Cubans measure their social standing and quality of life" (Dawdy, 2002, p. 49). Villapol's influential career's legacy demonstrates how the preparation and consumption of beloved meals can play a valuable role in households adapting to socioeconomic and food systems transitions (Garth, 2014).

Clearly, "food serves as a window into the history of everyday life" (Pilcher & Watts, 2012, p. 9). The significance of food as a tool for academic research is widely recognized, as food has and always will retain its integral role within economic and biological structures. Maintaining food systems with consistent production and accessible distribution has always been necessary for the survival of communities, households, and individuals. Furthermore, food can serve as a measure of cultural practices, beliefs, and social structures (Brønnum & Munk, 2019). The social and cultural analysis of food in relation to larger structures is now a valued aspect of academia, particularly concerning the development of Food Studies (Pilcher & Watts, 2012). This field created research opportunities surrounding the history of culinary practices and dietary patterns by studying cookbooks and various literature (Pilcher & Watts, 2012). The new perspectives offered in this field of study may provide new and valuable information surrounding concepts like food regimes, which have traditionally accompanied a political economy framework.

The Slow Food movement is fundamental to discussions of culinary practices concerning larger food systems (Chaudhury & Albinsson, 2015; Gaytán, 2004; Tencati & Zsolnai, 2012). Culinary practices allow ingredients to transcend from being simply food items that *feed* living beings to meals that *nourish* peoples (Crowther, 2018). Culture remains embedded within dishes that are considered high cuisine as well as everyday

food choices. Indeed, "the study of food and cuisine tells us a great deal about who we are and what we value as a civilization" (Pilcher & Watts, 2012, p. 18). It can contribute to the understanding of larger global food systems and a single dinner plate's contents.

1.1 PRACTICAL PROBLEM

The commodification of food, global issues surrounding food supply, and threats to local culinary knowledge and practices connect to global capitalism's development (Tencati & Zsolnai, 2012). Food regime analysis has emerged to illustrate the relationship of food with the establishment of global capitalism. A food regime is an era of capitalist accumulation determined by distinct international power configurations, which influenced modes of food production and consumption (McMichael, 2009). As a result of food regimes, states engaging in capitalist economic development and transitioning from low-income to middle-income countries are following unsustainable and unhealthy consumption patterns of Global North countries (Nigatu & Seeley, 2015).[3] The current food regime's creation of food import dependency, trade liberalization, and class hierarchies have transformed dietary preferences, in some cases, to the detriment of local food production and traditional culinary practices (Steckley, 2016). The food regime erodes important, culturally appropriate foods in communities across the world. For example, Steckley (2016) argues the food regime's material and cultural influence in Haiti has resulted in the domestic population viewing less-nutritional and more expensive foreign goods as superior to domestically grown, traditional, "peasant" foodstuffs.

[3] These consumption patterns include increased consumption of fat, sugar, processed foods, less fibre, and more animal-based foodstuff (Nigatu & Seeley, 2015).

Colonial and neo-colonial forces have determined Caribbean food systems for centuries (Barry et al., 2020). In the past few decades, Cuban independence has required the island to focus on food self-sufficiency. Indeed, "the Cuban diet carries the memory of the island's pre and post-conquest histories" (Paponnet-Cantat, 2003, p. 12). Throughout the past three decades, the Cuban government has shifted its development model from a command economy to a mixed economy, incorporating private enterprise. This shift correlates with the re-establishment of the Cuban tourism industry in the 1990s, which responded to the challenges of the economically devastating Special Period (Babb, 2011; Miller et al., 2008; Sanchez & Adams, 2008). During this time, tightening US sanctions purposefully targeted the importation of food (Lowenfeld, 1996). The influences of capitalist and socialist economic policies have forced the Cuban food culture and cuisine to evolve continually. However, the continuation of the corporate food regime and the repression of the US embargo will threaten vital culinary practices and access to culturally significant foods in Cuba. Additionally, the potential for cultural erosion increases as the country works to accommodate tourists' desires over its domestic population in order to acquire foreign capital and ensure the survival of the Revolution.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

Although international trade involvement is crucial to numerous farmers' livelihoods around the world, as well as many nations' food security measures, the corporate food regime's trade policies threaten food producers and consumers (Burnett & Murphy, 2014). US-imposed sanctions have impacted Cuba's involvement in this international market. The embargo has impeded Cuba's ability to purchase imports, export food, and acquire foreign capital. It has also limited US tourism to Cuba. The

tourism industry is a crucial centre of investment for understanding food culture in both Cuba's public and private sectors, as tourism plays a central role in influencing local cuisine (Zamparini, 2018). Cuba's food economy runs through a blended system of state-run businesses and private entrepreneurship.[4] While principles of the Food Sovereignty and Slow Food movements have taken root in Cuba, there is insufficient research on how these principles relate to the Cuban food system concerning both food preparation and consumption. Thus, the question guiding this thesis is, how are Food Sovereignty and Slow Food principles reflected through formal and informal culinary practices in Cuba? This study also asks, how has tourism influenced Cuban cuisine and the Cuban food system? Finally, how have food regimes and sanctions influenced Cuban recipes in Havana?

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

There is a lack of knowledge surrounding the relationship between Food Sovereignty and food acquisition, preparation and consumption in the Cuban context. The Cuban food system's massive transformation from conventional to organic agriculture is widely celebrated in academia (Gürcan, 2014; Koont, 2011; Rosset et al., 1994). Many Cuban Food Sovereignty studies are influenced by the food security approach and thus revolve around food production. Historically in research, food is "mainly looked at as an agricultural product, and attention is not paid to taste, the social organization of food preparation, food markets, and cooks or the significance of ingredients that compose a meal" (Pilcher & Watts, 2012, p. 13). Additionally, a

[4] Examples of legal private enterprise in Cuba include renting out overnight rooms (*casas particulares*), running restaurants (*paladares*), and private transportation (taxis). These enterprises are all still regulated by the state, but the strictness of these regulations has evolved in the decades following their initial legalization.

dominant conceptualization of the Global North as a space populated by consumers and the Global South populated by producers influences research (Freidberg & Goldstein, 2011; Gregson & Ferdous, 2015). This understanding resulted in studies that solely consider Food Sovereignty principles as they apply to production capabilities. Food systems studies in Cuba can look beyond agricultural policies, practices, and caloric intake to consider the cultural value of food staples required for culinary practices. Analytically connecting food production and consumption is a necessary approach in the endeavour for progressive food politics (Goodman & DuPuis, 2002). This thesis will contribute to the literature of the Cuban food system by emphasizing the sovereignty of both Cuban producers and consumers through analysis of the acquisition, preparation and consumption of food.

1.4 THESIS STATEMENT

This thesis argues that Cuban culinary practices and recipes, while subjected to various food regimes, have persisted and evolved due to the Cuban state's efforts to establish food self-sufficiency and the Cuban people's adaptability and ability to persevere through extreme hardship. The US embargo has profoundly shaped Cuba's food landscape and culture. The result of the embargo is limited access to key ingredients and food supply chain instability. Tourism has had a twofold role in preserving and expanding culinary practices while also creating a class divide regarding access to "authentic" Cuban cuisine. Despite the Cuban economy's socialist basis, the expansion of private entrepreneurship in the tourism industry introduces capitalist influences, making the Cuban culinary scene more dynamic, competitive, and exclusionary while also challenging the Cuban government's centralized authority. Additionally, some private

restaurants offer international cuisine to cater to visitors, while others "perform" authenticity for visitors, serving them traditional Cuban meals. These changes have left some meals existing mainly within the pages of cookbooks and on the plates of tourists. However, culinary practices have shifted and adapted to limited access to various ingredients. Cuban food culture is grounded in people's willingness to pass on recipes, create new dishes, and preserve traditional cuisines despite food supply challenges.

For this study, a holistic conception of Food Sovereignty is linked to the Slow Food movement's principles on the cultural importance of culinary practices and food consumption. This study contains data collected from Cuban cookbooks, academic journals, observations of food acquisition sites and cooking classes in Havana, and interviews of producers, distributors, preparers, and consumers of food in Havana. Notably, while this thesis speaks of Cuban cuisine as a national cuisine, this thesis only discusses food acquisition in Havana and does not generalize food acquisition in Cuba based on Havana residents' experiences.

Food acquisition, preparation, and consumption are everyday practices where culture, politics, and economics interact. This study will contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between gastronomy, Cuba's national food system, as well as the impact of food regimes, sanctions, and the tourism industry on local culinary practices. Through recipes, cuisine, and the sharing of meals, food preparation and consumption bring families, communities, and countries together. Only an approach that links the different aspects of the food system can fully demonstrate the repression of the US embargo and the impact of tourism on Cuba's food culture.

1.5 BACKGROUND

Cuba's history of political turmoil includes colonial imposition, civil disorder, dictatorships, and revolutions. Throughout these struggles and triumphs, the concepts and practices of food self-sufficiency and emancipation have become intrinsically linked at both the individual and collective levels (Dawdy, 2002). Cuba's economic system has continually evolved to adapt to various hardships (Lamrani, 2012; Torres, 2016). Before the 1959 Revolution, the legacy of colonialism in Cuba established a food system structured with large-scale land ownership and an export-oriented economic model (with a focus on sugar production), meaning Cuba depended on a few crops for export.[5] Cuban development of the sugar monoculture in Cuba coincided with the island's growing dependence on cheap food imports, which disincentivized domestic production (González, 2003). Meanwhile, this system disregarded the production of food for domestic consumption (Botella-Rodríguez, 2019). An economic and political dependency on the United States, a scarcity of subsistence foods, and social and economic inequality characterized the Cuban countryside. [6] From this context, the Cuban Revolution of 1959 emerged. The Cuban Revolution's primary objectives are independence and sovereignty, which have been aspirations of the Cuban people since the 1800s (Salim Lamrani & Translated by Larry R. Oberg, 2016). The Revolution was anti-imperialist, ending US

[5] In 1946, 8% of farmers controlled 70% of farmland (Thomas, 1998). By 1861 sugar and coffee accounted for over 70% of the value of all Cuban agricultural production. As sugar plantations expanded, small farmers growing other agricultural products were displaced (González, 2003, pp. 691–692). In the four decades before the Revolution, sugar comprised 82% of Cuba's export earnings (Thomas, 1998).

[6] The sugar monoculture increased Cuba's economic dependence on the United States. In the 1920s, US investors controlled 95% of the sugar harvest. (Thomas, 1998). In the decade preceding the Revolution, the United States received 66% of Cuba's exports and supplied 75% of Cuba's imports (Thomas, 1998). In 1958, the United States exported more agricultural products to Cuba than to any other Latin American nation, including many items that could be produced in Cuba (Thomas, 1998). While the sugar industry employed one-third of the Cuban labour force during the four-month sugar harvest, most of these workers were unemployed, or underemployed, for the remainder of the year (Díaz-Briquets & Pérez-López, 2000).

domination of the island (Domínguez López & Yaffe, 2017; Judson, 1983). Fidel Castro declared the socialist character of the Revolution in April 1961 (Domínguez López & Yaffe, 2017). Fidel Castro centred humans in the Cuban revolutionary project "by dedicating national resources to the people" (Salim Lamrani & Translated by Larry R. Oberg, 2016, p. 152). These ideals were extended to Cuba's food and agricultural policies, demonstrating a commitment to development for all Cuban people (Campbell, 2016; Wilson, 2012). The socialist human development model, championed by Cuba, concentrates on equality, while the capitalist economic development model is driven by competition and self-interest (Campbell, 2016).

Early on, the revolutionary leadership identified Cuba's sugar monoculture as the root cause of some of the country's economic plights (González, 2003). During this transition, the Cuban state passed agrarian reform laws between 1959 and 1963 to nationalize large landholdings and redistribute land ownership to the peasants who worked it, cooperatives, and the state (O'Connor, 1968). For example, the Agrarian Reform Law of 1959 transformed the Cuban economy from a capitalist system with private ownership marked by significant inequality in landholding into a planned economy, intending to establish greater economic equality (O'Connor, 1968). With the reform, the Cuban food system's objectives were to feed the population with home-grown products and generate wealth through exports and decrease social inequality in rural Cuba (Oficina Del Historiador de La Ciudad de la Habana, 1960, as cited by Funes-Monzote, 2002). Although this took place before the concept of Food Sovereignty, the Revolution's goals for the Cuban food system are in partial alignment with key tenets of

Food Sovereignty. Additionally, Castro wanted Cubans to focus on eating more culturally appropriate foods that were grown in Cuba:

> "Why should we eat peaches? We were made to think that peaches were the best thing going, and when we'd visit someone's house they'd offer us peaches. So we all thought that... peaches were better than mangoes, but peaches are expensive and foreign and mangoes are sweeter, cheaper, and much better" (Nuñez Jiménez 1982, p. 243, as cited in Dawdy, 2002, p. 60).

Castro wanted the Cuban people to enjoy and take pride in the fruits of their homeland and reject belief in American imported products' superiority. During this effort, agricultural diversification was prioritized over sugar production to minimize dependency on monocultural production and reap the benefits of Cuba's land and resources (Pollitt, 2004). Nationalism was explicitly linked to the independence and autonomy of the Cuban food system.

When the revolutionary leadership expropriated US nationals and companies' property, President Eisenhower's response was to cut the island's sugar import quota and impose a partial trade embargo to economically isolate the island that had been long dependent on trade with the US (Morley, 1984). Consecutive US administrations expanded and enforced these sanctions, which have continued longer than any other in modern history (Gabilondo, 2017). Indeed, the US embargo

> deprives Cuba of access to US markets and goods, interferes in its trade with third countries; prohibits US Dollar transactions, even with banks and trade partners in third countries; prohibits most travel to Cuba by US citizens; interferes in Cuba's internet access and roaming agreements for cell phones; denies Cuba access to global financial institutions; prohibits the sale of equipment to Cuban research scientists by US companies or their foreign subsidiaries; prevents Cubans from visiting family members in the United States; and often blocks scientific and cultural exchanges (Gordon, 2012, p. 64-65).

Various UN entities view the US embargo as a violation of international human rights law (Gabilondo, 2017). [7]

After the first land reform, it became clear that transitioning the agricultural sector, which had been long embedded in (and dependent on) international trade, into a sovereign system, was an ambitious plan to undertake. Efforts to produce enough food and end Cuba's economic reliance on exporting sugar were unsuccessful due to the labour shortages, the absence of fertilizers and insecticides, and Cuban landlords neglecting their crops as a form of rebellion against the agrarian reforms (O'Connor, 1968). These factors and the loss of US imports led to a food shortage (O'Connor, 1968). In 1963, the state implemented a rationing system to provide essential food items at subsidized prices for the Cuban people. The state did not intend for the ration system "to completely fulfill the dietary requirements of the population, but rather to establish some of the most important staples as accessible to everyone" (Vázquez Gálvez & Tondre, 2018, p. 10-11). Indeed, the revolutionary leadership built a food system based on the concept that an adequate supply of food should be accessible to all (Wilson, 2012). For the Cuban people, this policy means that individuals sacrifice their access to certain desirable foodstuffs for the betterment of the broader community (Schrager, 2018). Although the state only planned for the ration system to last for a few years, it has continued due to the tightening of the US embargo, supply chain shortages, and loss of trading partners. To gain state control of land, a second agrarian reform, passed in 1963,

[7] The General Assembly, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Children's Fund, UNESCO, and the World Health Organization have all denounced these sanctions (White, 2014). On 7 November 2019, the UN General Assembly adopted its annual resolution to end the US embargo against Cuba with 187 countries in favour and only three countries—the US, Israel and Brazil—against the resolution (The UN, 2019).

laid out two stages in which a total of 70% of arable land became expropriated from foreign companies and large landholders and taken over by the state (González, 2003).

Reduced sugar production and a fall in world sugar prices led to an economic crisis in 1963, with the government running a balance of payments deficit of more than $300 million (González, 2003). The balance of payments crisis prompted the Cuban government to abandon its diversification and import-substitution program and return the country to its previous reliance on sugar to generate export revenues and finance Cuban development (González, 2003; Leogrande & Thomas, 2002). In mid-1963, following a trip to the Soviet Union, Fidel Castro announced a return to sugar specialization (Ritter, 1975). In need of an ally, the Cuban state committed to a socialist economic model and signed a trade agreement with the Soviet Union in 1964, setting minimum quotas for sugar and purchase contracts for Cuban sugar at inflated prices, thereby providing Cuba with some protection from fluctuating international sugar prices (González, 2003; Leogrande & Thomas, 2002; O'Connor, 1968). In 1972 Cuba was admitted to the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), becoming one of the principal sugar suppliers to the trade bloc. Cuba was assured a generous market for its exports and economic assistance (Leogrande & Thomas, 2002). The Cuban state's agricultural sector strategy was similar to the model of mass industrialized production with reliance on imported agricultural inputs that the capitalist food regime enforced. Cuba also relied on imported food, with two-thirds of its food imported from the Soviet Union. Through this arrangement, the revolutionary leadership acted against their previous plans and deepened Cuba's dependence on sugar and international trade partners in order to

establish socialism as a survival strategy for the Cuban people and the revolutionary government (González, 2003; Leogrande & Thomas, 2002; Pollitt & Hagelberg, 1994).

The collapse of the USSR shattered the Cuban economy, leaving the island more vulnerable than ever. Between 1989 and 1993, Cuba lost 35% of its GDP and over 70% of its imports and exports (Gordy, 2006; Pastor & Zimbalist, 1995). Fidel Castro declared a "Special Period in a Time of Peace" to begin on 30 August 1990. The government rationed limited food, fuel, and electricity and prioritized the expansion of domestic food production and the tourist sector's development (Fernández Domínguez, 2005). During this period, Cubans had minimal access to basic foods and goods that were previously available in abundance. This crisis left nearly 20% of the island's labour force unemployed, hectares of land previously used for sugar cane production were abandoned, which nearly destroyed the Cuban sugar industry (González, 2003).

Furthermore, the loss of imported agricultural inputs (e.g., fertilizers, pesticides) significantly decreased the domestic production of food items central to the Cuban diet. From 1990 to 1995, caloric intake decreased by 27%, as the food ration provisions reduced from one month's supply to ten days' supply (Mesa-Lago, 2005). Between 1989 and 1994, the caloric intake per capita in Cuba diminished from 2908 to 1863 calories (Sinclair et al., 2001). Additionally, the prices of the limited food available increased while wages decreased (Garth, 2014).

The state's legalization of various forms of private enterprise sought to ensure the Revolution's survival at the risk of releasing a limited, modified form of capitalism. The widespread introduction of market mechanisms in the domestic economy included reopening private farmers' markets, reorganizing agricultural cooperatives, allowing

foreign remittances, legalizing US Dollar (USD) usage, and licensing and expanding self-employment (*cuentapropismo*). The crisis drove the island to transform into an alternative agricultural model that revolutionized food production patterns and decentralized land ownership. Decree-Law No. 142 established a new form of cooperative, Basic Units of Cooperative Production (UBPC), on formerly state-run farms. This decree also distributed small plots of land to new small-scale farmers (Botella-Rodríguez, 2019).

Additionally, the state lifted restrictions on cooperatives of private producers in the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP). The government also created the National Commission of *Organopónicos* in 1994 and the National Group of Urban Agriculture (GNAU) in 1997, thus formally establishing urban agriculture in Cuba (Koont, 2011). As a result of these changes, agricultural production increased with fewer chemical inputs (Altieri & Funes-Monzote, 2012). Cuba overcame food shortages and reached record food production levels in 1997 in ten of thirteen food staples (Koont 2004; Rosset 2000). By 2000, food production exceeded pre-crisis levels (Koont, 2004). By 2000, Cuba's caloric intake per capita had risen to 2585, slightly below the minimum amount recommended by the World Health Organization. (Sinclair et al., 2001).

This transition to small-scale farming, urban agriculture, and organic agricultural practices demonstrated the Cuban government's commitment to Food Sovereignty principles to avoid a future crisis. This commitment emerged from the revolutionary culture in Cuba that has long been committed to furthering Cuban independence. The crisis of the Special Period forced the Cuban state to address its need for a more independent and sustainable system of food production.

In October 2000, the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act (TSRA) approved the limited export of food from the United States to Cuba. Following this, Cuba began importing essential agricultural commodities from the US to augment domestic production (Zahniser & Cooke, 2015). Notably, the US did not make this "humanitarian exception" until a decade after the start of the Special Period, when Cuba was most in need of humanitarian support. In 2004 Venezuela became a significant trading partner and aid provider for Cuba (Machín Sosa et al., n.d.). The consequences of these trade relationships are decreased domestic food production and increased food importation. Magalys Calvo, former Vice Minister of Economy and Planning in Cuba, claimed in 2007 that 84% of items in the 'basic food basket' were imported, referring to state rations (Granma, 2007). Policy responses to crises, and efforts to establish food self-sufficiency, have created a Cuban food system again dependent on imports.

Along with the evolution of the agriculture system and Cuba's relationship to the international market, tourism, and the private foodservice industry are other vital economic sectors that have transformed the Cuban food system. In 1994, the Cuban government established a new Ministry of Tourism, and throughout the decade, the Cuban state invested over $3.5 billion in the tourist industry (Wilkinson, 2008). The government intended to increase the role of international tourism to boost the economy (Babb, 2011; Miller et al., 2008; Sanchez & Adams, 2008). In 1990, 340,000 tourists visited Cuba (Hingtgen et al., 2015). In 2019, the number of visitors in a year had grown to 4.7 million (ONEI, 2020). Cuba's GDP increased from $30.69 billion in 2002 to $114.1 billion in 2010, with the service industry generating 72.9% of this growth (Becker, 2015). The travel and tourism industry's total contribution to employment in

Cuba grew from 362,000 jobs in 1995 to 556,000 jobs in 2019 (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2020). However, President George Bush's strengthening of the embargo limited initial growth of the industry. In 1992, President Bush imposed a limit of $500 per family per year allowed for travel expenses to Cuba, thus restricting travel to Cuba (Hingtgen et al., 2015). In 1992, President Bush also placed an executive order to forbid ships engaging in trade and other commercial activities with Cuba from entering US ports, resulting in a lack of cruise ships to Cuba and difficulty importing supplies (Miller et al., 2008; Skaine, 2004).

A significant aspect of the Cuban economy and tourism industry is the dual currency system. This system originated in 1993 when USD first became legal currency, allowing for USD remittances from family members. While this helped some Cubans, it created economic inequalities as individuals with access to dollars could attain a higher standard of living (Mesa-Lago & Vidal-Alejandro, 2010; Morris, 2014). The use of Cuban convertible pesos (CUC) did not become widespread until 2004, when the government declared that CUCs must be the currency used for all previous USD-based transactions. The state established CUCs in order to acquire and control foreign currency. One CUC is roughly equivalent to 24 Cuban pesos (CUP). Given that most tourist transactions are in CUCs, Cubans working in tourism can earn more than the state salary. Many Cubans have left government jobs to pursue employment in the tourism industry (Sanchez & Adams, 2008).

Throughout this transitional period, seaside resort communities were established across the island to accommodate crowds of tourists. The concentration of tourism in certain areas has allowed the government to maintain control of tourists' spatial

distribution (Salinas et al., 2018). Under the 1988 General Housing Law, private rentals had been allowed, but they did not become state-regulated businesses until 1997. After 1997, the state heavily taxed (ranging from a monthly minimum of $100-$250) and strictly regulated private rentals (T. Henken, 2002). Meanwhile, *paladares* (the name for private restaurants in Cuba) emerged out of illegality. Under Fidel Castro, *paladares* "had a history of grudging legalization and repression based on ideological grounds…" (Henken & Vignoli, 2017). During the Special Period, the regulated private sector included limited business types and excluded restaurants. However, illegal *paladar*-like eateries began to pop up in the early 1990s in response to food scarcity.

Given that these establishments provided a service to the Cuban population, the state tolerated and eventually legalized *paladares* in September 1993 (Henken & Vignoli, 2017). The decriminalization of pervasive economic activities marked this era. However, the Cuban state later restrained *paladares* by limiting them to 12 chairs, prohibiting the sale of seafood, horsemeat, beef, and milk, banning live music, determining where they could acquire ingredients, and restricting households to a single license (Henken, 2013). Fidel Castro announced his doubts surrounding the "necessary evils" of self-employment and *paladares*, given the growing inequality they created and exacerbated. "It's good that these markets and self-employment have taught people a little bit of capitalism. But … some *paladares* and other *cuentapropistas* earn more in a day than our honored teachers earn in a month" (Castro, 1995; Peters 1997,p. 5). In 2005, in response to these concerns, the government further repressed *paladares* through bureaucratic measures, including excessive taxation, regulations, inspections, and closures (Henken & Vignoli, 2017). The *paladares* that survived were forced by high taxes to raise their prices and focus on a

foreign clientele. These paladares differ from the initial low prices and local function of *paladares* during the 1990s (Peters & Scarpaci, 1998). Of the 1,562 *paladares* that had registered in 1996, only 98 existed in 2006 (Henken & Vignoli, 2017).

In 2006 Raúl Castro succeeded his brother's leadership duties and was elected Cuba's president in 2008. Raúl Castro began to gradually shrink the state sector, creating an increasingly decentralized economy. Under the guidelines of The Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba in April 2011, the "socialist property of the entire people" (*propiedad socialista de todo el pueblo*) remains the basis of the Cuban economy. However, some private entrepreneurship was permitted, including cooperatives, small-scale agriculture, leasing, and limited self-employment categories (*cuentapropistas*). Raúl Castro's reforms surrounding self-employment reconfigured tourism on the island and impacted foods available to tourists and locals.

Radical land reform passed under Raúl Castro's leadership in 2008, and Decree-Law 259 distributed unused lands (over 50% of Cuba's agricultural land was idle at the time) under long-term contracts to "anyone who wants to produce" (Granma, 2008). Raúl Castro announced on 26 July 2009 that improving Cuba's local production outputs and reducing expensive food importation was a security matter (Rosset et al., 2011). Cuba previously focused on food security goals instead of Food Sovereignty to feed the population. Notably, after this redistribution, while Cuba's total amount of imports decreased from US$13.5 billion in 2011 to $10.3 billion in 2016, the value of food imports has remained generally steady (Deere & Royce, 2019).

Following 2011, Cuban Bed & Breakfast operators could rent out their entire homes, rent by the hour, and those who possessed legal "permission to reside abroad"

would now be allowed to rent out their residences (Peters, 2012). In 2016, 30% of international tourists chose homestays, also known as *casas particulares*, as their accommodation (Chapon, 2019). These accommodations allow tourists to engage with Cuban households directly. *Casas particulares* also function as space for tourists to purchase and consume meals in Cuban households, although offering this service will increase the renter's tax rate (Henken, 2002). The seaside tourism model remains dominant, and 70% of foreign visitors in Cuba stay at state-owned hotels (ONEI, 2020). While these changes in the tourism sector have ensured the survival of the Cuban people and state, they also place mounting pressure on the Cuban food system.

The food system must feed the Cuban population of 11.3 million in addition to the crowds of tourists that visit the island every year- with a reported 4.7 million visiting Cuba in 2019 (ONEI, 2020). The Cuban state depends on the tourism industry as a source of foreign currency and an employment sector for Cubans. According to recent data, the tourism and travel sector contributed to 10.3% of Cuba's GDP in 2019 (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2020). Additionally, in 2018 and 2019, the travel and tourism industry's total contribution to employment was over 556,000 jobs (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2020). This industry has increased thousands of Cubans' economic mobility significantly. It has also ensured the Cuban state's dependency on imported food and fuel to feed and transport tourists.[8]

A measure enacted in 2011 that allowed agricultural cooperatives to contract directly with tourism entities was later expanded in 2013 to allow individual farmers to

[8] In 2018 Cuba spent 517 million USD importing transportation vehicles, 85.1 million USD importing petroleum, 80 million USD importing engines and engine parts and 1.58 billion USD importing food (OEC, n.d.).

contract directly with restaurants and hotels (Deere & Royce, 2019; Puente Nápoles, 2014). Some of these farmers solely produce food for tourist consumption. Depending on the types of tourists, there are also varying demands on the types of cuisine tourists desire- from international cuisine to perceived "authentic" Cuban food. These demands place pressure on an unstable food supply chain to provide for the needs of the Cuban people and visitors' desires.

Regarding *paladares*, Raúl Castro significantly loosened restrictions, which resulted in an upsurge in an increase in *paladares* across the island, with over 2,000 *paladares* in 2015 (14ymedio 2015; Infobae 2015, as cited by Henken & Vignoli, 2017). These new policies allowed anyone to become self-employed, obtain multiple licenses, and openly hire workers. Furthermore, the state lifted policies that had limited the size of *paladares* and the foods they could serve*,* and owners could set up *paladares* outside of their homes (Ritter, 2017). These reforms and the increase in *paladares* created a more competitive and diverse culinary sector throughout the country's tourist centres.

Paladares evolved from a local method of coping with food scarcity to experimental sites for new economic principles and cuisine (Henken & Vignoli, 2017). *Paladares* have increased some Cubans' economic mobility. They have also concentrated wealth in the hands of those who can afford to pay rent for space, acquire multiple licenses, and hire workers (Jackiewicz & Bolster, 2003). The contradictory space that *paladares* take up in Cuban society continues to be celebrated by tourists as chefs have improved food quality and increased the diversity of dishes. In contrast, many Cubans, unable to afford the prices in *paladares*, continue to prepare and consume food at home.

Paladares and tourism have created a Cuban food culture that is continually evolving and changing due to limitations, constraints, and tourist demand for different categories of cuisine. Jackiewicz and Bolster (2003) argue that tourism helps fund Cuba's socialist economic model. However, as Cubans who work in tourism have access to foreign currency and tips and can earn significantly more than state employees, this has produced greater inequity in Cuba (Mesa-Lago & Vidal-Alejandro, 2010; Morris, 2014). Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, many have assumed that these transitions suggest that Cuba is following the path of other "developing world" countries by accepting neoliberalism and globalization's rhetoric. However, while these changes stabilized the economy, the Cuban state has instead established an increasingly complex economic system, and the state does not intend to transition to neoliberal capitalism (Gabilondo, 2017).

While Cuba's economic and food systems have transformed, food has played a significant role in coping and survival strategies throughout Cuba's history. Cuban consumers are required to incorporate a variety of methods for their food acquisition, including the state *libreta*, the farmers' markets, black market channels, food exchange networks, local private markets, nonlocal private markets, individual gardens, and local farmers (Bono & Finn, 2017; Paponnet-Cantat, 2003). Food provisioning and Cuban cuisine reflect the ongoing collective struggle throughout the island (Wilson, 2012). Although food shortages have threatened Cuban communities in the past, "the sharing of a Cuban meal remains for the islanders one of the greatest sources of pleasure, celebration and connection" (Paponnet-Cantat, 2003, p. 27). Cuban flavours have become engrained in the people's national identity (Paponnet-Cantat, 2003).

1.6 THESIS OUTLINE

This summary of Cuban history reviews the domestic and international challenges that have threatened Cuba's ability to attain a sovereign food system. This introductory chapter provides a background and justification for critical food studies' significance within the Cuban context.

Chapter 2 reviews the academic literature on food regime analysis and the Slow Food and Food Sovereignty movements in relation to Cuba. This chapter also explores the Cultural Political Economy theoretical framework, which guides the interdisciplinary approach to this study as well as the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the methods used for this study. The semi-structured interviews, document review, and participant observation provide interconnected accounts of experiences with the Cuban food system and attitudes towards the connection between identity and national cuisine in Cuba.

Chapter 4 presents the data collected for this study and groups the data into themes. The bulk of the data collection from fieldwork included semi-structured interviews. These interviews relate to data collected through document review and participant observation.

Chapter 5 takes themes from the presented data and applies them to Food Sovereignty and Slow Food's movements' philosophies, guided by the Cultural Political Economy theoretical framework explored in the literature review.

Chapter 6 offers reflections from the field, makes recommendations for further research, and provides a conclusion of the research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.1 Food Regimes

The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) is a committee established in 2009 to inform policymaking for the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS). HLPE created a comprehensive definition of a food system:

> "A food system gathers all the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructures, institutions, etc.) and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, and the outputs of these activities, including socioeconomic and environmental outcomes." (HLPE, 2014, as cited by Burlingame & Dernini, 2019).

This definition recognizes the interconnected nature of the many aspects of a food system. McMichael, the founder of food regime analysis, contends that the global food system exists within a 'corporate food regime' that administers global industrialized agriculture and trade (McMichael, 2014). McMichael breaks up the history of capitalism into periods referred to as food regimes. The development of capitalism structured food regimes through organizational patterns, institutional mechanisms, and political-economic structures of power, defining food production and consumption (Rioux, 2018). The first food regime was related to British imperial hegemony (1870– 1930s). The first food regime then created the conditions for the second food regime (1950s– 1970s) of national development. The last and current food regime is known as the corporate food regime (1980s– present) (McMichael, 2009). The third food regime encompassed all world regions with cheap food production and consumption, through neoliberal structural adjustment and free trade agreements of the World Trade Organization (WTO) era. This top-down food governance system enforces rules for the international market that exploit

labour and production in the Global South and support the corporate food industry (McMichael, 2012). The corporate food regime imposes the rules of neoliberal capitalism upon local food systems in the Global South. Food producers either struggle immensely or scale-up their operations. “Consumers, on the other hand, find themselves buying highly processed, unhealthy food” (Lutz & Schachinger, 2013, p. 4783). This food regime’s net result shifts nutritional control from local communities to global entities (Bernstein, 2016). Food regime analysis critiques the current corporate food regime and ties it to global capitalism, widespread ecological destruction, gender inequality, and international nutritional disparities. These regimes have transformed economic, agricultural and political systems and social and cultural relationships with food production, distribution, and consumption. The current food regime is “divorcing” individuals and communities from their food cultures (Parkins & Craig, 2009).

Before the 1959 Revolution, Cuban agricultural production was directly involved with the first regime and briefly involved with the second food regime. While food regime analysis focuses on capitalism as the driver of food regime projects, Cuba was more recently involved with a Soviet food regime of socialist countries. Unlike past capitalist food regimes, the socialist food regime, organized through COMECON, had established trade partnerships with Cuba that were generous and generally advantageous for the Cuban people (Pollitt & Hagelberg, 1994). While capitalist accumulation is not the basis of this food regime, it still forced Cuba to continue its industrialized mass-production of sugar cane (Pollitt, 2004; Pollitt & Hagelberg, 1994). Eventually, Cuba’s dependency on trading partners would hurt the Cuban people after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Various studies have highlighted how Cuban producers have based their work on principles of local, diversified, agroecological, or organic agricultural production (Funes-Monzote, 2006; Koont, 2011; Leitgeb et al., 2016; Rosset et al., 1994, 2011; Serrano & Funes-Monzote, 2013). Cuba's modern food system is divided between capitalist and socialist principles. Despite striving towards self-sufficiency, the Cuban food system, to a limited extent, has become re-involved in the global food regime. A crucial aspect of the corporate food regime is the US embargo against Cuba. US sale of food to Cuba can be considered a humanitarian exemption to the embargo. However, even with exceptions, most sanctions still harm the living standards of those in the targeted state (Allen & Lektzian, 2013). For example, because the food sector depends on other industries, the US sanctions that do not target food can still hinder access to food (Hanania, 2020). Cuba remains reliant on various trading partners in Europe, Latin America, Asia, and North America (OEC, n.d.). In 2018 Cuba spent 1.58 billion USD on food imports (OEC, n.d.). Imported foods were reportedly 60-70% of all food consumed in Cuba in 2018 (Frank, 2018).

2.1.2 Food Sovereignty

The Food Sovereignty movement emerged in response to the food regime's creation of an agrarian crisis of global proportions, which embraces a variety of contemporary concerns, including corporate 'land grabbing,' nutritional problems, cultural destruction, ecological devastation, and climate change (McMichael, 2012). Food Sovereignty is the antithesis of the corporate food regime and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) unsuccessful aims for 'food security' (Windfuhr & Jonsén, 2005).

The definition of food security, established at the 1996 World Food Summit, states that "Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (World Food Summit, 1996). The international policy framework that emerged from this definition concentrated on the availability of food supplies in national markets based on population/food availability ratios, leading to plans to increase food production and international trade (Windfuhr & Jonsén, 2005). These policies exacerbated the corporate food regime's impacts and did not address the root causes of hunger and malnutrition (Windfuhr & Jonsén, 2005).

The Food Sovereignty movement emerged as an alternative to food security, anchored in a democratic rebuilding of local food systems, to overcome processes of deepening food dependency imposed by corporate marketing of cheapened food (McMichael, 2014). The peasant organization, La Vía Campesina, formed by various movements and communities across the globe with shared issues, adopted Food Sovereignty as a rallying cry against the corporate food regime (Portman, 2018; Wittman et al., n.d.). La Vía Campesina identifies conventional agriculture, neoliberal trade policies, and cash crop production for international markets as the principal causes of the food crisis. La Vía Campesina defines Food Sovereignty as:

> The right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute, and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime and directions for food, farming, pastoral, and fisheries systems determined by local producers. Food sovereignty prioritizes local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal—fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution,

and consumption based on environmental, social, and economic sustainability (La Vía Campesina, 2007).

Notably, the goal of this framework is "to establish national, regional and local food networks that provide healthy, affordable, ecologically sound, and culturally diverse foods" in order to "strengthen the inherent socio-cultural and environmental characteristics of the communities involved" (Lutz & Schachinger, 2013, p. 4780).

The Food Sovereignty movement addresses the root causes of food insecurity, looking at historical food regime analysis and food supply chains that benefit Global North countries. While international trade is central to farmers' livelihoods across the globe, the trade argeements of the corporate food regime undermine food producers and consumers. Although the Food Sovereignty movement does not reject global trade, it favours local markets (Burnett & Murphy, 2014). Food Sovereignty centres the state in protecting local producers from global economic forces (Reardon & Pérez, 2010).

Interpretations and implementation of Food Sovereignty can vary across diverse geographic and cultural contexts (Naylor, 2019). To demonstrate this, Naylor (2019) embarked on Food Sovereignty tours in the Basque region of Spain and Western and Central Cuba. The Spanish tour centred on producer-consumer relations and the cultural importance of food, eating and regional cuisine. Those on the tour perceived it as adopting food sovereignty narratives from a "Northern perspective." In Cuba, the tour focused on production. This understanding of Food Sovereignty focused on Cuban self-sufficiency, as it was formed under the US embargo's repression and the crisis of the Special Period (Naylor, 2019). Participants in the Cuba tour noted a contradiction "in what we were seeing (vegetable production) and what we were eating (largely rice, meat,

and beans)" (Naylor, 2019, p. 711). The Cuban imaginary of Food Sovereignty omits the connection between Cuban producers and Cuban consumers.

2.1.3 Slow Food

The Slow Food movement, inaugurated in Italy in 1989, was established to promote the enjoyment of food with knowledge of the local traditions, capabilities, and resources needed to create quality dishes (WHO, 2020). The founders intended for the movement to challenge the worldwide prevailing food regime, which is homogenizing food production and consumption and is considered a threat to local cuisines (Pietrykowski, 2004; Tencati & Zsolnai, 2012). The movement's primary goals include emphasizing the enjoyment of food; appreciating diverse tastes; eating fresh seasonal produce; highlighting the role of the community in sustaining the education of local tastes; preserving and protecting local cuisines, traditional systems of production, and biodiversity; sustaining de-industrialized agroecological production; and defending the right of peoples to Food Sovereignty (Simonetti, 2012).

The Slow Food movement advocates preservation of local cuisines by "creating and strengthening networks of social relations between consumers and producers… [promoting] pleasure through consumption while simultaneously advocating a politics of eco-agriculture" (Pietrykowski, 2004, p. 318). In food studies, highlighting food choice and taste has been considered elitist (Pilcher & Watts, 2012). However, the Slow Food movement advocates "taste as an ethical, humanist pursuit of consumers' skills, as opposed to a distinctive class practice" (Sassatelli, 2015, p. 492). Gregson and Ferdous (2015) argue that the concept of ethical consumption, a principle of Slow Food, reinforces a binary of Global North consumers and Global South producers that

disregards the agency of Global South consumers. Assessing the perspectives of consumers in Global South communities may provide insights on how "to address the injustices and ecological damage of the food status quo" by focusing on "the root causes of unfairness and harm" (Freidberg & Goldstein, 2011, p. 31).

While a focus on sustainability and food self-sufficiency in Cuba was established independently of Slow Food, they have become officially incorporated with the Cuban Slow Food Network, established in 2004. In 2018, the Slow Food Network in Cuba launched a network of farms to support and promote small, diversified agroecological farming throughout the island (Slow Food, 2018). The Slow Food Cuba Network is also running the "*Arca del Gusto*" project, which catalogues Cuban foods that are culturally or ecologically endangered (Slow Food, 2017). In Cuba, Slow Food projects like the Food Network and the "*Arca del Gusto*" projects are focused on production. However, Slow Food's contributions to Cuban food culture are not solely through the establishment of agricultural projects but through the movement to preserve and protect Cuban culinary practices related to Cuba's cultural heritage.

The Slow Food movement has created a space where the aims of Food Sovereignty and consumer sovereignty (CS) are combined. The concept of CS presumes that consumers control the market, as they "have the power to get what they want from producers" (Sassatelli, 2015, 484). However, the literature has built on this concept, claiming that consumers are only sovereign when they engage responsibly with their community and their planet's future well-being (Sassatelli, 2015). A new concept of sustainable CS links the individual with the land and food producers (Sassatelli, 2015). To achieve Food Sovereignty and CS, consumers need information surrounding food

policies, food production, sustainability, significant recipes, and nutrition to make informed food choices that avoid unethically produced, unhealthy, culturally inappropriate, over-priced foodstuffs (Widener & Karides, 2014). While it is possible to aim for Food Sovereignty and CS simultaneously, this transition depends on both producers' and consumers' community-wide coordination.

2.1.4 Tourism and Gastronomy

Tourism is comprised of goods and services, including food and attractions, purchased by visitors of a determined area (Zamparini, 2018). Gastronomy is an art intrinsic to a destination's culture, embedded within the preparation and consumption of food (Hegarty & Barry O'Mahony, 2001). The gastronomy at tourist destinations can exist as both an attraction and an impediment (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). It is necessary to differentiate between experiential and recreational (or traditional) tourists. Experiential tourists seek to experience authenticity in others' lives, and typically prefer to try local foods (MacCannell, 1973). A gap between what is considered authentic cuisine and what locals typically eat may result in locals performing authenticity for these tourists (MacCannell, 1973). Meanwhile, recreational tourists enjoy areas that feel familiar and tend to prefer familiar food. Experiential tourists tend to predominate during the early developments of tourist destinations, but as destinations become popular recreational tourists predominate (MacCannell, 1973). These developments result in local restaurants incorporating more foreign cuisine to accommodate recreational tourists (Zamparini, 2018). Eventually, the variety of local cuisine will likely be reduced and homogenized to the prevailing visitors' tastes, resulting in cultural erosion (Zamparini, 2018).

The tourism industry and the Cuban food system are linked. Tourism has transformed the Cuban economic structure and has changed socioeconomic hierarchies within the Cuban state. Cuba's tourist attractions include the climate, beaches, architecture and the Cuban revolutionary project (Babb, 2011; Sanchez & Adams, 2008). The tourism landscape in Cuba centers on some aspects of Cuban society that reflect the impact of the US embargo (Salinas et al., 2018). For instance, the old cars in Havana are under constant repair by their owners, out of necessity for their utility and use in tourism. These old cars are a "symbol in the landscape that Cubans had to develop resiliency thinking with regard to resources" (Salinas et al., 2018, p. 218).

Havana and Varadero are the two major tourism "poles" in Cuba. The seaside town of Varadero, known for its resorts, is likely to be populated by recreational tourists. Havana is likely to be a popular destination for both recreational and experiential tourists. Inevitably, both forms of tourism have impacted the Cuban food system. Tourism has forced Cuba to be more reliant on imports as local production only provided 30% of the food consumed in Cuba in 2018 (Frank, 2018). Additionally, loss of local identity can occur when the tourism industry relies heavily on imported products. Efforts to promote more extensive use of local food products can lead to more regional employment and sustainable tourism development (Zamparini, 2018).

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This thesis uses cultural political economy (CPE) as its theoretical framework. Cultural political economy is a critical realist, post-disciplinary approach that highlights the importance of culture within the analysis of economic and political systems and their

embedding in broader sets of social relations (Belfrage & Hauf, 2016; Best & Paterson, 2010). Geertz (1973) defines culture as a system of meanings whereby social life is perceived and structured. While culture emerges through common perceptions of similar phenomena and allows people to establish a sense of communal identity, it is also used to differentiate groups. In the political economy, cultural processes produce fundamental actors and objects in the economy and establish their linkages (Best & Paterson, 2010). Culture intersects with other economic and political mechanisms to determine economic outcomes. CPE emphasizes the lifeworld aspects of economic processes, including identities, discourses, and the social and cultural embedding of economic activity (Jessop & Oosterlynck, 2008). The lifeworld is a product of the relations between actors and their cultures. Systems are institutional, organizational structures, like governments and marketplaces, that formalize and govern actions while remaining culturally embedded in the lifeworld (Jessop & Oosterlynck, 2008). This emphasis on culture suggests that everyday practices cannot be interpreted independently from the cultural meanings that society assigns to them (Best & Paterson, 2010).

CPE emphasizes food analysis from both material and discursive perspectives (Watts et al., 2018). A recent study uses cultural political economy as a useful theoretical framework in determining how individuals and historical processes have shaped food production and consumption and created social inequalities in different food systems (Kollnig, 2020). Kollnig (2020) argues that, following a CPE framework, focus on food production and consumption strengthens understandings of a cultural political economy of food. The analysis presented in this thesis follows this theorization, showing that individuals' actions and a historically developed political system have shaped the

evolution of Cuban cuisine. Wilson (2012), drawing on Cuban history, argues that under revolutionary leadership, the Cuban food economy was based on Cuban moral values until the introduction of the US dollar in the economy, which reintroduced the commodification of food to Cuban society.

Concerning this thesis, CPE will inform the analysis of the organizational structures of the corporate food regime, the Cuban government, and the U.S. embargo and consider how these systems impact Cubans' lifeworld. Cuisine is the tool used in this study that reveals how political systems, economic regulations, and cultural tastes come together on a Cuban's plate. Regarding tourism, the CPE framework recognizes that different cultures can draw tourists to new destinations and tourists bring their own culture with them, resulting in the commodification of culture and authenticity in the tourist destination (Lisle, 2010). Other political and economic aspects shaping this cuisine are considered in the discussion of the US embargo, the sites of food acquisition in Cuba, and the Cuban economy and political system's contradictions. Culture is both h about the 'low' culture of things like consumer desires and the 'high' culture of great art (Best & Paterson, 2010). This understanding informs the analysis of both traditional and typical Cuban dishes.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

This section contains an outline of the methods used in this study. This thesis employs qualitative methods. Data collection operated to answer the main research question— how are Food Sovereignty and Slow Food principles reflected through formal and informal culinary practices in Cuba? This study also asks, how has tourism influenced Cuban cuisine and the Cuban food system? Finally, how have food regimes and sanctions influenced Cuban recipes in Havana? Participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document review were all utilized to collect data for this study.

3.1 FIELDWORK IN HAVANA

While existing literature provides details on Cuba's food systems' history and Cuban cuisine, there is a lack of research discussing the linkages between Food Sovereignty and Cuban culinary practices. Therefore, it was necessary to conduct field research and collect data in Cuba to generate a holistic understanding of the country's practices, provide new insight into the significance of Cuban cuisine within the broader context of the food system, and fill in current literature gaps.

I based the fieldwork in Havana. Staying in Havana allowed me to forge a network of interview subjects and utilize participants associated with institutions, such as the Federation of Culinary Associations of the Republic of Cuba (FACRC) and the Faculty of Latin American Social Sciences (FLACSO), as well as a plethora of Havana-based markets, *paladares*, *casas particulares*, and food experts. Notably, although this thesis discusses Cuban cuisine in general, while interviews occurred in Havana, this decision was based on Cuban cooking literature, which affirms that Cuban food is a national cuisine (Alfonso, 2012; Dawdy, 2002; Garth, 2014). Several participants

affirmed this assertion. However, this thesis only discusses food acquisition in Havana and does not generalize food acquisition in Cuba based on Havana residents' experiences.

I applied to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board at Dalhousie University (REB) to conduct field research in Cuba. The submission outlined the proposed project and methods. The application, initially submitted to REB on 10 September 2019, was approved on 7 November 2019 after a round of suggested modifications.

3.2 QUALITATIVE METHODS

Qualitative methods are employed to answer questions about "experience, meaning, and perspective," typically from the subjects' perspectives (Hammarberg et al., 2016, p. 499). Qualitative work is often focused on individuals, events, and contexts, focusing on unique and subjective research analysis. This study employs three different data collection methods.

3.2.1 Participant Observation

A critical method used for this study was participant observation. An observational method of analysis allows the researcher to directly observe and understand social phenomena, behaviours, and attitudes (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Sites of participant observation for this study included spaces of food acquisition, preparation and consumption. Specific areas were market places, restaurants, and cooking classes. These activities occurred in tandem with observing the network of social and economic relations before ingredients, through a recipe, transform into a completed dish. Whether the ingredients were local, sustainable, accessible to the general population, were affected by the global food regime, or deemed culturally appropriate were all related to the a recipe's

ability to measure Food Sovereignty. The analysis considers the tangible and intangible aspects of a dish, looking at its origins and investigating how unique recipes reflect various aspects of Cuban history.

The preparation and sharing of meals added value to my knowledge as a researcher of individual Cuban people's relationship to food and the Cuban food system. I also observed variations and contradictions surrounding the dishes served in restaurants and *casas particulares*. A California-based participant observation study focused on avocado consumption had consumers and professional food preparers making their favourite avocado-based dishes in their homes or restaurants (Guest et al., 2013). The analysis will compare the food preparation and realized dishes to the meals I made in the cooking classes I attended. I took cooking classes in Havana to observe the foods we made, the content of the classes, the teachers, and the other attendees. Dyen and Siriex engaged in participant observation of cooking classes by observing the content, discussion and dynamics of the cooking classes (Dyen & Sirieix, 2016). I also observed the exchange between producers and consumers at various stages of food acquisition. Participant observation in a Ugandan marketplace was utilized by Monteith (2014), as it served as a "dynamic, multicultural space…to study the interaction of divergent sets of rules and norms" (p. 3).

3.2.2 Semi-Structured and Unstructured Interviews

The second method was semi-structured and unstructured interviews. The semi-structured interview participants includes food producers, distributors, preparers, and consumers in Cuba. The semi-structured nature allows interviews to unfold in an

informal, conversational manner (Newton, n.d.). Semi-structured interviews also allow participants to play a more active role in the research.

During the fieldwork in Cuba, I contacted potential interviewees to make official requests to participate in the study. Following initial contact, we determined locations and meeting times, and I completed procedures relating to the informed consent process. Each interview followed an interview guide. There were five different interview guides for the categories of interviewees; people who prepared food for me, chefs, restaurateurs, market vendors and food producers, and experts on the Cuban food system or cuisine. The interviews were conducted in both Spanish and English, depending on the individual participants' language abilities.

3.2.2.1 Participants

Qualitative research entails purposeful participant selection. Participants are selected based on who can best respond to the research questions and provide information that can enrich understandings of the studied phenomenon (Sargeant, 2012). Qualitative studies typically involve small samples of participants (Gerring, 2017). For this study, participant groups were selected based on knowledge and different local food system experiences.

I conducted interviews with producers and distributors of food. This group of participants included a farmer, market vendors, and restaurateurs. The unstructured interviews were with market vendors at various *agropecuarios* (agricultural markets) in Havana. I asked vendors and farmers at *organopónico*s informal questions about the food they sell, their clientele, and changes in the markets. I did not record the interviews with market vendors and *organopónico* owners but took notes from these informal interviews.

These interviews ranged from 5 minutes to 10 minutes. The interviews of restaurateurs and the farmer were structured and lasted approximately 15-20 minutes long. The interviews with the restaurateurs occurred at their restaurants. The restaurateurs discussed where their ingredients come from, how they chose the dishes they served, their clientele's demographics, and their restaurants' histories.

I interviewed formal and informal chefs in Havana. "Formal" chefs refers to chefs employed at *paladares* and cooking class instructors. "Informal" chefs refers to employees at *casas particulares* who prepare meals (often breakfast) at the request of visitors. These interviews were all conducted at their workplaces, from restaurant dining rooms to family dinner tables. The restaurant and cooking class chefs discussed how they choose what dishes to serve and whether they consider the dishes they serve to reflect local production and consumption values. The time commitment for chefs was approximately 15-25 minutes. The workers who prepared meals at *casas particulares* tended to have a less formal involvement with the Cuban food service industry than chefs who cooked at restaurants and taught cooking classes. The interviewees discussed what they prepared and their opinions on their local food system and Cuban cuisine. My homestay family aided the recruitment of participants and used chain referral sampling to find people to interview and share meals. The time commitment for interviewees who also prepared meals was an hour.

Finally, I conducted interviews with experts on the Cuban food system and Cuban cuisine. This subgroup included a food journalist, food scholars, a cookbook author, and a member of the FACRC. I asked experts about their knowledge and attitudes

surrounding the history of Cuban cuisine and the Cuban food system's history. The time commitment for experts was approximately 15-20 minutes.

In the interviews, I asked each participant if I could record the conversation and use their opinions in this thesis. Participants were able to consent to or oppose these questions orally. All participants were given a pseudonym in the thesis. In the interviews, participants discussed Cuban cuisine, tourism, and their opinions surrounding the Cuban food system. I saved all audio recordings and written transcriptions on an encrypted hard drive.

Table 1: List of Interviews

Date	**Description**	**Pseudonym**	**Citation Note**
19 January 2020	Restaurateur	Alejandro	Cited as a
19 January 2020	Producer	Roberto	Cited as b
22 January 2020	Expert	Esteban	[redacted]
23 January 2020	Preparer	Maria	Cited as a
23 January 2020	Distributor	Ernesto	Cited as b
24 January 2020	Distributor	Toni	[redacted]
27 January 2020	Preparer	Veronica	Cited as a
27 January 2020	Expert	Juan	Cited as b
30 January 2020	Preparer	Teresa	[redacted]
2 February 2020	Distributor	Ivan	
3 February 2020	Preparer	Samantha	Cited as a
3 February 2020	Expert	Mario	Cited as b
3 February 2020	Restaurateur	Carlos	Cited as c
4 February 2020	Expert	Alberto	[redacted]
5 February 2020	Preparer	Leonardo	Cited as a

5 February 2020	Expert	Luis	Cited as b
9 February 2020	Producer/Distributor	Marco	[redacted]
11 February 2020	Producer/Distributor	Javier	Cited as a
11 February 2020	Preparer	Daniela	Cited as b

3.2.3 Document Review

Document review is a procedure for analyzing texts that require data to be analyzed and interpreted to increase comprehension of the studied phenomenon (Bowen, 2009). As a research method, document review is particularly applicable to in-depth qualitative studies, and researchers often use it in combination with other methods (Bowen, 2009). This study includes document review through the analysis of Cuban cookbooks and recipes. This analysis will compare cookbooks based on the ingredients in the recipes and the types of recipes they include. Included in this document review are cookbooks obtained outside of Cuba alongside contemporary and historic cookbooks purchased in Havana. This diversity of cookbooks was selected to compare Cuban cuisine's ideological constructions abroad and typical cuisine in Cuba.

Table 2: Cookbook Titles, Descriptions, and Origins

Cookbook	**Description**	**Published**
Cocina Al Minuto: 2nd edition	Written by prominent Cuban cultural figure Nitza Villapol, the book reflects changes in everyday life and the Cuban food supply chain throughout her lifetime.	Cuba
30 *Platos Emblematicos de la Cocina Cubana*	Written by the Cuban Culinary Association, collection of recipes for emblematic Cuban dishes.	Cuba

The Cuban Table	Written by a Cuban American food blogger, it shows combined food cultures and idealized versions of Cuban recipes.	US
The Cuban Cookbook	Written by Cuban and American authors, this extensive collection of Cuban recipes includes definitions of Cuban cooking methods and ingredients.	US

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This chapter outlines themes that emerged from the data collected through interviews, document reviews of Cuban cookbooks, and participant observation in Havana cooking classes and food acquisition sites. This chapter explores responses, recipes, and observations through the lens of themes for this study, considering the differences between perceptions of traditional cuisine and actual eating habits in Cuba. These findings include data on food access and acquisition concerning food regimes and tourism. This thesis considers Slow Food and Food Sovereignty's principles regarding cuisine, eating habits, *paladares*, markets, and Havana cooking classes.

4.1 TRADITION

Almost all interviewees shared the perspective that Cuban cooking is an important cultural tradition. Leonardo spoke of Cuba's history of colonialism and migration that influenced and enriched the Cuban culture and created a distinct national Cuban cuisine (personal communications, 5 February 2020a). Daniela believes "[Cuban cooking] is a tradition that doesn't vary." (personal communications, 11 February 2020b). Individual chefs may change some characteristics of specific recipes. However, several participants claimed that traditional Cuban culinary practices, such as using the Cuban "trinity" of onions, garlic, and peppers to make *sofrito* sauce, the foundation for many Cuban dishes, persist primarily unchanged (personal communications, 19 January 2020a; personal communications, 5 February 2020a; personal communications, 11 February 2020b). Alejandro argued that the Cuban state protects Cuban cuisine from external corporate influences, which has helped preserve culinary traditions. Alejandro explained, "we do not have big international restaurants like McDonald's here, so the way we consume food

is different." (personal communications, 19 January 2020a). The significance of tradition in Cuban food preparation aligns with the principles of Slow Food. There is a strong sense of Cuban identity embedded within the culinary practices. Comments like Alejandro's suggest that, as a Cuban chef, he prefers to use quality ingredients to prepare traditional dishes. Alejandro does not consider fast food and its culture (cheap, processed, standardized food for convenience) to be conducive to preserving Cuban culinary practices. Again, this implication aligns with the anti-fast food messaging of Slow Food, which resists corporate influence of food consumption. However, certain state-run places comparable to American fast food restaurants exist in Havana, with counters offering a selection of pre-made food items.

Cuban families preserved traditional eating habits across generations, making dishes similar to those enjoyed by their grandparents, only made with the ingredients they can currently find (Federación de Asociaciones Culinarias de la República de Cuba, 2018, p. 17). The ingredients that past generations enjoyed, which Cuban people are now lacking, have demonstrated the divide between perceptions of Cuban cuisine within the Cuban diaspora and Cuban chefs' current realities. Peláez (2014), the author of *The Cuban Table*, claims that growing up in Miami, her impression of what constituted Cuban cuisine differed from actual contemporary Cuban culinary practices. This rift between her perception and reality reflects changes in the accessibility of specific ingredients in the Cuban food supply chain. The Cuban food her grandparents knew now exists only outside of Cuba. However, despite the loss of certain ingredients, much of the knowledge surrounding traditional recipes remain preserved in cookbooks and Cuban memories. According to Esteban,

> "older generations educated their children and grandchildren to prepare and consume traditional foods by passing down [the] customs of their parents. Parents are responsible for transmitting knowledge of cooking, for good quality eating, and selecting the best products to be healthier." (personal communications, 22 January 2020).

Indeed, many respondents claimed that their grandmothers had taught them how to cook. In alignment with Food Sovereignty's recognition of women's roles in caring for their families' nutritional needs, Cuban women's generational protection of Cuban culinary practices has shaped Cuba's modern food culture. Samantha claimed that, in addition to her grandmother, her husband had taught her to cook. She explained this as an anomaly, "my husband is better at cooking than I am, but women in Cuba are always expected to learn to cook more. It is machismo here. The cooking is done in the kitchen, without the men, but my husband, he cooks, and he loves to cook." (personal communications 3 February 2020a). In Samantha's household, her husband's cooking preserves past generations' culinary traditions while breaking down their cultural gender norms.

Interviewees spoke of the Special Period's significance when Cuba had severe food, fuel, and electricity shortages. Alberto believes "Cuban food definitely changed over the Special Period… the whole supply chain was just broken, nobody was providing the necessary things to the Cubans, and we had to adapt in so many ways." (personal communications, 4 February 2020). He also claimed that the Cuban food culture has generally returned to its previous state, despite the emergence of *paladares* and the adaptability and creativity of Cuban chefs. He asserts, "it is still very hard to find some things, but it has not changed now." (personal communications, 4 February 2020). With the emergence of *paladares*, food offerings have transformed for tourists but not for Cubans. Although Slow Food may celebrate the quality of food offerings in *paladares*,

key to the Slow Food movement is ensuring that enjoyment of food is a humanist desire and not a class-based activity (Sassatelli, 2015). Until ordinary Cubans have access to the ingredients that *paladares* do or can afford to enjoy their offerings, enjoyment of quality-food in Cuba's private sector will remain a class-based activity.

4.2 KEY INGREDIENTS

Almost every interviewee stated that Cubans eat rice with every meal, with Samantha stating that Cubans "do not eat if we do not have rice." (personal communications, 3 February 2020a). Esteban elaborated, "it is almost impossible to think of a dish that does not have rice. It is very typical for families to cook rice everyday." (personal communications, 22 January 2020). Cubans are provided with 7 pounds of rice every month through the state rationing system. In order to maintain this quota, the Cuban state ensures that rice is produced domestically and imported. The Cuban Ministry of Agriculture projected in July 2020 that Cuba's domestic production of rice in 2020 would fall 538,000 tons of rice short of the 700,000 tons needed for the state rations (Reyes Montero, 2020). Although rice is key to the Cuban diet and the enjoyment of Cuban cuisine, the Cuban food system's dependency on importing rice demonstrates where Cuba's domestic production cannot meet Food Sovereignty's vision.

Beans, garlic, onions, sweet peppers, and plantains were considered some of the most commonly consumed foods in Cuba and staple features of Cuban cuisine. Other essential ingredients were sweet potato, pumpkin, malanga, and yucca. According to interviewees, document reviews of cookbooks, and participant observation in Havana cooking classes, some of the most popular and culturally significant dishes are *Ropa*

Vieja, *Pizza Cubana*, *Congrí*, *Tostones*, *Frituras de Malanga*, *Frituras de Maíz*, *Ajiaco*, *Arroz con Huevo Frito,* and *Arroz con pollo*.

4.2.1 Animal Products

According to Daniela, "we are not a country of vegetarians." (personal communications, 11 February 2020b). Esteban claims that the familiar characterization of Cuban cuisine as meat-heavy is "thanks to all of the Cubans who like a lot of meat all the time…" (personal communications, 22 January 2020). Esteban suggests that this preference for daily meat consumption is problematic. "We live in a developing country where it is not possible to have abundant meat production. So, we consume a lot of chicken and pork, but for example, obtaining beef… it is a very high price." (personal communications, 22 January 2020). Samantha claims that although Cubans technically have access to meat products such as chicken, pork, and beef, these products' high cost makes it impossible to buy enough of them (personal communications, 3 February 2020a). Increased meat consumption over the past century has correlated with economic development (Nigatu & Seeley, 2015). However, high levels of meat consumption have reportedly been part of Cuban culture for over a hundred years (Vázquez Gálvez & Tondre, 2018). The colonial influence of Spanish dietary habits and aspirations engendered this Cuban preference for meat consumption (Paponnet-Cantat, 2003). However, an integral aspect of the second food regime was increasing global mass production and meat consumption, creating a global demand for meat (Friedmann & Mcmichael, 2008). If tourists and Cuban people share this meat preference, this creates a greater demand for this agricultural product. Cuba's top import continues to be poultry

meat, making up 4% of all of its imports in 2017 (OEC, n.d.). Notably, the state system of food rationing typically provides chicken.

Alberto explained that he struggles to make recipes based on his personal preferences because Cubans have limited access to seafood. “Seafood is like something that happens once in a lifetime here, for most Cuban families. Of course, there are some families that can afford seafood more. Seafood is really expensive… [and] has legal regulations around it that doesn’t make it easy to access.” (personal communications, 4 February 2020). He explained that he wanted to make shrimp on New Year’s, as shrimp is his favourite food, but he simply could not find it. Eventually, he realized that he would have to shop in the black market if he wanted to obtain shrimp. Unwilling to put in the effort, money, and risk to acquire shrimp, Alberto decided to make a pork dish instead (personal communications, 4 February 2020).

Daniela’s professional involvement as a chef allowed her to elaborate on seafood acquisition. She explained

> “… if you have to make a seafood dish, you need to find shrimp, lobster, squid, and you cannot find all these things in a market. It’s not like you go out and find these things, you need to plan ahead. Sometimes you need 15 days or 20 days of planning, searching, and shopping. You have to have already planned this, it’s only after you have already planned this that this meal may be possible, but you cannot just go out and get everything you need. It is a big problem that we have here because the markets are not stocked. You can go to a market or a store and get everything you need... you have all the ingredients you need to make simple foods. But not when you want to make a complicated dish for a special occasion…” (personal communications, 11 February 2020b).

Convenience is not a word that is associated with food acquisition in Cuba. Juan commented on the sad irony that inhabitants of this Caribbean island who are “supposed” to eat fish do not eat fish because “we cannot get it. We have none. The fishing infrastructure is run by the government. Lobster and fish, the government exports it, and

then they [claim] that we do not have any fish." (personal communications, 27 January 2020b). Indeed, according to 2018 trade data, Cuba exported 81.8 million USD of crustaceans, making them the country's fifth most exported product and the most exported animal product from Cuba (OEC, n.d.). Some interviewees claimed that seafood consumption, regardless of government regulations, is simply not part of the Cuban food culture. Although many interviewees contended that Cubans rarely consume fish, several Cuban cookbooks included recipes for fish-based dishes (Federación de Asociaciones Culinarias de la República de Cuba, 2018; Peláez, 2014; Vázquez Gálvez & Tondre, 2018).

According to FACRC (2018) Cubans primarily consume eggs as supplementary foods to meals. In Cuba, eggs obtained from a Creole hen, which feeds on natural produce, are called Creole Eggs, and Cuban people generally prefer these eggs (Federación de Asociaciones Culinarias de la República de Cuba, 2018). This preference reflects Food Sovereignty's emphasis on traditional agricultural production methods and rejection of processed agricultural inputs. According to several interviewees, the monthly ration for eggs keeps decreasing, as the government claimed that the chickens are not producing enough eggs, making eggs challenging to find in Havana (personal communications, 27 January 2020a; personal communications, 27 January 2020b). In 2019, Cuba's Commerce Minister Betsy Díaz Velázquez claimed that shortages of staple foods, including eggs, were related to the Trump administration's tightening of the embargo (Press, 2019). In the year prior, Cuba imported less than 1 tonne of eggs while Cuba's domestic production exceeded 122,000 tonnes of eggs (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, n.d.). This data suggests that the domestic production

of eggs in Cuba is self-sufficient. However, the embargo may have impacted the Cuban government's ability to acquire animal feed, which would impact production, as Cuba imported 34.5 million USD of feed in 2018 (OEC, n.d.).

Veronica, a retiree, had created a small business baking cakes and selling them to neighbours for special occasions. Unfortunately, recent egg shortages and the high cost of flour had made it impossible for her to continue her business. She was frustrated, as the business helped supplement her state pension and baking was an enjoyable retirement activity (personal communications, 27 January 2020a). Notably, at the *paladares* and *casas particulares* visited during fieldwork, visitors could purchase eggs for breakfast without issue. The contrast between food access for tourists and Cuban households is palpable.

Dairy was not mentioned in the interviews, as fresh dairy products can be challenging to acquire in Cuba (Peláez, 2014). Fresh or powdered milk is, however, provided for children in the state rations. Daniela explained, "Many of us prefer fresh milk to the condensed milk and evaporated milk that can be found in stores but most of the time it's not possible [to acquire]." (personal communications, 11 February 2020b).

4.2.2 Produce

All of the interviewees spoke of the importance of fresh vegetables for the Cuban diet and Cuban cuisine. According to Esteban, this is a recent development, explaining,

> "For many years, there didn't exist a culture of diversification. For example… people habitually consumed tomatoes and lettuce but there didn't exist an education for the population on all of the benefits of consuming plenty of vegetables, like cucumber, carrots beets, chard- and this learning took place over a slow process. There is a great experience where some children's circles in Cuba

> teach the colors to children with vegetables. Beets are red. The carrots are orange, and they learn the colors white and green, etc. These kids have contributed to helping their parents change their eating habits to consume other types of vegetables different from tomatoes and peppers which are traditional." (personal communications, 22 January 2020).

This example demonstrates how food knowledge is not just transmitted from one generation to the next; food knowledge can be shared reciprocally. Meanwhile, Alberto explained that healthy habits and preferred food tastes in Cuba are not necessarily in alignment, stating, "I do not like [fresh vegetables]. I would say that the average Cuban who is older than 30 does not get the importance of a healthy diet. For many years we did not even have choices of fresh vegetables- so we just eat whatever is available." (personal communications, 4 February 2020). Ivan notes that the revolutionary government and the influential culinary figure Nitza Villapol tried to influence Cuban food habits by promoting domestically grown vegetables (personal communications, 2 February 2020). Mario agrees, "[the state] worked on a project to promote a varied diet with vegetables." (personal communications, 3 February 2020b). There was a concentrated effort to ensure that Cuban culinary practices would reflect nutritional and public health guidelines.

Cubans can buy produce in farmers' markets located in the various neighbourhoods of Havana. These markets are either private, cooperatives, or state-run. These markets can vary in size. One or two vendors selling out of a window on an apartment building's ground floor constitutes a market. Large designated areas with vendors selling behind dozens of lined up stalls are another type of marketplace. Venturing to an *organopónico*, one can see where the food is grown and purchase

products directly from those who grow it.[9] These markets also fluctuate in the variety of products that they offer. According to several fruit and vegetable vendors in Havana, there is always a high demand for fresh produce (personal communications, 23 January 2020b; personal communications, 9 February 2020; personal communications, 11 February 2020a; personal communications, 24 January 2020). Although many markets are still open in the afternoons, vendors claim that their best produce is purchased much earlier in the day (personal communications, 23 January 2020b; personal communications, 24 January 2020). At a state-run agricultural market, I asked Ernesto if I could purchase some of the yuccas in his stall. After a look at his picked-over selection, he said, "I cannot sell you these, they are horrible, you need to come back at eight tomorrow morning." (personal communications, 23 January 2020b). After having already sold off his best yucca that morning, he was unwilling to close a sale of poor-quality produce. When I returned and purchased yucca the next day, he reminded me twice that I had to boil the yucca and eat it with mojo, a beloved sauce made with garlic and citrus. In Ernesto's view, the sale of his products should result in the enjoyment of his foods with Cuban flavours.

Marco's business as a farmer is partially dependent on agritourism. Agritourism is an alternative form of tourism defined as ''any practice developed on a working farm with the purpose of attracting visitors'' (Barbieri & Mshenga, 2008, p. 168). Marco's farm also sells vegetables to private restaurants in Havana. Marco claimed

> "There is a direct influence [of tourism]… considering vegetables, there is a fluctuation in the demand. That's because the demand is so huge… the demand

[9] A large urban organic garden, existing as part of a cooperative of urban agricultural projects. Organopónicos were first established during the Special Period as a means to obtain food security in urban areas like Havana.

> exists always, no matter if the tourism is up or down because the demand for vegetables, it's so high that those fluctuations happen below the curve. We have always lots of demand for the products we produce. That is, for example, mostly greens or arugula, dill, or fennel, red lettuces or cabbage, or basil or these kinds of products that have always a demand no matter if it's higher or lower, the impact of tourism." (personal communications, 9 February 2020).

Notably, very few of these vegetables and herbs were named by other interviewees when asked about the necessary ingredients for Cuban cuisine and the Cuban diet. Additionally, a search for these products in the state-run agricultural markets was unsuccessful. This list shows a distinction between the vegetables produced at this private farm and the state-owned farms' products. The other interviewees did not discuss this extensive variety of greens. However, various *paladares* in Havana sold salads using this diversity of vegetables. Still, Marco specifically stated that the demand for these products, no matter the fluctuations of waves of tourists, remained high, indicating that he has Cuban customers distributing these diverse vegetables to other Cubans.

4.2.3 Processed Foods

Several interviewees spoke of Cuban eating habits and restaurants shifting towards processed foods and foods that contain flour. Although flour is not a new ingredient, it is becoming a larger part of the Cuban diet, according to several interviewees (personal communications, 23 January 2020a; personal communications, 30 January 2020; personal communications, 4 February 2020). Statements about high flour consumption led to concerns about the increased consumption of bread, pizza, and spaghetti. Spaghetti has occasionally been included as one of the state rations' staples and is occasionally found on the state-run markets' shelves. In 2018, Cuba imported 160 million USD of wheat and 9.06 million USD of wheat flours (OEC, n.d.). The prevalence of these products relates to this thesis's practical problem, that neoliberal globalization

and the food regime impact local food systems and eating habits. Concerns about shifting local culinary practices and eating habits to incorporate more processed foodstuffs are directly related to Slow Food's principles.

4.3 FOOD ACQUISITION IN HAVANA

Inequity has unfortunately characterized Cuba's system of food distribution (the food rationing system, state-run markets, and alternative food sources like hard currency stores), as the provinces with the largest cities in Cuba, Havana and Santiago, have always received more items than the other provinces (Carter, 2013; Garth, 2009). Still, according to many interview participants, the unstable food supply chain has been an issue in Havana. This instability and limited food supplies engender fluctuations in the prices for numerous foodstuffs. State rations include a necessary quota per person of rice, refined and unrefined sugar, salt, beans, coffee, chicken or pork, eggs, milk for families with children, and occasionally spaghetti.

Mario claims that Cubans can access all of the ingredients they need to make culturally significant Cuban meals:

> "From one form or another, there is access. There is access to vegetables in markets that are established across the country. In the cities, we have *organopónicos* and agricultural markets that are enriched. There are some micro-manufacturers that produce condiments, seasoning, and spices and they can be found in the markets... The condition of the food can vary but in general, it can be obtained what they need to cook." (personal communications, 3 February 2020b).

Interviewees generally confirmed that there was sufficient access to necessary foodstuffs in Havana (personal communications, various 2020). Food preparers who worked in *casas particulares* noted that acquiring ingredients to cook a meal or complete a recipe is

challenging and time-consuming. They explained that acquiring produce, animal products, and bread can require travelling to stores all across the neighbourhood (personal communications, 23 January 2020a; personal communications, 30 January 2020; personal communications, 3 February 2020).

Several interviewees explained that they knew how to find the foodstuffs they wanted but that some were too expensive. Veronica explained that she could find almost everything she needed to make what she wanted. However, often ingredients like peppers, onions, eggs, and flour were too expensive for her to afford with her pension (personal communications, 27 January 2020a). All interviewees explained that they could not complete all of their food shopping in one place due to the planned structure of the state-run markets and shops, which divides food distribution. Owners of *paladares* and chefs explained that there is always produce, but finding specific ingredients can require visiting different, more expensive markets. They also explained that it is challenging to find all of the ingredients they need to run their restaurants because there is no wholesale market for *paladares*. They have to buy many of their ingredients from the same sources that other Cubans do.

Daniela explains, “fresh [vegetables] are always in the market… we do not always have the same fruits or the same vegetables. It’s all seasonal, dependent on the weather….” (personal communications, 11 February 2020b). Alberto confirmed this, explaining, “of course, the offers can vary a little bit but… it’s mostly the fruits that change with the season like mango, tomatoes, avocados, stuff like that because most of the stuff is being grown locally so it’s depending on the time of year.” (personal communications, 4 February 2020).

Javier, who runs an *organopónico*, explained that his family started the project during the Special Period because of the food crisis. They established the *organopónico*, a large urban organic garden, to provide for their family and community. The owner explained that most of his customers were still people from his neighbourhood in Havana (personal communications, 11 February 2020a). From the Special Period, urban agriculture became more widespread in Havana, so residents had more access to locally grown produce. According to Daniela, whether someone shops at an *organopónico* depends on their location, as "there are only a few *organopónicos* and they aren't convenient for everyone. There are so many agricultural markets so it's easier to just shop there." (personal communications, 11 February 2020b). In the state-operated agricultural markets, there was less variety in produce. Vendors reported that their produce was grown in a range of locations from Havana to Matanzas Province.

Variety in markets was directly linked to cost. Specific agricultural markets were known for the plethora of their offerings. Upon visiting a market with more variety than others, the increased cost of produce was high, with rare fruits, like star fruit, advertised at a significantly higher price than a handful of bananas or guavas found at other markets. Vendors claimed that this market's clientele were typically ex-patriots or diplomats who could afford the more expensive variety of fruits and vegetables (personal communications, 23 January 2020b; personal communications, 24 January 2020). Meanwhile, the Cubans who visit these markets tended to make the journey solely to purchase a specific ingredient.

Alberto addressed how *paladares* obtain rare ingredients. Alberto explained that some owners "have people working with them daily to find things on the black market.

Like people will be constantly checking … every Cuban is a little bit involved in the black market." (personal communications, 4 February 2020). The causes of the black market are numerous but primarily rooted in economic policies that enabled citizens to break the law in order to survive (Ritter, 2015). The unstable supply chain and shortages of essential foodstuffs in Cuba are related to US sanctions, which hinder the Cuban state's ability to obtain necessities (Perlmutter, 2020). Indeed, involvement in the black market is a strategy for surviving US sanctions' repression (Hove et al., 2020). The dual currency system fuels the black market, given the significant discrepancy between the value of the national currency and the value of CUCs (Ritter, 2015).

Carlos admitted that food acquisition barriers, scarcity, and supply chain disruptions drove him to change his restaurant's offerings. Concerning beef, Carlos explained:

> "When we started here, we actually had [beef] on our menu, but now we do not have it because it is something that is so hard to get and we were like living to get [beef], and it is not worth it… we just removed it [from the menu], and we will have it as a special whenever we have it, but it is not on our menu. Our menu is small… but every dish has its own little operation behind it" (personal communications, 3 February 2020c).

Even though there is no beef on the menu, Carlos admits that every dish offers its particular challenges in securing a supply of all of the necessary ingredients. Interviews with workers at *casas particulares* corroborated this idea that every dish has its "own little operation behind it." The breakfasts I consumed in Cuba consisted of various fruits, toast, butter, eggs, and coffee. The cooks at the *casas particulares* explained that they had to visit the local agricultural market and various storefronts in the neighbourhood to obtain all of the ingredients that covered my plate in the mornings (personal communications, 23 January 2020a; personal communications, 30 January 2020; personal

communications, 3 February 2020). Despite these challenges that *paladares* and *casas particulares* face in acquiring the ingredients to create a single meal, these people's resourcefulness and resiliency strengthen the ties between private entrepreneurship and delicious Cuban meals.

The foods found in state-run indoor stores were all pre-packaged, imported, processed foods. The price range of the processed foods in these stores was comparable to those found in a Global North supermarket, making certain processed foods luxury goods in Cuba. These products are typically intended for diplomats, foreign workers and visitors in Cuba. Depending on where one is in Havana, some of these state-run stores are well-stocked, particularly in the tourist centres. These stores often have many bare shelves in residential neighbourhoods, stocked with a handful of cans of condensed milk, bags of pasta, pre-made *sofrito* sauce, and instant coffee. Nearly all of the shelves were empty in one such store, but a wall displaying a Cuban rum selection had stocked shelves. Indeed, the cost of the products in these stores seems to reinforce this divide where "foreign tourists frequent dollar restaurants and dollar stores, use dollar taxis, eat food and use transportation that Cubans cannot" (Facio et al., 2004, p. 14).

4.4 TOURISM

Esteban believes that the tourism industry is a central priority of the Cuban state. He explains that the state and producers have heavily invested in ensuring that "food production has been varied and sustained for tourist interactions in the country…." (personal communications, 22 January 2020). Esteban claims that if one visits a hotel, they will encounter "a variety of food that we [Cubans] do not have." (personal communications, 22 January 2020). Esteban contends that this variety in Cuban hotels'

food availability ensures that the tourists have a positive and enjoyable experience on their trip. They must have access to foods that Cubans do not because tourists' enjoyment is an economic priority. Esteban adds that they must also have typical Cuban food in their hotels if they want typical cuisine to be part of their vacation experience.

Participants expressed complicated feelings surrounding tourism in Cuba. Tourism has sparked a new and exciting food culture, particularly in tourist centres like Havana. There is experimentation with traditional Cuban cuisine and new flavours and ingredients that cater to a broad international clientele. Carlos believes Cuban food has evolved and improved because "now there's more competition and the restaurants have to get better and the food has to get better..." (personal communications, 3 February 2020c). Alberto believes that tourism has forced Cuban cuisine to adapt,

> "because of the demand of the things that we are getting right now… they're opening up so much to the world and we are having so many tourists come here and they are demanding vegan cuisine, vegetarian, all of these things that we were not used to providing that we have to get because we have to adapt to the market." (personal communications, 4 February 2020).

Besides international cuisine demands from recreational tourists, experiential tourists seek authentic or traditional Cuban cuisine (personal communications, 3 February 2020b). This demand has led to *paladares* serving culturally significant foods like cassava bread, which some Cubans may not have the equipment or the knowledge to prepare.

According to many interviewees, tourists, diplomats, and Cubans who work in the tourism industry almost exclusively enjoy this evolving food culture. As *paladares* cannot access ingredients at wholesale prices, market constraints force them to raise their

prices. These high prices can only be afforded by those who have access to CUCs. Esteban explains that tourism has created a new type of class system in Cuba, as

> "the employment sector with the highest wages are the people with the highest access to products sold in CUC and there are many people who do not have access to CUC… It is a systematic formation that everyone cannot access everything. Only some people with greater economic mobility have more access to shop for everything they need. It is a quality of the West." (personal communications, 22 January 2020).

Esteban refers to the Cubans who work in the private sector of tourism and their access to CUC. At the same time, Cubans employed by the state only have access to the domestic currency (CUP). To Esteban, this system shares similarities with a Western, capitalist economy.

Daniela believes **"**we have a real economic problem here and the tourists really help us and our business… life is not easy, it's hard, but we survive because of the people visiting." (personal communications, 11 February 2020). As a cooking class instructor, she spoke in favour of the tourism industry because it provides her, along with numerous Cubans, increased economic opportunity. In Cuba, tourism benefits most Cubans because it has helped sustain the economy and fund Cuban social programs, allowing medical care and education to remain free and accessible throughout Cuba (Wilkinson, 2008).

When speaking to food preparers and experts in Havana, there was a consistent stance that most Cubans cannot afford to go out to eat at a restaurant, especially at a *paladar*, which has higher prices than state-run restaurants. Teresa explained

> "[eating in restaurants is] very expensive for us because we work to have money, but we have two currencies so it's a little complicated when you make the exchange… We sometimes eat in restaurants, but cheaper ones, for Cuban food. Some are meant for Cubans and not for tourists to eat at … but normally we eat the Cuban food, we prepare it at home, we eat with the family, and for me, it's

> more important than eating at a restaurant…" (personal communications, 30 January 2020).

Instead of wishing that she could enjoy food prepared by professional chefs more often, Teresa values the social aspects of eating food, including her direct involvement in preparing and consuming food with family members. Although she occasionally eats in restaurants intended for Cubans, referring to state-run restaurants and cafeterias that sell food in the local currency, she prefers the routine she shares with her family when they eat at home.

However, several *paladar* owners insisted that the majority of their clientele were Cuban. Carlos claimed to be "surprised" by the amount of Cuban clientele he had. "I'm Cuban and I'm sure Cubans do not go out to eat… this is too expensive for Cubans- but… it's a place where people save money for a month to come." (personal communications, 3 February 2020c). He explained that running a restaurant with a price range that seemed impossible for Cubans to afford was a result of market realities.

> "We wanted to have low prices but the thing is, it's pure math. There's no way you can make profits with lower prices and still be able to use high-quality ingredients because high-quality ingredients are expensive and you need the restaurant to be expensive to make [a] profit." (personal communications, 3 February 2020c).

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

From the presented data, this chapter will analyze and interpret the findings with the CPE framework to analyze the principles of Food Sovereignty and Slow Food. These principles are embedded within the cultural practices and discourse of the lifeworld and the bureaucratic and economic policies that govern the Cuban and international food systems. Although Slow Food and Food Sovereignty advocates have championed Cuba's transition to organic agriculture, agroecological production, and urban agriculture, as well as the preservation of traditional culinary practices, these ideologies only grasp fragments of a larger, complicated picture. This thesis bridges the Slow Food and Food Sovereignty movements' principles by linking food production and consumption. From this approach, ingredients, recipes, and culinary practices reveal significant cultural, economic, political, and environmental implications.

Juan explains, "if you are talking about the culture of Cuban food and what Cuban people like, well this has changed because of the access to stuff. We have started eating hot dogs. A Cuban meal can be white rice and hot dog, cooked with tomato sauce. This is a meal in Cuba. Black beans, white rice, and an egg, that's a meal in Cuba. There is a gap between Cuban cuisine and what people eat." (personal communications, 27 January 2020b). Notably, what Juan claims are typical Cuban meals were not corroborated by other interviewees who focused on discussing the importance of traditional recipes and ingredients. There is a significant divide between formal and informal culinary practices, as most Cuban people rarely eat some of the dishes that are considered to be signifiers of the national cuisine.

5.1 SLOW FOOD & FOOD SOVEREIGNTY CUISINE ANALYSIS

The key to Food Sovereignty is ensuring that quality, locally and agroecologically produced ingredients are accessible to all in a community. The Slow Food movement contends that people must have access to quality ingredients and traditional culinary knowledge to enjoy and protect their traditional recipes. The Cuban context demonstrates the limitations of only valuing traditional recipes and that the Slow Food movement should be expanded to emphasize the value and importance of evolving culinary practices that are accessible and enjoyable, even if they are not traditional. According to the FACRC,

> "The national cuisine, represented by its typical and traditional dishes, which had its origins within families and transcended commercial activity, is a concrete expression of the culture and substantive part of it, a symbol of the formation of nationality and our identity. These reasons underpin the need for its safeguard in the present to strengthen its future, and its recognition as a manifestation of the intangible cultural heritage of the country that, transmitted from generation to generation, grants feelings of continuity, content, and a sense of identity." (Federación de Asociaciones Culinarias de la República de Cuba, 2018, p. 17).

This organization justifies and explains the importance of safeguarding Cuban cuisine, and it attempts to do so by publishing a cookbook of 30 dishes that are emblematic of Cuban cuisine.

Analysis of the traditional, culturally significant, and typical Cuban recipes identified in the findings reveals that Cuban culinary practices reflect many of Slow Food and Food Sovereignty's principles. However, traditional recipes show the limitations of both approaches to food choices and access to culturally appropriate and traditional foods. This section will analyze the findings stated on pages 47 and 48, which listed the most popular and culturally significant recipes.

5.1.1 Ajiaco (Stew)

Ajiaco, which uses the Taíno word for stew, is typically made up of root vegetables, corn, meat, onion, and garlic (Paponnet-Cantat, 2003). *Ajiaco* is considered the signature dish of Cuban cuisine. The ingredients demonstrate that it is a product of Spanish, indigenous, and African influences. While there is plenty of discussion surrounding *Ajiaco* and its role as a culturally significant Cuban meal in the cookbooks and cooking classes I attended, only two interview participants mentioned it (personal communications, 19 January 2020a; personal communications, 4 February 2020). However, several interviewees regularly mentioned the ingredients typically used to make a pot of *Ajiaco* (pork, peppers, corn, and root vegetables) as popular and culturally significant ingredients necessary to make numerous Cuban dishes. Ortiz (1940) famously argued that *Ajiaco* was a metaphor for Cuba, given that its ingredients, preparation methods, and seasonings represent Cuba's historical process of transculturation, all coming together in one pot of stew. The recipes for *Ajiaco* in the different cookbooks, varied, given that one can make it with whatever meats and root vegetables are on hand in Cuba. While "*Ajiaco* has historically been considered the national dish, it is not prepared as frequently because of its numerous ingredients and long and complicated preparation" (Vázquez Gálvez & Tondre, 2018, p. 11).

This dish presents a gap between a traditional Cuban dish, considered by many to be culturally and historically significant, and what Cubans typically eat. The celebration of this dish, representative of Cuban history and culture, relates to Slow Food's principles surrounding the preservation of traditional food production and consumption. *Ajiaco* requires Cuban ingredients and flavours, making it an ideal representative of the Slow

Food movement. However, the complicated preparation and long list of ingredients that have made it less popular to prepare reveal the irony of Slow Food, in that not everyone has time to make 'Slow' dishes. Indeed, Nitza Villapol's cooking show and books, named 'Cocina al Minuto' or 'Cooking in a Minute,' were intended to teach women quick recipes so they would not have to spend too much time in the kitchen (Fuster, 2016).

5.1.2 Ropa Vieja (Shredded Beef Dish)

Ropa Vieja is a famous Cuban dish of shredded beef, onions, peppers, garlic, and tomatoes. Its name, which translates to old clothes, originates from a legend from the Canary Islands about a poor man who cooked old clothes for his family (Peláez, 2014). His love magically transformed them into the stew known as *Ropa Vieja*. While multiple restaurants in Havana serve *Ropa Vieja*, beef is difficult to acquire on the island. As was previously mentioned, Carlos's restaurant no longer offers *Ropa Vieja* or any beef dishes because he was unable to maintain a steady supply (personal communications, 3 February 2020c). Maria claimed, "it's not in the stores." (personal communications, 23 January 2020a).

The commodification and othering of Cuban food by tourists has created a demand for beef in Cuba. Some of them want to try authentic, traditional Cuban dishes, like *Ropa Vieja*. Cuban recipes that require beef reflect a time in history when beef was accessible to more Cubans. Cubans' love of meat comes from Spanish culinary ideals and consumption habits (Paponnet-Cantat, 2003). Today, beef dishes can represent a sense of frustration in Cuba with the Cuban and American governments regarding the Cuban government's strict regulation of the beef market and US sanctions limiting Cuba's access to numerous beloved foods. The revolutionary leadership designated beef

production primarily for the tourism industry (Paponnet-Cantat, 2003). The environmental implications of beef consumption are immense, as beef production is a leading greenhouse emitter and requires a significant amount of water, land, and energy (Rearte & Pordomingo, 2014; Vries et al., 2015). In the Cuban case, much of the beef consumed on the island is not produced in Cuba, as Cuba imported a total of 8.35 million USD of frozen beef from Chile, Brazil, Canada, Mexico and Spain (OEC, n.d.). Thus enjoyment of beef-based *Ropa Vieja* in Cuba requires unsustainable production, thousands of food miles in transporting beef to Cuba and energy use to store frozen beef safely.[10] This dish demonstrates how traditional dishes can be ecologically unsustainable.

Although several interviewees spoke of the cultural importance of *Ropa Vieja*, others claimed that *Ropa Vieja*, prepared with beef, is simply not part of the average Cuban's diet anymore (personal communications, various 2020). Still, the FACRC claim that they need to protect "the memory and recognition of the food and dishes identified by the people as part of their habits and customs, despite the physical unavailability of the products that sustain them…"(Federación de Asociaciones Culinarias de la República de Cuba, 2018, p. 17). Daniela explained that chefs can prepare *Ropa Vieja* with alternatives to beef. This culinary flexibility has allowed dishes like *Ropa Vieja* to survive. In accordance with Slow Food's principles, Cuban people must have the opportunity to enjoy traditional Cuban dishes that are part of their cultural heritage.

[10] Food miles is the distance food travels between the stages of production and consumption.

5.1.3 Congrí (Rice and Beans)

Congrí is a dish comprised of black beans and rice cooked together. Congrí can be a meal in and of itself, served with fresh vegetables on the side, but Cubans often consume it with other dishes. Leonardo explained that the name of this dish comes from the Haitian kongo (beans) and ri (rice), and the technique is West African (personal communications, 5 February 2020a). Amongst many interviewees with similar sentiments, Samantha explained that "to talk about traditional Cuban food, you will always include congrí, a mixture that is well-known as Cuban food… Always foreigners say [they want] '*Comida Cubana*' and it is always *congrí* because of the flavour, the cumin, the peppers, they like this." (personal communications, 3 February 2020a).

A multitude of rice and bean dish variations exist across the world. They are popularly considered a "perfect pairing" packed with essential nutrients, including amino acids. This combination can act as a meal in and of itself that is satisfying, delicious, nutritionally, and culturally significant. As was stated in the findings, rice goes with every meal in Cuba. Many interviewees said Cubans feel that if there is no rice on the table, it is not a meal. The state provides the ingredients to make *Congrí* with the rationing system, making this dish accessible to the entire population. This nutritious dish is reflective of the local food culture as it is popular amongst Cubans. Although the Cuban state relies on local production and imports for rice and beans, this dish shows the significance of simplicity, flavour, nutrition and accessibility. This dish's cultural significance in Cuba cannot be overstated. Continuing ensured access to the ingredients in this dish is necessary for achieving the principles of Food Sovereignty and Consumer Sovereignty.

5.1.4 Casabe (Cassava Bread)

Casabe, or cassava bread, "is a food we inherited from our aboriginal peoples" (Federación de Asociaciones Culinarias de la República de Cuba, 2018). Spanish colonizers incorporated *casabe* into the Creole diet, and it remains today, although mainly in Cuba's central east region. *Casabe* is a type of bread made from yucca, the root of the cassava plant. The yucca roots must be washed, peeled, grated, and then passed through a sieve before it is pressed into a flat, round *torta* and cooked. The actual preparation process and the required materials for this process have endured (Federación de Asociaciones Culinarias de la República de Cuba, 2018). The preparation and consumption of *casabe* is a meaningful tradition for holidays in the central-east regions of Cuba.

Without requiring the importation of flour, cassava bread has the potential to be an effective solution for Cuban Food Sovereignty. Juan believes approximately 15 *paladares* in Havana sell cassava bread (personal communications, 27 January 2020b). Unfortunately, cassava bread, a product promoted as part of Cuba's intangible cultural heritage, is not offered at state-run restaurants (Slow Food, 2019). Instead, the private sector serves as the provider of quality and traditional Cuban food. Slow Food principles are involved in the recent promotion of cassava bread (Slow Food, 2019). Still, this food's preservation is a result of generations of Cubans passing down this tradition (Federación de Asociaciones Culinarias de la República de Cuba, 2018). In relation to Food Sovereignty's emphasis on indigenous knowledge systems, cassava bread serves as the optimal example of how indigenous ingredients and preparation techniques have remained in the Cuban memory and culture.

5.1.5 Arroz con Pollo (Rice with Chicken)

Arroz con Pollo is similar to the Spanish dish known as Paella, a yellow, rice-based seafood dish. The Cuban version of this dish contains chicken thighs instead of seafood. It includes many of the most important aspects of Cuban cuisine- peppers, onions, tomatoes, garlic, chicken, and rice. It can also include peas, according to several cookbooks (Federación de Asociaciones Culinarias de la República de Cuba, 2018; Peláez, 2014; Vázquez Gálvez & Tondre, 2018). Peas were never mentioned in interviews and not visible in markets during data collection. This chicken-based Cuban dish was considered a household staple by several interviewees (personal communications, 19 January 2020a; personal communications, 4 February 2020; personal communications, 5 February 2020a).

This paella-like dish reveals the historical influence of Spanish colonialism on Cuban cooking. It also demonstrates the lack of seafood consumption in Cuba, as the recipe reflects the Cuban culture and Cuban food system, which exported 81.8 million USD of crustaceans in 2018 (OEC, n.d.). In the 1950s, poultry was more expensive than other meats, and it became the preferred dish for "special occasions and Sunday family gatherings" (Peláez, 2014, p. 126). While this dish represented an initial preference for poultry as a luxury good, this dish has not needed to evolve with Cuban political changes, as chicken is provided by the state rations. Instead of a luxury good, chicken is now a typical protein. This dish is simple, and the state ration system typically provides the main ingredients.

5.1.6 Arroz con Huevo Frito (Rice with Fried Egg)

Rice with a fried egg, considered by Juan to be a typical Cuban meal, was only included in the FACRC cookbook, as the FACRC considered it to be emblematic of Cuban cuisine, due to the "availability, simplicity and speed of its preparation" (Federación de Asociaciones Culinarias de la República de Cuba, 2018, p. 39). According to the writers of *Cuba: The Cookbook*, although a meal centred around meat is preferred in Cuba, "when meat is not available it is common to eat rice and beans with a fried egg or egg scramble" (Vázquez Gálvez & Tondre, 2018, p. 11).

This inclusion of this dish in the FACRC cookbook demonstrates that meals that are emblematic of Cuban cuisine do not necessarily need to be linked to ideas of authenticity or tradition but can instead be linked to ease of preparation and accessibility. There is a critical difference between this dish and dishes like *Ajiaco* and *Ropa Vieja*. Many interviewees considered *Ajiaco* and *Ropa Vieja* to be culturally significant (personal communications, various 2020). The FACRC cookbook also included these dishes (Federación de Asociaciones Culinarias de la República de Cuba, 2018). *Ajiaco* and *Ropa Vieja* remain intrinsically linked to cultural heritage. However, dishes like *Arroz con Huevo Frito* represent food that Cubans are more likely to prepare and regularly consume, which encompasses cultural value. Despite Slow Food's best efforts, easy, accessible, and convenient meals are becoming more embedded in Cuba's established food culture.

5.1.7 Tostones, Frituras de Malanga, Frituras de Maíz (Twice-Fried Plantains, Fritters)

Several interviewees spoke of the prevalence of fried foods in Cuba, particularly malanga fritters, corn fritters, and *tostones*. One can easily find these foods at stands in

some of Havana's agricultural markets. They are also served freshly fried in storefronts across Havana. These foods are also typical offerings in both state-run restaurants and *paladares*, often ordered as starters before a meal or offered as a side dish to complement the main course. *Tostones* are green plantains, cut into rounds, fried, and then smashed into a flat round shape before being fried a second time and salted. *Tostones* are a popular side dish and can complement most Cuban meals. *Tostones Rellenos* (filled *tostones*) remain a popular alternative to traditional *tostones*. *Tostones Rellenos* follow the same initial preparation, but they are shaped into small cups after they are fried and pressed. After being fried a second time, the cups can be filled with sauce, cheese, meat, or vegetables and then baked again.

Malanga fritters and corn fritters are also popular fried snacks, typically enjoyed as street food or as starters before a meal. These fried snacks are cheap, greasy, and flavourful snacks that can complement most Cuban meals. These dishes are a prominent aspect of local cuisine as they are popular and uncomplicated snacks. They also demonstrate how local foods and traditional ingredients do not necessarily equate to healthier dietary choices. They play an influential role in Cuban food preferences, and the FACRC (2018) considers the fritters to be emblematic of Cuban cuisine.

5.1.8 Pizza Cubana (Cuban Pizza)

Cuban pizza is thicker and sweeter than Italian and American pizza styles. Cuban pizza was invented during the Special Period because, during this time, Cubans would stretch food supplies to make them last. The scarcity required watering down tomato sauce and adding sugar to the watered-down sauce to add flavour for Cuban pizzas. White cheese and meat are standard toppings for this street food. Cuban pizza is

considered “an affordable option [that] has become ubiquitous among young people” (Vázquez Gálvez & Tondre, 2018, p. 12). Rather than buying an “authentic” pizza in a *paladar*, which could cost a Cuban ¼ of their monthly salary, Cuban pizzas are a form of street food. At a decent size, vendors sell them for 10 CUP- the equivalent of .40 USD. Cubans can fold the pizza and eat them on the go. Cuban pizzas are delicious, unique, cheap to make, and cheap to buy. The affordable Cuban pizza is accessible to most Havana residents.

The unique taste and preparation methods of Cuban pizza reflect Cuban resiliency and creativity during a food scarcity crisis. Cuban pizza also allows Cubans to participate in and enjoy more international dishes. Cuban pizza demonstrates the problematic nature behind the belief that only traditional culinary practices should be protected and that new and processed foods are degrading traditional culinary practices and diets. Cuban pizza is evidence of the continual evolution of food cultures and the expansion of local food tastes. Understandings of food culture as stagnant ignores the complex history of transculturation in Cuba, and societies worldwide, which has created Cuba’s unique cuisine. Cuban pizza exemplifies the type of food cautioned against by the Slow Food movement. It is based on foreign cuisine and is representative of the global homogenization of food tastes. Additionally, it comprises unhealthy and processed ingredients that are not representative of Cuba’s local food production. However, this thesis argues that this food is still culturally significant and represents Cuban innovation and autonomy. Considering CPE’s focus on the cultural value of everyday practices, Cuban pizza may represent typical food to young people in Havana. Rejecting the cultural value of cheap, enjoyable, and accessible food negates the CS of Cuban

consumers. Cubans are no longer living under the same conditions of scarcity of the Special Period, yet they still enjoy their pizzas prepared in this unique, modest way, demonstrating the importance of food consumption choice. Cuban pizza demonstrates that culture, and food culture in particular, is not stagnant.

5.2 FOOD REGIMES

Two prevalent narratives exist in Havana when discussing Cuban food shortages. One follows that the Cuban government is doing their best to meet the Cuban population's dietary needs. However, US sanctions' ongoing consequences make it exceptionally difficult for the Cuban government to maintain consistent provisions of adequate foodstuffs.[11] This narrative speaks to Cuba's dependency on imports ranging from foodstuffs to fuel and the barriers that the US government has placed on Cuba's ability to purchase and distribute these necessities. The opposing narrative suggests that the Cuban government does not function properly and blames its incompetency and failure on US sanctions. This narrative follows the logic that socialism is an inherently flawed system that will result in shortages or that socialist countries intentionally create shortages to keep the population fixated on meeting their biological needs instead of interrogating the root cause of problems in their society. This account accepts that US sanctions have negatively impacted the Cuban economy and diminished the number of

[11] In December 2014, President Obama announced a loosening of the embargo. However, the Trump administration reversed this and implemented new sanctions. This included restricting Americans' travel and prohibiting American cruise ships from docking in Cuba. Trump also re-enacted a long inactive component of the embargo in May 2019, a section of the 1996 Helms-Burton Act, which states that anyone whose property was nationalized by the revolutionary leadership can sue any individual or company profiting from their former holdings, thus further limiting trade with Cuba (Marc, 2019).

food supplies in Cuba, but ultimately holds the Cuban state responsible for Cuba's shortages.

The dual currency system has led to black-market activities as some essential goods are only available for purchase in stores that accept only CUCs (Di Bella & Wolfe, 2008). Additionally, multiple participants claimed that shortages and strict food sales regulations also consolidated Cuba's black market. Some products, such as beef and seafood, are scarce because of the government's control of resources. Alberto claims, "the way that Cubans find something, that would have just been so easy in any other country, would take a lot of effort here… because of the political system that isn't organized properly to provide." (personal communications, 4 February 2020). Alberto's argument follows that the Cuban state intentionally perpetuates scarcity and disruptions in the food supply chain. However, Cuba's efforts to cultivate a more sustainable food system following the Special Period counter this logic.

Based on observations made from visiting various stores, restaurants, and households, many of the imported foods that make it to Cuban tables are processed foods. A contact claimed that ships coming from other countries with supplies for the Cuban people are regularly turned away on their course due to the US blockade. Still, according to Esteban, "The Cuban population has access to many international products from other countries…we have products from China, Canada, the United States of America, and Europe and you can buy, in different markets, foods from these countries." (personal communications, 22 January 2020).

5.3 TOURISM

Because many Cubans cannot afford to eat at *paladares* and fast food options can be limited, there is little choice surrounding capacity building with regard to food preparation. *Paladares* have worked to preserve traditional culinary practices and innovate Cuban cuisine for decades. The increase in *paladares* has led to more international restaurants catering to international tourists and the diplomatic community. Some of the culinary advancements of private restaurants, old and new, are dependent upon foreign connections to acquire supplies they cannot find in Cuba. For example, Carlos explained that he had to have expensive, dried mushrooms shipped from a US contact. They were an essential ingredient for one of his restaurant's most popular pasta dishes (personal communications, 3 February 2020c). Still, if only consumers who can afford to enjoy this culinary culture are diplomats or tourists, this reinforces the binary of Northern consumers and Southern producers. There are social inequalities built into the cultural political economy of food in Cuba. The capitalist influences of tourism and consumerism have created an elite food culture (a form of "high culture") in the private sector. However, the impact of *paladares* is significant in creating a more dynamic food culture in Cuba, for those who enjoy the meals served at *paladares* and for the chefs who prepare them. However, the Revolution's socialist influences are better understood from the meals prepared at home.

Although Cubans have limited access to ingredients beyond the basic ones that are guaranteed by the state, this forces Cubans to become acquainted with their kitchens and learn how to cook with what they can find. There are popular Internet activities related to food, including "searching for, sharing, adapting, and commenting on recipes" (Aspray et al., 2013, p. 61). However, the Cuban government's limitations on Internet

access have made it a luxury in Cuba, as it is not cheap or widely available everywhere (Dye et al., 2018). Cuba has one of the lowest rates of direct Internet access in the world (Vigil-Hayes et al., 2018). Thus, Cubans access culinary knowledge in other ways. Access to recipe books may be limited, as the cookbooks purchased for this thesis, some used and some new, were out of an acceptable price range (costing 10 CUC per book) for a Cuban earning a state salary. The majority of the Cubans I spoke with had learned to cook from family members rather than cookbooks. State-sponsored cooking shows have also aired in Cuba for decades, with the current program offering Cubans a chance to learn a recipe every week. This resource, along with family traditions, have made cooking at home a valued cultural practice. Several participants who worked at *casas particulares* claimed that they enjoyed preparing and eating food at home with their families (personal communications, 23 January 2020a; personal communications, 30 January 2020; personal communications, 3 February 2020).

The Cuban case is complicated regarding whether consumers of producers control the market. Arguably Cuban producers have more power and influence over the market, while Cuban consumers have little control. Cubans who run private farms can sell their vegetables directly to *paladares* and hotels. If we consider tourists as the consumers that the market is catering to, we see how tourists are playing a role in shaping Cuban society's cultural and economic developments. Cuban consumers have considerably less power to determine the market than tourists do. With greater economic mobility, recreational tourists' desires for familiar foods and experiential tourists' desires for "authentic" Cuban dishes play a role in determining the market. The culture of various tourists thus influences the political economy of food in Cuba. Restaurant owners,

operators of *casas particulares*, chefs, and the Cuban state work to ensure that tourists can access whatever they may desire, including meals that tourists perceive as authentic and international cuisines familiar to tourists. Additionally, tourists may prefer consuming foods prepared with local ingredients, while some foods may require imported ingredients.

This issue of meeting tourist demand is perhaps best exemplified by "*La Coppelia*," a large and famous ice cream parlour in Havana. There are several areas to line up at this ice cream parlour, many of which can have long lines of Cubans waiting for ice cream, particularly on hot days. *La Coppelia* also has a designated area for tourists. Tourists can simply ask an employee, and employees will direct them to an area with no lineup, table service, and indoor seating. The catch is that while the Cubans waiting outside will pay in CUP, the tourists, who do not have to wait will pay in CUC. The state awards tourists with improved access to goods and services. The tourist purchases will earn significantly higher profits, while the Cubans have to pay with their time.

5.4 SUSTAINABILITY

Interviewees agreed that sustainability is paramount for both the Cuban diet and for preserving Cuban cuisine. Carlos explained that, while in Western countries, consumers need to seek out organic or locally grown food, as an alternative, these agricultural practices are simply the norm in Cuba. He claims that access to fresh, organic produce:

> "is one of the best parts about our bad situation here… I see a lot of restaurants now that are referred to as organic restaurants but it would be hard to find, in Cuba, a non-organic restaurant because everything we have here it's truly

> organic... if you buy things at… the most expensive markets in Cuba what they offer is still cheap. They're expensive for average Cubans but for us here, for a business, a restaurant I think it is still cheap… it's the real farm-to-table here." (personal communications, 3 February 2020c).

Notably, Carlos's response demonstrates how Cuban restaurants market themselves to international clientele by inferring that serving organic food is unique when this is simply the reality for numerous Cuban restaurants. Indeed, *paladares* play a vital role in solidifying the relationship between tourism and agriculture by partnering with small-scale agroecological farmers and creating a steady demand for fresh produce (Deere & Royce, 2019). Carlos also believes that environmentally sustainable produce in Cuba is socially and economically sustainable, as Cubans can afford to buy organic and local produce at reasonable prices.

Esteban explained that Cuba is a celebrated country for food systems sustainability. Still, he claimed,

> "we need to do a lot more to produce more food. There are many regions of the country that are working towards a sustainable form of food and agricultural production. There are many university research centres that train and inform farmers to work on the land… there is a high amount of sustainable production but it is not enough for the population of Cuba … we need more to achieve sustainability and stable food production that we do not have." (personal communications, 22 January 2020).

Urban agriculture in Havana has allowed for Havana residents to gain access to produce that has historically been grown in rural areas. Given the current fuel shortages in Cuba, Havana locals would be suffering without the infrastructure of urban agriculture that the Cuban government turned to during the Special Period, ensuring that locally grown produce will continue to be widely accessible. Notably, Cuba's indigenous communities remain confined to Cuba's memory (Backer, 2008). Contemporary Cuban Food Sovereignty efforts are carried out in solidarity with indigenous communities worldwide,

emphasizing the importance of incorporating indigenous knowledge systems in developing resilient and sustainable food systems (Altieri & Funes-Monzote, 2012).

Despite being celebrated as a state with a sustainable food system, considering its focus on developing and expanding agroecological production, organic food production, and urban agriculture, Cuba remains dependent on imported products to feed the domestic and tourist populations. Imports represented 60-70% of Cuba's food consumed in 2018 (Frank, 2018). These imports cost Cuba 1.58 billion USD in 2018 (OEC, n.d.). Thus, Cuba has work to reduce its dependence on importing foodstuffs (Deere & Royce, 2019). The relationship between Food Sovereignty and food imports is complicated. Following the Special Period, it appeared that Cuba was transitioning from being part of the Soviet food regime to becoming a food sovereign state. However, recent crises have led Cuba to become dependent on food imports to provide for the state's rationing system. Given that experiential tourists demand authentic Cuban cuisine, such as *Ropa Vieja*, Cuba must continue to purchase beef, an unsustainable protein, from other countries. While Cubans may prefer unsustainable foodstuffs (i.e., meat and dairy), the country's economic status makes it impossible for Cubans to access all of the foods they want.

One cooking class was at a farm-to-table restaurant. The restaurant owners had created a community garden to supply the restaurant. The garden also served as a space for educating future generations on sustainable agricultural production and was intended to provide for the local community. The cooking instructor spoke of the importance of quality ingredients and flavours. The farmers explained that they are intentional about how they raise their produce and their meat. The instructor believed that high-quality,

locally-grown ingredients create more delicious meals than those made with processed, imported foods. The teacher discussed the importance of sustainability and recycling for their project. They claimed they did not use pesticides because of their country's agricultural history. They instituted creative solutions to keep their garden productive, placing brightly painted plastic water bottles to heat the soil to deter bugs and attract bees. They explained that getting creative was key to their success with their garden and their restaurant. Carlos suggested that Cuban organic agricultural production was not a choice and was simply due to the country's famous organic revolution. However, at this restaurant and community garden, the owners emphasize the role that choice plays in their farming, claiming their local, chemical-free, and innovative production system is rewarding. They insist that the result is better tasting, better quality food.

The class walked between the restaurant and the garden that provided the restaurant's produce. The restaurant's practices demonstrated Slow Food principles, as attention was paid to sustainable production to grow quality ingredients that would create flavourful local recipes. However, the restaurant and cooking class were priced for tourists and thus not accessible for Cuban people. This restaurant's tables reflected multiple Food Sovereignty and Slow Food principles. However, this enterprise implicitly excluded Cuban people from participating in and enjoying these foods and lessons on traditional Cuban cooking. This exclusion matters. Although the garden was an educational space for the local community, this again reinforced the binary of "Northern consumers and Southern producers," where the restaurants reserved the pleasure of food consumption for tourists. At the same time, the business provided food production lessons for the community.

Ideals paramount to Food Sovereignty and Slow Food's principles are often in direct conflict. The dietary preferences emphasized by Slow Food's consumer sovereignty ideals are not always compatible with embracing ecological sustainability. The Cuban case demonstrates the contradictory elements of these principles. Cuban people prefer a high amount of meat consumption, an unsustainable and unhealthy dietary habit that the state cannot fulfill. Tourists from capitalist, Western countries can purchase a plethora of meat dishes in Cuban restaurants for fair prices (compared to their home countries). Tourism and economic constraints complicate Cuba's ability to attain an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable food system capable of meeting both the Cuban and tourist populations' food needs and desires. Cuban culinary practices demonstrate the cultural political economy of food. The policies and cultures of socialism and capitalism are interacting in the Cuban economy. From the "high cuisine" sold to tourists and diplomats to the "low cuisine" of Cuban household staples, access to a variety of ingredients is limited to those with greater economic mobility. Tourists and diplomats are the elite in Cuban society, and tourism has created a middle class of Cubans who work in the industry. Although access to ingredients is intended to be equal for all Cubans, there are inequities regarding access to various foodstuffs in the Havana context.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The nature of this study allowed participants to be selected based on their professional involvement with food production, distribution, and preparation. Many of these interviewees worked in some capacity with the tourism industry. However, this selection also served as a limitation to the study, as interviewees may have provided

information biased towards Western expectations of Cuban cuisine rather than the reality of Cuban cooking practices and eating habits. Additionally, given that many of the participants were involved with tourism, these interview participants were part of the Cuban upper-middle class, as they had access to foreign currency through their professions. Thus their experiences with access to foodstuffs are likely different from Cubans earning state salaries. The producers who were not directly involved with tourism may have had different experiences than state-employed Cubans because they were directly involved with food production and, therefore, directly access the foods they produce.

Speaking with restaurant owners and chefs at privately-run restaurants allowed for an open conversation about the Cuban supply chain, entrepreneurship, and how the Special Period and the tourism industry's impacts have transformed Cuban cuisine. However, this research did not include restaurant operators and chefs of state-run restaurants, which may have provided further insight into the different challenges faced by privately-run and state-run restaurants.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This thesis demonstrates how Food Sovereignty and Slow Food's principles intersect with and inform Cuban culinary practices. This study emphasizes the necessity of studying the acquisition, preparation, and consumption of food to supplement existing analytical frameworks previously applied to Food Sovereignty studies in local contexts. This research analyzes the cultural political economy of Cuban food. This study shows the relationship between gastronomy, tourism, and food acquisition regarding the preservation of traditional culinary practices in Havana and the emergence of new culinary practices. This study demonstrates how the economic constraints of the US embargo, Cuba's balance of socialist and capitalist policies, and the perseverance of Cuban people and culture are all visible on Cuban plates.

This thesis argues that Cuban culinary practices and recipes, while subjected to various food regimes, have persisted and evolved due to the Cuban state's efforts to establish food self-sufficiency and the Cuban people's adaptability and ability to persevere through extreme hardship. The state's efforts include the establishment of tourism, support for private enterprise, and fostering agroecology. The US embargo has also played a significant role in shaping Cuba's food landscape and culture, resulting in limited access to key ingredients and food supply chain instability. Tourism has had a twofold role in preserving and expanding culinary practices while also creating a class divide regarding access to "authentic" Cuban cuisine. The Cuban people's work includes passing on recipes, creating new foods, and preserving traditional cuisines despite food acquisition challenges.

This study asks, how are Food Sovereignty and Slow Food principles reflected through formal and informal culinary practices in Cuba? This study also asks, how has tourism influenced Cuban cuisine and the Cuban food system? Additionally, how have food regimes and sanctions influenced Cuban recipes in Havana?

The Cuban economy's socialist basis and the expansion of private entrepreneurship in the tourism industry have led to a capitalist influence, making the Cuban culinary scene more dynamic, competitive, and exclusionary. However, preserving Cuban recipes and culinary practices is sometimes performed within a discourse of traditional preservation. Most Cuban people rarely consume some dishes that remain celebrated as part of Cuba's national identity and cultural heritage. Meanwhile, Cuban people commonly eat foods that do not always reflect the preferences of the consumers and instead reflect the realities of the state's position in the global food regime and the individual's socioeconomic status within the Cuban state.

Entrepreneurship plays a large role in preserving traditional cuisine in Cuba, and therefore is significant in the Slow Food ideology. However, private entrepreneurship is counter to the anti-capitalist framework of the Food Sovereignty movement. Despite this protection and innovation, only tourists, wealthy Cubans, and diplomats can enjoy these meals. Cuba is a country with a rich culture and a political and economic system rife with contradictions and challenges. Still, both the Cuban people and the Cuban government have been adaptable and willing to make changes to endure various crises.

From the black-market to *organopónicos*, the Cuban people's innovation and adaptability in transforming the supply chain have played a salient role in ensuring that Cubans can remain well fed. The black-market may be seen as a positive feature of the

Cuban food culture with the Slow Food perspective, given that it provides Cubans access to a wider variety of foods with more affordable prices than products they can find at state-run stores.

The principles of Food Sovereignty and Slow Food are limiting within this complicated context. The Food Sovereignty movement often focuses solely on the rights and needs of producers. While the Slow Food movement champions traditional cuisines and culinary knowledge, it does not address the economic accessibility of the ingredients required to make culturally significant meals. While the Cuban state guarantees access to basic foodstuffs, this access is limited. However, Slow Food follows an enhanced, comprehensive understanding of the food system and how the corporate food regime impacts consumers and producers. Slow Food and Food Sovereignty do not adequately engage with the ways that tourism can impact and influence food systems in tourist-dependent economies. Both the improvement and preservation of Cuban cuisine are directly tied to Cuba's tourism industry. However, the foods that only tourists can enjoy cannot be upheld as signifiers of Food Sovereignty and Slow Food principles. Tourists exist in an entirely separate class system from Cubans, and the quality of their experiences in Cuba is often prioritized over the Cuban people's quality of life.

The Cuban state deserves to celebrate its efforts to become a more sustainable and sovereign society. However, it is imperative to recognize the critical contradictions that occur as the Cuban state prioritizes tourists' desires over those of its people. Additionally, the Cuban state's dependency on tourism leaves the Cuban economy and food system vulnerable to external actors and forces. While the meat-heavy diet that some Cubans prefer is not conducive to achieving Food Sovereignty, the lack of choices and access to

crucial ingredients for Cuban cuisine is also not conducive to the Food Sovereignty movement's cultural and democratic principles. A version of the utopian Food Sovereignty model is unlikely to be achieved without compromise and tweaks to the framework's crucial pillars. Future studies should determine how cultural significance, sustainability, consumer rights, and producer rights will be balanced when this framework shapes future policy. While the Slow Food movement crucially fights for cuisine, it needs to expand its framework to value economic justice for actors throughout the food system, including those not involved with food production. The preservation of traditional Cuban cuisine as a site for foreign enjoyment and consumption shows the Cuban society's contradictions. In Cuba, an economic sector exists as a capitalist haven, a space of profit, commodification, and consumption, for tourists and those who work in tourism. As the service industry has expanded, Cuban culture has become a central commodity purchased by tourists.

Meanwhile, this system relegates professionals like doctors and professors to second-class citizenship in an increasingly inequitable society. Data on economic and social disparities in Cuba are difficult to obtain, as the National Office of Statistics (ONE) only publishes data for peso (CUP) salaries, not for hard-currency incomes (CUC). Reportedly, the primary source of growing economic stratification in the 1990s was between households dependent on salaries in Cuban pesos and households with access to additional income in hard currency (USD or CUC) (Mesa-Lago & Vidal-Alejandro, 2010; Morris, 2014). The Special Period crisis and legalization of private enterprise have resulted in capitalist cultural elements infiltrating Cuban politics, economics, and culture. Pervasive income stratification is one example of these elements.

6.1 REFLECTIONS FROM THE FIELD

Interviews with formal and informal chefs allowed this research to consider the blurred lines between formal and informal culinary practices in Cuba. These private self-employment areas were initially operating within people's homes, and many of them still are. Although the food prepared at *casas particulares* are sold to tourists, they may seem like home-cooked meals in Havana. This experience depends on the *casa particular*, as some *casas particulares* are like mini-hotels, as Raúl Castro's reforms allow Cubans to rent out multiple rooms. The same range of experiences can also apply to *paladares*, several of which had previously been homes of the owners or were still part of someone's home, with menus written on chalkboards daily. In several family-run *paladares*, the owners introduced themselves to customers and wanted to ensure everyone enjoyed their meals. Other *paladares* had all the formality of a typical commercial restaurant. This wide variety of *paladares* complicated the distinction between formal and informal culinary practices in Cuba's private sector. The line dividing dishes prepared by professionally trained chefs and home-cooked meals prepared by grandmothers has become less clear. In some of these private establishments, this distinction was nearly non-existent, potentially skewing my perception of what Cubans eat and what tourists eat. Although this presented challenges, interviews helped define the intersections and distinctions between Cuban cuisine, Cuban consumption habits, and Cuban food preferences.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As the corporate food regime's economic, political, cultural, and environmental consequences become increasing concerns, researchers must continue investigating the

Food Sovereignty and Slow Food movements and how they intersect with culinary practices and consumption habits, particularly in non-capitalist countries. Expanding research surrounding food systems and food preparation and consumption can create a more comprehensive understanding of the Food Sovereignty and Slow Food frameworks.

A study focusing on the impact of specific forms of tourism on the availability of Cuban ingredients may collect valuable data. These tourism forms could include ecotourism, cruise ship tourism, voluntourism, and resort-based tourism, all of which certainly have varying impacts on the Cuban food system. Research on the relationships between food systems and culinary practices within tourism-dependent economies has the potential to provide fundamental knowledge of how different types of tourists and different tourist activities can impact food systems within various contexts.

A study focused on interviewing experts at the Cuban Slow Food Network, the FACRC, and similar organizations in Cuba would provide information on how people working within these organizations view tourism and Food Sovereignty would produce intriguing results. It would be valuable to learn how these organizations attempt to harmonize all of these movements' principles within a tourism-dependent country.

A study on food preferences and consumption habits for Cubans that work in the tourism industry, compared to state employees, would provide further data on how income inequality in Cuba can transform individual experiences within the Cuban food culture.

6.3 CONCLUSION

Cuba's economic and geographic context has meant that Cuba should continue to create a more sustainable, independent, and sovereign food system that can produce enough ingredients for accessible, culturally significant dishes. CPE interconnects Cuban cuisine, Cuba's development model, and the current global food regime. Scholars must value Cuban cuisine as intangible cultural heritage and a material part of everyday life that should be accessible to the Cuban people. The Cuban plate serves as a useful barometer of cultural political economy. Further research on the recommended topics can strengthen the food justice movements of Food Sovereignty and Slow Food. This thesis demonstrates how these movements, and their philosophies, alone, will be unable to sufficiently address the complexities of unjust, inequitable food systems. Until their principles translate to food access policies, these movements' visions will not be fully realized beyond sites of ecotourism and small-scale community projects. Concrete policies determining food production, distribution, and economic sustainability as they relate to food access are necessary for protecting and promoting the cultural heritage of national cuisine.

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