IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MONEY
A Study on Tourism Entrepreneurship in a Socialist State

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This Minor Field Study, undertaken as a Bachelor’s Thesis within the field of tourism, examines the role of entrepreneurship in the socialist state of Cuba. The study focuses on the business and ownership of private room renting, called Casas Particulares; examining influencing factors, means and implications of the business. Recent political changes has lead to a more encouraging approach towards private businesses, allowing Casas Particulares to become one of the most common forms of tourist accommodation. From examining the role of tourism entrepreneurship in a strictly regulated country the aim is to develop the knowledge and stereotype perception of entrepreneurship and the entrepreneur.

Cuba is developing into a popular destination for tourists. Countless of Cubans are now employed or self-employed within the tourism industry where the Cuban form of Bed & Breakfast, Casas Particulares, is the most frequent profession (Cerviño and Cubillo, 2005). Gilmore and Pine (2007) highlight that individuals more and more crave for authenticity and people seek engagement and personal experiences. Findings suggested that tourists visited Cuba and chose Casas Particulares as accommodation urged by the want to experience the island “before it changes” and to meet the “real” Cuba, i.e. seeking authenticity.

Cuba is a country with strong governmental control and regulation where contextual factors have shown to be imperative in the development of entrepreneurship. Holmquist (2009) distinguishes the connection between contextual factors and entrepreneurship through highlighting the context as a determining factor for recognising entrepreneurial ventures, or through changes in the context enabling the recognition. The role of the context can only be acknowledged as crucial for the existence of Casas Particulares, as well as any entrepreneurial activity in Cuba. Engaging in Casas Particulares can be seen as a venture challenging the norm of the Cuban society.
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¡Muchas Gracias!

Camilla and Sara
Kalmar, January 2013

Camilla Larsson
Sara Öst Grundemark

“It had long since come to my attention that people of accomplishment rarely sat back and let things happen to them, they went out and happened to things”
(Leonardo Da Vinci)
“In Cuba no one is in a rush, why do it today when you can do it tomorrow? The country is impregnated by centuries of regulations, silencing peoples’ power of initiative”
(Authors translation, Gustafsson, 1997:524)

“You can come to our country to enjoy it, but you can never understand it, Cuba is like a planet that circles around the earth, separated from everything else; everything is upside down and the world observes from afar” (Juan, 2012-11-09)
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INTRODUCTION

After the revolution in 1959 tourism in Cuba was kept to a minimum, associated with capitalism and an antagonist in the socialist ideology (Taylor Jr and McGlynn, 2009), but in 1990s the industry was urged to be acknowledged due to the desperate need of income. Tourism in the Socialist State of Cuba creates a complex environment, where the economically driven industry that tourism constitutes outlines one of the most important sources of incomes. Since the US embargo in 1960 Cuba suffers from an exclusion from the free market-trade and export. This creates a dependency to what monetary means might exist nationally and where tourism becomes an important resource (Gustafsson, 2011). Businesses and employment within tourism are the most attractive professions in Cuba, “that is where the food and money is” (Gustafsson, 2011:549). Spencer (2010) states that Cuba, without being classified as a country with high levels of poverty, still is a poor country acknowledging tourism as beneficial for the people and has the possibility to be used as a tool for development. Journalist and author Thomas Gustafsson, recognised as an expert on Cuba, illustrates the complex environment that Cuba comprises by expressing:

“In Cuba there are no street children as in other poor countries. Everyone can read and health-care is free. No Cuban is allowed to be rich but those with the right connections and access to hard currency can live a life of luxury. Cuba is contradictive, Cuba is complex, Cuba is different, Cuba is conflictive, Cuba is provocative” (Authors translation. Gustafsson, 2011: 11).

Possibilities for Cubans to operate their own businesses have recently increased due to eased regulations of privatised businesses performed in 2010 (Swedish Embassy, 2011-11-01). Entrepreneurship or self-employment in Cuba is the most evident demonstration of economic reforms commenced by President Raul Castro since taking office in 2008. The expansion of the private sector enables the reduction of government payrolls and every new entrepreneur, running a private business, implies more tax revenue for the government (Peters, 2012). In total, the Cuban government allows businesses within 181 occupation categories, where tourism and agriculture embodies the majority (Kederstedt, 2012). This study will further examine entrepreneurship in tourism by focusing on one of the businesses allowed for
privatizing, referred to as “Casas Particulares”- private room renting in Cuba. When the attitude towards entrepreneurship from the government changed from insignificance to encouragement, a result of a large increase of small private businesses in Cuba was seen (Peters, 2012). After the collapse of the communist block in 1989, Cuba was in a crisis and attaining foreign currency was vital (Jayawardena et al, 2005). The crisis created a new interest in international tourism, as it is an important source of foreign currency and for Cuba tourism has become an economic necessity (Taylor Jr. and McGlynn, 2009). The accommodation sector represents an important part of the tourism income in Cuba where the Cuban government has focused on establishing hotels and tourist facilities at the largest tourist sights. In 1996 the government made it legal for Cuban families to offer their houses for lodging and hosting tourists, known as Casas Particulares (Baker, 2010). This arrangement of accommodation is promoted as a way to meet Cubans on their terms and away from the general tourist hubs (Hammond, 2009). In order to run a Casa Particular legally an administrative fee was introduced to the owners. This policy enabled the government to benefit from the tourism income in terms of fees and taxes (cubatourism.ca, 2011-11-01).

Tourism: An Entrepreneurial Tool for Development?
Mowforth and Munt (2009) argue that tourism growth offers a path for developing countries to evolve and create sustainability and increase the future prospect for the nation. A growing number of governments in low income countries have discovered the scope of tourism and taken advantage of the possibility of earning much-needed foreign exchange (Mowforth and Munt, 2009).

Tourism is acknowledged as a contributing factor for developing countries to evolve and create a sustainable development. However, tourism can also contribute to economic leakage where large tour operators and tourism companies disable the tourism income to benefit the country (Page, 2011; Mowforth and Munt, 2009). Ateljevic and Li (2009) argue that the tourism sector has been glorified in the context of development, sustainable development and economic diversification. It is suggested by Schevyens (2011) that the concept of tourism in developing countries is complicated, as stakeholders within tourism are looking for profits. Hence, it is imperative to understand the agendas of stakeholders involved in endorsing tourism to
be used as a tool for poverty alleviation (Scheyvens, 2011). A well-discussed topic in
tourism research is who actually benefits from tourism. It is suggested that tourism
development often benefits the middle classes, not the poor; where the poor are the
ones most affected by negative impacts of tourism (Cohen and Cohen, 2012).
Furthermore, poor people in the host-country are seen as particularly vulnerable due
to the loss of access and consumption of natural resources caused by the tourism
industry. Mitchell (2012) found, during his research conducted 2005, that existing
research still suffered from insufficient material on how tourism in developing
countries affects the lives of poor people.

Szivas (2001) argue that tourism businesses can contribute to a higher standard of
living. People in poor countries struggling to make ends meet are turning to the
tourism industry with the prospects of creating a better life for themselves. The
expansion of business opportunities for the poor through entrepreneurial promises
implies prospects of national and personal economic development (Scheyvens, 2011).
Lewis and Green (1998) suggest that entrepreneurs carry an important role in the
development of a destination. This due to the opportunity recognition and creativity of
the entrepreneur as being a generator of change (Bygrave (1993). Imas et al. (2012)
discuss the notion of entrepreneurship as a factor to improve communal and personal
wellbeing, and it is stressed by Russell and Faulkner (2004) that the role of the
entrepreneur has been underestimated. Barr (1990) suggests that entrepreneurial
appearances are of great importance to be studied further since entrepreneurs’
contribution to destination development is recognised. Although, Russell and
Faulkner (2004) argues that the development of entrepreneurship is dependent on the
state of the environment, what stage of development the destination is in and the
characteristics of the entrepreneur.

**Discussion of Study Purpose**

Becker et al. (2011) and Lee-Ross and Lashley (2009) reason that entrepreneurs have
the possibility to push economic growth and oversee limitations of the exiting reality.
Regulations, laws and fees have created an unsympathetic environment for becoming
an entrepreneur within tourism in Cuba (Peters, 2012). Entrepreneurship as well as
tourism in Cuba can been acknowledged as a necessary evil, considered contradictive
to the socialist regime but a crucial factor for economic prospects. Lee-Ross and
Lashley (2009) argue that the political scene is imperative for entrepreneurship to
flourish. A recent shift in Cuban politics have been recognised indicating a more open approach towards entrepreneurship in Cuba, implying that more people engage in private businesses. Casas Particulares have developed into a successful and popular form of accommodation promoted as a way to experience the local culture, and is recognised as a vital source of the well-needed tourism income. Entrepreneurship within tourism occurs in an environment where both concepts have been forced to a governmental acceptance in order for Cuba to obtain economic growth. The complexity of tourism and entrepreneurship in Cuba, contradictory to the socialist ideology but simultaneously essential to acknowledge, has created an interest of studying the phenomenon of tourism entrepreneurship further.

**Purpose of Study**
The purpose of this study is to examine tourism entrepreneurship in Cuba by focusing on the business Casas Particulares. The study focuses on how the entrepreneurship affects the persons engaged and what factors encourage or discourage entrepreneurial activity. By investigating the business Casas Particulares the study investigate its role in the Cuban society and its function in creating the destination.
METHODOLOGY

The approach used to collect and interpret data about a specific phenomenon is referred to as methodology; it also describes what tools or methods are used by the researcher (Smith, 2010). The relationship between collection of data, empirical presentation and analyses plays an important role to create a coherent research approach within the frames for a certain study or project (Nylén, 2005).

Research Approach
The ways that the world is perceived and how the researcher assumes the reality is referred to as ontology. The world is composed by a complexity of preconceptions forming the relation between the researcher and the phenomena observed establishing the epistemological base (Jennings, 2010). This study focus on an interpretive approach, where we seek to explain phenomena observed from the viewpoint of the subject. The ontological base from an interpretive approach emphasises the reality as perceived by the people being studied rather than the researchers’ perspective (Veal, 2011). In order to create an understanding of the phenomena a relation to the subject is crucial. The epistemological base from an interpretive approach implies that an understanding and relation is created through subjectivity formed by interaction, participation and engaging in the subject of study (Jennings, 2010). Our relation to the subject has been created on location, through participation and interaction with the phenomena throughout the study. Hence, an interpretive approach has been favourable in terms of performing this Minor Field Study in Cuba.

Hermeneutics
Hermeneutics is a way to study peoples’ subjectivity, their ways of perceiving reality, assuming that the researcher is subjective and interact with the subject. In coherence to an interpretive approach, this study’s aim was to through interaction and participation create subjectivity based upon the respondent’s point of view. The starting point for a hermeneutic approach is that there are several ways of understanding the reality. Hermeneutics comes from the Greek “hermeneutikos”, meaning “interpretation”, that there is no understanding, only pre-understanding. When creating an understanding of the phenomena a constant transition between the
general and the specific is performed to localise connections. The relation between pre-understanding and understanding illustrate a constant process in understanding the unknown (Bjerke, 2005). An hermeneutic approach has been favourable due to the nature of the study and has enabled us to remain open-minded and understand and interpret the phenomena from the respondents perception. The purpose of this study was not to produce a theory or generalise the subject area, implying that connections found in the process can only be interpreted as pre-understandings due to the unexplored topic of interest.

The rule of hermeneutics comprise the notion that to reach an understanding of a phenomenon we must understand the whole in terms of the part, and the part in terms of the whole (Gadamer, 2004). The main premise of the concept of hermeneutics is “the meaning of one part can only be interpreted if connected to the whole” (Authors translation. Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2008: 193). By examining specific cases the aim of the study has been to establish an understanding of entrepreneurship within Casas Particulares in relation to the general idea of entrepreneurship. An attempt to create the most extensive understanding of the phenomena Casas Particulares has been performed through collecting empirical evidence from different areas on location and interactions with as many owners as possible.

The horizon is defined as “the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point” (Gadamer, 2004; 301). To reach understanding of a subject open-mindedness is essential, as well as challenging our prejudices and ourselves (Gadamer, 2004). Also, to reach understanding beyond what is near and accessible, the horizon needs to be released and moved. Figure 1 illustrates how we approached the study; by adopting a subjective approach from the viewpoint of where the phenomena is taking place our horizon moved in order to create an understanding.

![Fig. 1. The Horizon. Authors image of the horizon, inspired by Gadamer’s concept of the horizon (2004)](image)
Research Method
For collection of empirical material a variety of qualitative methods were used, primarily informal interviews and observations (Veal, 2011). Qualitative research answer questions of how a social experience is created and convey meaning through emphasising on the relationship between the researcher and the subject of investigation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). It is argued by Lawler (2002) that reasons for performing qualitative interviews within social research offer a course for studying how people interpret the world and their place in it. Although, these interpretations are generally exceptionally complex, Lawler (2002) stresses that social stories and interpretations provide a way of making sense of a specific phenomenon. Since the study focuses on a hermeneutic approach, indicating that data is collected and analysed subjectively, qualitative methods have been used to favour the respondents’ perspective.

Narrative method is an approach we used throughout the empirical study and according to Nylén (2005) the approach is expanding in social science. Noted by Chase (2011) is that a narrative study involves stories of individuals’ life experiences told by the individuals themselves. Narrative method is a way of understanding a phenomenon and organise events and actions into an expressive whole and seeing the consequences of actions and events over time (Chase, 2011). A narrative approach enabled us to collect empirical evidence through interaction with persons of interest and spontaneous conversation. Due to the conditions in Cuba methods are required to be subtle and discrete; a narrative method created possibilities to gather data when respondents were unwilling to participate in a traditional interview.

Collection of Evidence
Qualitative research focus on the views and assumptions of the respondent to establish knowledge of what the person interviewed perceive as important and relevant (Bryman, 2012). Methods used for collecting empirical material have been chosen because of the conditions given to the study. Data collection took place in a strictly regulated and closed country, where a certain amount of carefulness is essential and we had to be cautious when seeking respondents. For the study nine interviews with different owners of Casas Particulares were undertaken, together with a supplementary interview with a housekeeper. One interview was performed with a person knowledgeable of the phenomena Casas Particulares during the first week in

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Cuba; this allowed us to gain a more profound and deeper understanding of the phenomena Casas Particulares since not much information were to be found before departure. Respondents were chosen due to accessibility and are mainly comprised of Casas Particulares’ owners encountered during the course of the study. Observations have throughout the performance of the study contributed and deepen the understanding of the specific phenomena as well as Cuba as a country. Additionally, spontaneous conversations with tourists and Cubans on location are an important source of information valuable to the study.

List of respondents, although names are replaced in order to protect the individuals involved in the study. We have also chosen to be restrictive of conveying personal information due to specific statements that may appear as offensive or as critique to the regime, possibly implying a risk for the individual.

1. Carlos
2. Rafael and Maria
3. Juan and Elena
4. Julio and Margarita
5. Tomas and Alicia
6. Carol and George
7. Jennifer and Enrique
8. Angel and Sandra
9. Patricia and Penelope
10. Amelia (Housekeeper at a Casa Particular)
11. Ricardo (Manager of a booking website)

Since we have focused on a hermeneutic approach our understanding has developed during the course of the study, which has affected the shape of questions asked. As little was known of the subject in beforehand, values, questions and perceptions developed during time spent in the studied environment, discovering the topics of interest and important questions along the course of events. As interview methods and questions were shaped in relation to the respondent we focused on: *semi-structured interviews* and *informal narrative interviews* and *participant* and *direct observations*. The native language in Cuba is Spanish and generally the knowledge of English can be considered as low. Conversations have been performed in English when possible otherwise in Spanish. Due to the negative perception of interviews in Cuba
(documentation of statements that may occur as regime-criticism implies a personal risk), these were mainly conducted as ordinary conversations. Recording was not an option, hence we had to remember what the respondents said and documentation occurred afterwards.

**Semi Structured Interviews**
Two interviews were semi-structured, due to the respondents’ proficiency of English and that they were open to the idea of engaging in a traditional interview. Bernard and Ryan (2010) acknowledge that semi-structured interviews are an important method for collecting data when researchers seek to make comparisons between people or groups of people. Further, in semi-structured interviews the respondents are asked similar questions where a number of topics are covered, while in maintaining flexibility and optional questions (Bernard and Ryan, 2010). For the interview performance of this study, standard questions were established (appendix A) with the prospect to be included in all interviews, however; each new interview stirred new questions that were later added to the next interview. The goal was to have all interviews as informal semi-structured interviews, but because of language barriers and the perception of interviews in Cuba, informal and narrative interviews as well as observations was favoured.

**Informal Narrative Interviews**
An informal narrative approach was used throughout all interviews. The core of narrative interviews is according to Kvale and Brinkman (2009) the stories of the respondents, the storyline and the structure of the story. To start the conversation easy and to generate a deeper knowledge of the owners as individuals, we began with asking about their background and how they started their Casa Particular. If respondents did not naturally continue with topics, further questions were added throughout the conversation in order to reach answers valuable to the study. This approach permitted us to focus on specific events in the respondents’ lives and gain a valuable perception of the owners as individuals and their thoughts on the business, which was essential to the study.

**Participant and Direct Observations**
Since individuals were not always willing to be part of an interview, participant and direct observations became an important source and complement for gathering information. Participant observations *comprise* a face-to-face encounter with the
participants in the environment of the examined phenomenon (Sirakaya-Turk et al. 2011). Direct observations derive from formal and casual data collection activities, involving observations of meetings, interviews, sidewalk activities, field visits etc. (Yin, 2009). For the study, participant and direct observations were used throughout the whole stay, including conversations and happenings at the accommodation, as well as spontaneous meetings and street observations. Observations were conducted constantly through interacting with various individuals, Cubans and other tourists. Therefore the study contains a great collection of individuals’ opinions that strengthen and develops the knowledge of the Cuban society and Casas Particulares.

Analysis and Structure of Evidence
As the core of hermeneutics entails that the significance of a part can only be understood if it is related to the whole and vice versa, empirical material has been analyzed from the respondent answers to create an understanding in connection to their environment and situation. Also, we have tried to analyse answers and observations in relation to their environment in order to understand their meaning and importance, and by that create an understanding of the environment. However, as stated by Alvesson and Sköldberg (2008) we are aware of the fact that analyses of empirical material involve our interpretations, which are based on our pre-understanding of the area.

When analysing our empirical data we used the process of coding, implying that categories were derived from the empirical material gathered (Nylén, 2005). Coding entails that researcher read the material over and over again to find common concepts (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2008). Our approach entails an open coding, indicating that the main purpose is to identify concepts that can be applied and organised in categories to create a deeper understanding (Dalen, 2007). Analyses of collected empirical material were achieved from us locating common issues or topics in the interviews, which created the classifications for the empirical chapter. Categories originated from the first 5 interviews, with subsequent interviews added to observations to strengthen the categories and establishing a more profound description. A journal with daily observations and happenings was kept during the course of the study to complement empirical findings.
Research Criticism
Finding individuals willing to participate in traditional interviews was challenging, hence, other methods had to be used. If we could have performed traditional interviews, more extensive information might have been collected and enhanced the research. This study was conducted on location in Cuba on an eight weeks’ tourist visa, which meant that technically we did not have permission to conduct research in Cuba. The special situation implied that we had to be careful of who we spoke to and what opinions we expressed. This conditioned a negative impact on our pursuit to gain comprehensive information. Moreover, translations and language barriers were an obstacle for the collection of evidence and may have restricted the study.

The lack of access to technology imposed a great challenge and limitation on the study. In Cuba technology as telephone, computer/internet is primarily for tourists, although the standard can be questioned. The conditions given made communication with our university and professor difficult: implying that we had to be flexible and creative when conducting the study, since tutoring was not possible. Theories relevant to the study had to be collected before departure since communication resources in Cuba are limited. If the collection had been possible in connection to the empirical study it can be reasoned that the theoretical analysis would include different theories.

Only a limited number of cases have been examined and research has been limited by lack of time, resources and knowledge, hence generalise and create a complete understanding is not possible. It is important to explain that the study is highly affected by interpretations deriving from our inherent values and therefore a subjective role can never be fully undertaken.
CUBA: TOURISM AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Tourism is an important part of the Cuban society. Its importance and implications can be put through these words, stated by Carlos an owner to a Casa Particular:

“Ever since the Americans came to Cuba, tourism has played an important role in the Cuban society” (Carlos, 2012-10-26).

“If the tourists disappear, it would imply a disaster for Cuba” (Carlos, 2012-10-26).

Tourism in Cuba: a Historical Perspective

Before the revolution in 1959 Havana was established as a pleasure city and when the USA prohibited gambling, Cuba developed into a paradise for gamblers (Gustafsson, 2011). Tourism in Cuba was during this time controlled by the US mafia and the island was associated with gambling, prostitution and drugs, along with the attraction of sun, sea and sand. Tourist arrivals to Cuba were flourishing and the numbers grew with 94% between 1948-1957 (Taylor Jr. and McGlynn, 2009). The tourism industry in Cuba was thriving after the Second World War. Cuban rumba and mambo music, rum and cigars became extremely popular and Cuba dominated the Caribbean tourism scene (Gustafsson, 2011). The tourist boom also had several negative consequences for the country, prostitution, beggars and homeless children were not an unusual sight and crime and juvenile delinquency was on the rise (Taylor Jr. and McGlynn, 2009).

The socialist revolution in 1959 lead by Fidel Castro implied that the tourism industry in Cuba declined (Jayawardena, 2003). The revolutionary government viewed tourism as a form of imperialism that was constructed on the conservation of a non-socialist class community (Gustafsson, 2011). The government furthermore associated tourism with capitalistic evils of corruption, drugs, social inequality and racism (Taylor Jr. and McGlynn, 2009). Consequently, the years after the revolution were dedicated to dismantle Cuba’s tourism industry, an industry that had been the most developed of all the countries in the Caribbean. Hotels in Cuba became nationalized in October 1959 and large hotels; nightclubs and bars were closed down (Jayawardena et al, 2005; Gustafsson, 2011).
A New Interest in Tourism
In 1960 the USA introduced an embargo, which still prevents American businesses to trade with Cuba. Because of the embargo, Cuba developed a fruitful collaboration with the Soviet Union and the communist bloc, enabling the Cuban society to flourish with the benefits of a world power’s support. The real interest in tourism developed after the breakdown of the communist bloc and the relation between the two trading partners was dissolved, together with the vital subsidies and merchandise Cuba was provided (Gustafsson, 2011). After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, Cuba was in desperate need of foreign currency (Jayawardena et al, 2005). Cuba lost 75% of its international trade and the living conditions were deteriorating (Taylor Jr. & McGlynn, 2009). The collapse implied that all considerations to a limited tourism industry were destroyed and a new profound interest in international tourism was created (Jayawardena et al, 2005). President Castro clarified that even though Cuba do not like tourism the island have to expand its tourism efforts as it is an important source of foreign currency and has become an economic necessity. The aim with tourism development was to maintain the social and political structure that had become fragile after the break from the communist block (Taylor Jr. and McGlynn, 2009).

The Tourist Boom
Cuba’s tourism industry exploded during the nineties (Jayawardena, 2003) and in the year 2000 the revenue from tourism composed the most important one, constituting 43% of Cuba’s foreign currency earnings (Gustafsson, 2011). In 2001 Cuba had moved from 6th place to 4th place of the tourism countries in the Caribbean (Jayawardena et al, 2005). In 2004 the visitor numbers to Cuba surpassed the 2 million mark (Taylor Jr. and McGlynn, 2009). It is stressed by Wilkinson (2008) that Cuba’s tourism boom is an interesting phenomenon with remarkable statistics showing an increase in visitors from 326 thousand in 1989 to 2.2 million in 2007.

The Cuban tourism boom has created an expansion in the hospitality and service industry, where thousands of Cubans now are employed or self-employed. The most frequent profession is self-employment through Casas Particulares, the Cuban form of Bed & Breakfast. Cuba’s popularity as a tourist destination is constantly growing and has developed into the third most popular destination in the Caribbean after the Dominican Republic and Mexico’s Cancun. (Cerviño and Cubillo, 2005).
Entrepreneurship in Cuba- a Development
Cuban self-employment rapidly disappeared after the revolution in 1959. Most workers were instead employed by the public sector; only a limited number of workers were granted permission by the government to practice their own trade (Scarpaci, 2009). As a step towards the communist society, Castro proclaimed in a speech 1968 the removal of all private enterprises. The following day the remaining 58 012 private businesses were closed and nationalised, most of them never to be opened again (Gustafsson, 2011).

The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the communist bloc in 1989 implied new opportunities for Cuban entrepreneurs (Scarpaci, 2009). In order to solve the growing crisis created by the absence of trade partners, a liberalisation of the food market was implemented, allowing private farmers to sell the surplus on a free market. The Cuban government further responded to the crisis by legalising hard currency, developing the tourism sector, opening up for foreign investments, and establishing a limited small-scale entrepreneurship (Peters, 2012). Initially the US dollar served as the hard currency, but in 1994 the currency was abolished and replaced by the convertible peso (CUC), equal to the value of the US dollar, estimating approximately 24 times the national currency, Cuban pesos. Originally convertible pesos were only used by tourists; enabling Cuba to gain from the expanding tourism industry. Today CUC is used by Cubans as well as tourists and are the only access to most resources (Holmqvist and Roth, 2007). Although market liberalisations were performed, private business owners in Cuba were still heavily regulated, for example, home family run restaurants (Paladares) were only allowed to employ family members and the settings were limited to 12 persons (Scarpaci, 2009).

In 1998 Peters and Scarpaci governed a large-scale survey of self-employed workers in Cuba. Findings showed that Cuban entrepreneurs made more than three times than the average Cuban monthly salary and paid 42% of their gross wages in tax and licenses (Peters and Scarpaci, 1998). A new survey was performed by Scarpaci (2009) in 2008, the outcomes were similar to the survey in 1998; Cuban entrepreneurs valued their independence, appreciated the steady flow of cash and enjoyed co-locating work and residence. Nevertheless, the number of self-employed workers had sincerely declined over the island in the last 10 years, though noted by Scarpaci (2009) was that...
entrepreneurs had become more educated and a balanced group of workers had been developed. Entrepreneurs still earned more than the average Cuban and the taxes had increased by 10 %. Scarpaci (2009) concluded that Cuban entrepreneurs adhere to a tough place between smothering and control.

**Recent Development of Cuban Entrepreneurship**

Eased regulations undertaken in 2010 increased the possibilities for Cubans to operate their own businesses (Swedish Embassy, 2011-11-01). The reform regarding private businesses in Cuba transformed notably, most importantly, entrepreneurs were now allowed to hire employees. Entrepreneurship or self-employment in Cuba is the most evident demonstration of economic reforms commenced by President Raul Castro since taking office in 2008 (Peters, 2012). In total, the Cuban government allows businesses within 181 occupation categories whereas tourism and agriculture represents the most popular form of enterprise to be engaged in (Kederstedt, 2012).

The attitude towards entrepreneurship from the government changed drastically from insignificance to encouragement, resulting in a large increase of small private businesses in Cuba. Before the change, entrepreneurship was viewed as a necessary evil with little importance to the economy; now entrepreneurship is considered a strategic necessity for the government. The Cuban government wants to boost economic output by reducing government payrolls through an expansion of the private sector. For the Cuban government every new entrepreneur, running a private business, imply more tax revenue, one more household with higher income and one less household needing the universal food subsidies that the government aspire to eradicate (Peters, 2012).

Entrepreneurs manage new businesses on every street in every city in Cuba. Unlike before the state medias’ attitude towards entrepreneurship is developing to a more positive stance (Peters, 2012). Still, the regime’s strive to decrease the number of government employees is weakened by the absence of personal capital to start a private business. High taxes are another undermining factor for development. For those who engage in the business of renting rooms the monthly tax of 150 CUC equalizes an annual salary and has to be paid, regardless of income (Kederstedt, 2012).
Development of Casas Particulares

During the 1980’s the tourism industry was modest and the government strictly monitored the businesses facilitating the guests. When the Soviet Union collapsed the prior reductive approach towards tourism changed; new hotels and restaurants were built and state run tourist businesses were rationalised and became more effective (Gustafsson, 2011). Positions that opened up through establishments organising service provision for tourism establishing a connection to hard currency (CUC), has made work in the tourism sector enormously desirable; in 2007 tourism provided jobs constituting 11% of total employment (Taylor and McGlynn, 2009). The accommodation sector within tourism constitutes an important part of the tourism income (Hammond, 2009) and large hotels and tourist facilities have been established at the largest tourist hubs by the Cuban government (Gustafsson, 2011).

When the tourism industry during the 90’s started booming in Cuba the government was facing a shortage of rooms, therefore, in 1996 the government made it legal for Cuban families to offer their houses for lodging and host tourists (Hammond, 2009; Ricardo, 2012-10-25; Baker, 2010). The Cuban government already had a developed network of hotels, restaurants and bars serving the tourists, though, they lacked alternatives directed to budget travellers; hence, the legalisation of Casas Particulares was unavoidable (Guastafsson, 2011). The Cuban government do not approve of Casas Particulares, but because of the room shortages they are dependent on the business (Baker, 2010). Before the legalisation of Casas Particulares many Cubans, to earn some extra money, allowed “friends” to stay in their homes and saw the possibility to charge tourists for accommodation. When the new law took effect it was only allowed to rent out two rooms per Casa Particular, with a limited number of tourists (two adults and one child i.e). From the start most people had little money to restore and set the conditions for tourists, but along the way owners had more money and conditions were improved (Ricardo, 2012-10-25).

The licences, taxes and fees authorising the existence of Casas Particulares enable the government to benefit from tourism (cubatourism.ca, 2011-11-01). Through a monthly fee renters are permitted to keep a blue sign on the door marked as “Arrendador Divisa” where a room can be leased from 15- 45 convertible pesos (CUC) per night. The monthly fee is determined accordingly to the location of the
house and is demanded regardless if the room/ rooms are rented or not (Sainsbury, 2009; Baker, 2010). A common monthly fee is 150 CUC per room with an additional fee of 240 CUC per month for the license. Owners of a Casa Particular have to stay open for 365 days a year; no vacation is permitted. Neither is it possible to close during low season since owners still have to pay the same fees, closing might mean a loss of licence (Baker, 2010). Though, if an owner wants to close the business for restoration it is only possible for 3-5 months and when open again, they have to pay at least 100 CUC for each room (Ricardo, 2012-10-25). The Cuban government recognised the injustice society created by the expansion of Casas Particulares and owners earning a higher income than other Cubans. So in 2004 the government increased taxes and fees and stopped granting licenses in order to stop the growth of Casas Particulares and hinder owners from receiving a superior income (Baker, 2010).

Casas Particulares can be found all over Cuba, with the majority situated in Havana and major cities and tourist hubs (Sainsbury, 2009). Varadero is one of the most popular tourist destinations receiving the majority of tourists in Cuba, although Casas Particulares were legalised as recently as 2011 (Tomas and Alicia, 2012-11-13). During the high season the hotels in Varadero are fully booked and there is a need for more tourist accommodation, making Casas Particulares vital for the destination (Julio and Margarita, 2012-11-05).

Government inspections ensure that every house fulfil the conditions in terms of cleanliness, safety and security (Sainsbury, 2009). Together with the monthly government inspections of the Casas’ conditions an inspection of the accounting is performed. If the inspections find anything inaccurate one infraction is reported; three implies that the owner loose the license (Baker, 2010). Owners are also required to keep a register of guests reported within 24 hours of the arrival, every guest is for that reason obligated to produce a passport. Standards of the properties varies, often including two beds, air-condition, fridge, fan and bathroom- other conveniences such as TV, hot showers and kitchenette are a bonus (Sainsbury, 2009).
Casas Particulares are throughout presented in magazines and guide books as the “best way to experience Cuba” and meet the locals in their home environment. Stated by Forex Bank Magazine (2012) is that Casas Particulares provide more than accommodation, offering better food than most restaurants, personal guiding and local knowledge. The arrangement of accommodation is promoted as a way to meet Cubans on their terms and away from the general tourist hubs (Hammond, 2009). An increased awareness of Cuba in a position of possible rapid change is increasingly picked up by marketers of the destination and used in tourism promotion. The Swedish tour operator “Läs & Res” that organise trips focusing on smaller groups and the interaction with the local community, promotes Cuba with the statement “see Cuba before it changes” referring to the common perception of the destination embodying American cars, cigars, Che Guevara and historical colonial cities (lasochres.se, 2012-09-11).

**Cuba and Casas Particulares**

The communist state with strong socialist values, appearing as detached from the surrounding world, has spurred a curiousness to experience the country before it changes. Cuba is often promoted as a destination that will take the traveller back in time and shapes the possibility to experience a society completely different to the rest of the world. Travellers’ perception of Cuba and Casas Particulares bear a resemblance to the promotion they receive through travelling magazines and guidebooks. It is expressed by most tourists that political reforms, national and international will position Cuba in a possible state of rapid change, which are expressed as a reason for choosing the island as destination. Tourists want to experience the Cuba that they imagine it to be, and since political changes suggest a transformation of the island tourists’ reflect that now is the time to visits the exotic destination. Though, the presence of tourism has lead to negative perception of the country. Most travellers expressed that their over all experience of the island was lowered by the fact that they were primarily perceived as an access to money, essentially pesos convertible, CUC. It is stated by Josef (2012-12-03) a former resident of the Soviet Union, that he wanted to take a walk down memory lane, however, Cuba did not meet his expectations.

“We want to experience Cuba before it is too late” (Austrian, 2012-11-07).

“When we worked in Latin America during the 80’s Cuba was the country to look up to, and now we want to experience it before it changes” (Swedish lady, 2012-11-11).

“Tourism has completely destroyed Cuba, everyone is just after your money, it is crazy” (Swedish backpacker 2012-11-21).

“Most Cubans just treat you like an ATM machine, thinking that you are made of money” (English traveller, 2012-12-05).

Casas Particualres are a cheaper option than most Cuban hotels although, the lower price is less mentioned than social factors in terms of determining choice of accommodation. Prominent among tourists as well as locals is the opinion that staying in Casas Particulares implies an interaction with the Cubans and the local culture that cannot be experienced by staying at hotels. Discovered is also that hotels in Cuba might not be a better option in terms of services and standards. It is observed how the local community engages in promoting private housing as the best form of accommodation, both in terms of standards and cultural exchange. Michel (2012-12-
09) an employee at a hotel, stresses that Casas Particulares are superior to Cuban hotels as private accommodation imply a direct interaction with the locals. The will to interact with the Cubans and experience the culture has been proven as important factors for tourists’ choice to stay at Casas Particulares. The tourists’ desire to experience the “authentic Cuba” through staying at Casas Particulares has also been acknowledged by most owners.

“Staying at an all-inclusive hotel was never considered, as you never really experience the local culture” (Swedish lady, 2012-11-11).

“If you only stay at hotels, you can not interact with Cubans as the employees at hotels do not have the time to talk to their guests” (Svein, 2012-10-23).

“The standards of the hotels are not that good in Cuba, Casas Particulares are better” (Daniel, 2012-11-30).

“Tourists come to stay in Casas Particulares to experience the true Cuban society” (Ricardo, 2012-10-25).

“Tourists should visit Cuba and Casas Particulares to experience the culture and meet the Cubans as this country is a diamond- one of a kind” (George, 2012-11-19).

Although owners expressed that the will to interact with tourists might not be a premiere motive for running the business, some owners do perceive their line of work as a social venture. It is highlighted by many owners that interacting with tourists are an opportunity to gain knowledge about other cultures and that they enjoy meeting new people and interact with tourists. An owner in Havana expressed that it was a passion of hers to run the business, emphasising that she got to interact with guests and make new friends as part of her job, something she really enjoyed (Elena, 2012-11-09). However, as Ricardo (2012-10-25) states, language barriers might cause obstacles and not all Cubans are interested or have the time to interact with their guests. Further stressed is that tourists might have a narrow view and are not always interested in interacting with the owners. A complicated relation between tourists and the local community has been observed because tourists are granted more benefits than Cubans. The relationship between tourists and Cubans is also undermined by the governmental disapproval of social interaction between the two, as they are terrified that tourists will be exposed to crime. Because of the treat of crime towards tourists the government have close supervision of Cubans interacting with tourists, restricting the contact (Gustafsson, 2011). In 2005, the minister of tourism in Cuba announced, “all contact employees have with tourists should be limited to the absolute necessary...
and focus on ethical, moral and professional principles” (Gustafsson, 2011:545). Simultaneously, the double currency gives tourists a superior role where the national currency values 24 times less than the “tourist currency”, Convertible peso (CUC), which constitute the only source for most merchandise. Carla (2012-10-24) a Cuban student, highlighted that interactions with tourists might imply trouble for Cubans. The complicated relationship between guests and owners, where tourists are superior together with the disapproval from the government, implies difficulties for a relation to develop on common grounds.

“Tourists are always allowed to complain, but owners are not in the position to say so much” (Ricardo, 2012-10-25).

“In Cuba, tourists have more rights than Cubans, it makes no sense!” (Diego, 2012-12-20).

“If tourists come to stay we can rent out the second room while we sleep in the living room, you need to be strong for this” (Carol, 2012-11-19).

“How well the relationship between the owner and guest develops and to what extent interactions occur has been proven to affect the level of authenticity experienced. The overall experience of Cuba and Casas Particulares has shown to be highly dependent on the hostesship, where the willingness to interact with the guests affects the impression of authenticity. In the search for the “real Cuba” many tourists are drawn towards private housing with the common idea that private housing implies living and eating together with the family, although meals, if served at all, are often separately prepared for the tourists.

“We really thought that you would eat together with the family, here they don’t even serve meals, so, we are a little bit disappointed about that” (Young backpacker, 2012-11-02).

“Eating at Casas Particulares resembles McDonalds, it’s like franchising where the food looks exactly the same” (Michael 2012-11-14).
The business Casas Particulares became legal for over fifteen years ago, and was running illegally even before that (Ricardo 2012-10-25), where a certain amount of institutionalisation and resemblance to the hotel sector has been noted. Standards in terms of furnishing, electronic equipment, cleaning and food served have been adjusted accordingly to requirements to fit the tourists’ needs. The repeating pattern recognised has lead to a questioning of the authentic value and has been stated as a factor degrading the total experience.

**Narrating Casas Particulares**

All Casas Particulares are different; some are an older smaller apartment while another is a large house that is newly renovated. Standards vary from Casa to Casa, sometimes there is an access to hot water while other Casas only have cold water. Prices normally vary in the range between approximately 20-35 CUC per night depending on the location of the Casa and what facilities are offered, although they can occur as higher or lower. A distinct difference between the scopes of Casas Particulares is visible through what the Casas Particulares are offering their guests. Some Casas Particulares serve nothing but a small breakfast, other offer large breakfasts, dinners, coffee, lunch, juice etc. and some businesses even have printed menus with prices of additional foods and drinks. Several Casas Particulares have additional services such as taxi, tours and products for sale while other solely focus on the renting of rooms.

The difference is distinct between Casas Particulares that have been running for a long time and new ventures, not only in terms of standards but also in service and hostesship. In houses with less experience of running the business there is a sense of pride in their work and the guests’ opinion of the house and food is essential. Carol and George started the business recently, in 2011, although they had owned the house for ten years\(^1\). Carol was able to purchase the house from the income earned while working in Venezuela. At the same time as operating the Casa Particular Carol works as a dentist while her husband George stays at home. Carol (2012-11-19) explained that if she would stop working as a dentist she would lose her license as a doctor. The special situation of being a dentist at daytime, and acting a waitress or cleaner during

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\(^1\) Research conducted underlines that selling and buying houses was not approved until 2011, although stories conveyed indicate that the business has been feasible before that. A black market of selling and trading properties has been recognised (Hills, 2012).
the rest of the day was often mentioned. Carol and George showed a great interest in their guests’ opinions, often asking if tourists were satisfied with the service and their house.

As mentioned, the difference between a newer Casa Particular and an older one is apparent. Service and the will to interact with tourists are the factors that separate the two the most. Rafael operates, together with his aunt Maria, a Casa Particular with three large rooms. 25 years ago Maria and Rafael’s mother exchanged their two apartments to a larger one enabling the possibility to start the business when it became legal. Maria started the business 17 years ago (i.e. before it became legal) but because of her respectable age Rafael have taken over. Rafael explained that he do not live in the Casa Particular and found the situation of travelling between his home and family to serve the tourists’ needs difficult. The accommodation included breakfast when Rafael had time to prepare it and it became clear that no more time than necessary was spent in the house. In Casas Particulares that have been running for a long time, regardless of how aware the owners are of the tourists’ wishes to relate with the Cuban culture, the perception of the “cash-cows” of the business exists.

“In this house you are not tourists, you are friends and family” (Carol, 2012-11-19). “Yes, we are tired of tourists and the lack of private life, but it is a good business... and we have to eat…”(Maria, 2012-11-01).

Comparing the two Casas Particulares states a good example of how different the owners’ perception of the business can be and what they wanted to accomplish through it. Rafael was in the process of selling the apartment when the study took place and clearly stated that no plans for the future were established. His aunt, Maria, was not in favour of selling the house, but admitted that with the money they could “buy a lot of things” (Maria, 2012-11-01). Carol, together with her husband, had grand plans for her Casa as she planned to expand the house so that more tourists could stay at the house. As for right now the house comprise of two rooms, though when tourists occupy the second room, she herself sleeps in the living room. The expansion is planned to be finished in the year 2013/2014 and will include a restaurant and two additional rooms for renting out to tourists. Carol and George were also eager to start collaborating with their guests so that they could promote their business.
“Its business, everything is business. Of all businesses in Cuba, Casas Particulares is the most beneficial: economically as well as socially, as you get to meet different people and work with so many different things” (George, 2012-11-19).

“No, I have other plans, I’m thinking of buying a smaller place, maybe to rent, but then I won’t live there. Or, there are other businesses with good profits too, I could buy a car for example and rent it to tourists.” (Rafael, 2012-11-01).

“We have other plans, I’m thinking of buying a smaller place, maybe to rent, but then I won’t live there. Or, there are other businesses with good profits too, I could buy a car for example and rent it to tourists.” (Rafael, 2012-11-01).

“When you go back to your country, you have to recommend this house on the Internet, please help us to get tourists here” (Carol, 2012-11-19).

“Renting is good business in Cuba” (Rafael, 2012-11-01).

The two Casas, Rafael and Maria’s and George and Carol’s, exemplifies two approaches towards the business, one eager to interact, improve and deliver the wanted product, another perceiving the business a necessity in order to make a living. Overall, the perception and commitment among the owners influence how the Casa is presented, affecting the tourists’ experience.

**Business Implications**

The fact that the business Casas Particulares has had a significant role in changing the course of the owners’ lives is highly evident. By no exceptions monetary resources have increased and give good prospects to improve standards of life for themselves and their families. Before Rafael became involved in the business he used to work at a restaurant, explaining that the economic situation used to be disastrous for him as well as for the society. Carol and George clarified that operating a Casa Particular contributed to changing their life in a profound way. Carol, working as a dentist at the same time as running her Casa Particular, clarifies that her salary of 15 CUC/month is not enough to eat or provide her daughter with what she needs for school or clothing. Before Carol and George started the business their life was very calm and less stressful but they could not afford to provide their daughter and relatives with what they needed solely on a dentist salary (Carol and George, 2012-11-19). Different to most owners with prior occupations, who conveyed that life was more relaxed as an owner of a Casa Particular, Carol and George (2012-11-19) expressed that life as a private business owner was more stressful and chaotic. Though, finance had significantly improved, now they have the possibility to help their relatives and families to a better life. They emphasise that the business makes it possible for them to set a stable foundation and ensure that their daughter gets a decent life, although all the surplus money at the moment goes to the reconstruction of the house in order to expand the business (Carol and George, 2012-11-19).
“Before we started with this business things used to be really bad here in Cuba” (Rafael, 2012-11-01).

“There is a huge difference between our life now and before the start of our Casa Particular, life used to be very calm and less stressful” (Carol, 2012-11-19).

Many Casas Particulares employ a person to help out with cooking and cleaning. This occupation has developed into a popular form of work in Cuba, as government employment is not perceived as safe. Also, a government salary is in Cuban pesos, which are not worth anything (Tomas and Alicia, 2012-11-13), making Casas Particulares a beneficial business to be engaged in as you get direct access to CUC.

“I don’t know if I could get my old job back, my colleagues had to look for another job” (Penelope, 2012-12-14).

“The job is popular as employability and the labour market is unsafe. Sure, Casa Particular is a lot of work, but it pays better” (Amelia, 2012-12-07.)

Casas Particulares has for most owners as well as employees meant a higher income and a more stable life. Highly noticeable was how Cubans in general struggle to make ends meet and provide children and family with necessities, something that successful Casa Particulares has to worry less about. Although official fees and taxes make the total income less, being involving in Casas Particulares has implied a positive change for all owners encountered.

**The Start of the Business**

To become a private room renter has been acknowledged as an expensive venture. In order to fulfill demands owners are required to provide tourists with sufficient standards, implying purchases most Cubans cannot afford.

“From the beginning, the apartment did not look as it does today, but as soon as the business started to pay off restorations were made and electronic equipment was installed to improve the standard for tourists. Though, electronic equipment is expensive, for example, a fridge costs around 500 CUC and with a highest salary of 40-50 CUC a month, most Cubans cannot afford one” (Carlos, 2012-10-26).

Signs of private room renting are as frequently spotted as taxis and dogs on the streets in larger tourists hubs and is one of the most beneficial businesses to be engaged in. Ricardo is one of the founders of an organisation providing booking of Casas Particulares through the Internet, founded in the year 2000. At the time, not many Casas existed and they had no channels to be marketed through as most Cubans still
today has no possibility of accessing the Internet. From studying computer science at the university, Ricardo had the knowledge, and with the connections of friends abroad, also the resources to start the website. From there on, he contacted owners of Casas Particulares in different cities and provinces to cover most parts of Cuba, and along with the business growth, the website has expanded and entails several Casas in each location (Ricardo, 2012-10-15).

“I inherited this house from an older relative. Before, I used to work within the house keeping department at a hotel, and I though about what to do with this house if not a paladare (small restaurant inside the house) or café- I already knew what tourists wants, so I decided to start like a small hostel” (Elena, 2012-11-09).

“We started the business in the year 2000 and my husband has chosen to continue working as a driver, while I take care of the tourists” (Jennifer, 2012-12-01).

“This house used to be my fathers, I inherited it around ten years ago, but we only started the business one year ago” (Julio, 2012-11-05).

“I inherited the apartment from my grandfather. I quit as soon as I started the business, it is impossible to work as a lawyer, and taking care of the business, and at the same time be a father” (Carlos, 2012-10-26).

“We like our jobs as teachers, we would rather work as teachers than staying at home running the Casa Particular, we miss the contact with colleagues and the atmosphere at work. We have been working as teachers as well as running the Casa Particular, but we decided to stay home for the business this year to restore our house, but we hope to go back to work next year” (Sandra, 2012-12-08).

“This is my business and my husband’s job is to be a doctor” (Elena, 2012-11-09).

Not much planning and assessments can be associated to the business start up process of a Casa Particular. Several owners have been noted to start the business when inheriting a house from relatives (most common in larger cities), without any previous plans of engaging in the business. Findings has pointed out that many individuals abandon their prior occupations in order to start a Casas Particular, although pride is taken in academic professions. In the cases encountered where owners have chosen to keep their employment, the Casa Particular is run by a couple enabling one of them to stay at home running the business.
Future Plans and Expansion
A general perception is that owners with several years of operating a Casa Particular made smaller efforts to improve. Several owners expressed that the knowledge of English is an important part in order to receive tourists and gain popularity among travellers. Carlos (2012-10-26) explained that most owners tend to improve their language skills along the way of operating the business. However, observations indicate that the statement was not necessarily accurate since many room-renters settled with the ability to communicate basic needs, as nothing more was required. Even though the majority of Casas Particulares owners acknowledge the business as beneficial, findings indicate that ideas and plans for future development are in most cases absent. Few visions for the business and plans of expansion were to be found during the study, generally, most owners seemed to have little interest in expanding the business but were happy to have more free-time and money.

“No, I don’t know much English, just a few words: breakfast, dinner…It’s enough to cater for the tourists” (Patricia, 2012-12-14).

“We are happy with how our lives are right no, so no we do not have any future plans” (Tomas, 2012-11-13).

“No, we do not have any plans for expanding the business, one rooms is enough” (Angel, 2012-12-08).

However, even though it stands quite clear that most Casas Particulares owners do not necessarily plan for the future, there are exceptions. Ricardo, who is in charge of a website promoting Casas Particulares, would like to see a system that enable Casas Particulares to charge a deposit for reservations. In addition, Carlos (2012-10-26) bought a house for 25 000 CUC with prospects to start renting it out to tourists in December. While few cases of entrepreneurial assessments or future plans have been noticed, most owners offer their guests additional services, ranging from meals to selling cigars and renting cars or arranging tours. Also, business cards were commonly used as a way of expressing a sincere business, and were used for promoting the Casa Particular. In the cases of recent start-ups it became clear that future aspirations entailed a vision of a life with less worries and the ability to create prospects for their family, whilst more established businesses settled with the benefits that the business had generated.
**Risk-taking**

Owners expressed that the high monthly fees and taxes, required every month to keep the business legally running, creates obstacles. In order to ensure that the income is sufficient to cover personal expenses as well as government fees owners of Casas Particulares try to attain as much income as possible by declaring false numbers. The fact that owners are constantly being governed, inspections may occur at any time to make sure conditions are sufficient and accountings are accurate, create an unsafe environment.

“If we employ a housekeeper, we have to pay both fees and salary, which can be difficult if we do not have any guests” (Sandra, 2012-12-08).

“Because of the high taxes and fees, everyone declare that they rent less rooms and take less charge, if you know the inspector, it is no problems, but otherwise things can go bad” (Rafael, 2012-11-01).

Most owners devote to the business completely, regardless of prior occupations and abandon a possibly highly educated title and a low, but still steady income. Engaging in Casas Particulares implies a constant uncertainty where the owners often have little possibility of estimating the number of tourist arrival. A few websites providing the service of booking a room in a Casa Particular enable tourists to make reservations before arrival, although no deposit is required. As bank accounts among private persons in Cuba are rare, money transactions are not possible to perform.

“It is like a robbery, you tell other tourists that we are expecting guests, then we have no guests and loose important income” (Amelia, 2012-12-07).

“We want to be loyal to our costumers and bookings, but sometimes tourist comes and ask for room, you tell them that it is full, and then the booked persons never show. This is because when you don’t pay, you don’t feel obligated to show up, so deposit or prepayments would be really good, though as for right now it is unfortunately not possible in Cuba” (Ricardo, 2012-10-25).

It is noted by owners that the tourists do not feel obligated to arrive on the booked date since no pre-payment or deposit is necessary. This implies a risk for the owners as the promised income might never show up and where the owners are put in a situation of vacant rooms and no income, but likewise are required to pay the tax. The survival mode created by high costs and taxes regardless if the room is occupied or not, surveillance and little influence on decisions imply constant risk factors in an environment where tourist arrival cannot be guaranteed.
Entrepreneurial Motives Equal Survival
The financial situation in Cuba is multifaceted as doctors earn more by working as taxi drivers, guides or by renting their home to tourists. Cuba is a poor country and people are engaging in various businesses, legal and illegal to earn extra money. Carlos (2012-10-26) explains how he as a student worked as a bicycle taxi driver to get into the business of Convertible Pesos (CUC). The double income creates a complex relationship between Cubans and tourists, where the social proximity to tourists implies an access to CUC.

“Work is not enough, all Cubans have to do something more” (Juan, 2012-11-09).

“All Cubans have problems, though it is not up to you, the tourists, to solve them” (Carlos, 2012-10-26).

The largest motive for starting a Casas Particular is, without exception, money. Practitioners as well as the local community acknowledge the tourism business Casas Particulares as important, and since regulations eased, private businesses have increased in number (Swedish Embassy; Peters, 2012). To what extent the owners actually enjoyed to run the business became visible through interactions, the will to make conversation and get to know the guests. Even though most owners expressed a passion for their job, it was always agreed that money defined the decision to start the business.

“Money is of course the largest reason for operating the business, although I enjoy the company and appreciate the opportunity to meet new people from all over the world” (Carlos, 2012-10-26).

“From the beginning the business worked as an extra income, now the house receives many tourists during high season and the business has evolved into a full time occupation” (Patricia, 2012-12-14).

“The business has given me and my family possibilities of living a life under better conditions than most Cubans. And I like to live for the moment. If you want to make a better life for yourself, you cannot sit inside and wait for money to show up- you have to do something yourself” (Carlos, 2012-10-26).

“We needed the extra income to support our family” (Carol, 2012-11-19).

“It is impossible to do run the business and have a normal job at the same time” (Penelope, 2012-12-14).

“The business makes it possible for our children to get an education and work within their profession, but they still have to come here to help out for the money” (Alicia, 2012-11-13).
“Before we had to work very hard for the government without earning anything, now, we have more freedom and the possibility to help our children. The working situation is very bad here, especially for the young, the salaries are so low that many choose not to work or flee the country if they can. It is not possible for our son just to work as a piano teacher, so he has to come here and help the business to earn more. Salaries in Cuban pesos are worth nothing, maybe 10-15 CUC, for that you cannot go out or live a decent life” (Tomas, 2012-11-13).

The majority of owners illustrated that their lives after starting a Casa Particular transformed both financially and in terms of independence. Several owners exemplified that they did enjoy their occupation before the start of their Casa Particular, but time is not always enough for both careers and the income earned form the business cannot be overlooked.

**Casas Particulares: Top of the Food Chain**

It is noted that the business of Casas Particulares can be perceived as “top of the food chain”, as it comprises the largest tourist expense. The market, where everyone wants to be a part of the tourist industry creates obstacles for the tourists as well as for those running a trustworthy business. Expressed by tourists is the Cubans’ constant chase for money and fight for attention. An example can be illustrated by picturing a Cuban bus station where in a chaos of taxis and room providers, everybody struggles to claim the tourists attention. It is explained by owners that a common situation is when taxi drivers take tourists to houses of family and friends, instead of the address where the booking was made, making the owners lose the important income.

“Everyone in Cuba wants a piece of the tourist cake” (Ricardo, 2012-10-25).

“It is more expensive to live in Varadero, but it is also easier to earn more; less Cubans, more tourists” (Alex, 2012-11-17).

One reason for acknowledging tourism as one of the most important sources of income for the local community is the access to hard currency, convertibles pesos (CUC). Most products are priced in CUC with exception of some small cafeterias, and minor shops selling meat and vegetables. A bottle of shampoo costs around three convertible pesos, constituting a fifth of a nurse’s salary, if paid in CUC. For example, in comparison to a fifth of an average Swedish salary this equalise about 400 US dollars. The access to CUC and tourists has showed to be important for Cubans, and the difference between people with access to tourists and those without are obvious. Two Cuban students painted the reality of the situation where Sebastian
(2012-10-24) explained that he started studying nursing, but changed to language instead as a contact offered a career within the hotel sector, requiring language skills. A comparison stating the difference in income between a private business and government employment are illustrated by the statements that a taxi driver, employed by the public sector, earn 20 CUC/month (Taxi driver, 2012-11-25) and a private bicycle taxi earning 80-90 CUC/month (Bicycle taxi, 2012-12-01). A Casa Particular owner grosses over 150 CUC/week if keeping one room occupied for the whole week (not including expenses and taxes). Casas Particulares are without doubt one of the most beneficial businesses to be engaged in, a government income give approximately 15-30 CUC a month equalising one days’ payment for one room rented. The difference in income and condition have been noted by many tourists, stating that they would rather give gifts to schools, hospital and people on the streets.

“It is not all about the actual money that Casas Particulares earn, gifts that tourists leave are worth a lot, shampoo and soap costs a fortune for us” (Bartender, 2012-12-05).

“Casa Particular owners are not the ones that need gifts the most, they have it so much better than the average Cuban so I would rather give donations to other organisations” (Ben, 2012-11-30).

“‘As a nurse the salary is 15 CUC a month which is almost the same as buying a pair of shorts, a Casa Particular owner earn more in just one day!’(Carla, 2012-10-24).

“We were astonished by the differences between rich and poor here; in Havana the house we stayed in had everything, whilst the neighbour had nothing” (Swiss, 2012-12-10).

“It is attractive to work in the tourism business as you can get a hold of CUC, which is the only access to a lot of things” (Sebastian, 2012-10-24).

“The government never import enough so toothpaste is hard to attain and when you do find it in the store it is extremely expensive for us, but for you, toothpaste is nothing” (Maria, 2012-11-01).

The difference between a Casa Particular, housing tourists, and one that does not, is apparent and beheld by tourists. Most often the Casas Particulares are standing out with painted facades and robust entrances, compared to close to collapsed buildings. Casas Particulares is highlighted as one of the most beneficial businesses to engage in terms of income, but also for its prospects to attain products brought by the tourists that might not be available on the restricted Cuban market.
Social Network
That tourists are an important source of money becomes obvious from the network and communication surrounding the visitors and their monetary resources. The network appears in several more ways than in the business of Casas Particulares, and has developed to a product itself. When a product cannot be presented directly, ways are found to gain an income from representing others and earn a commission. Most travellers have made an acquaintance with “street entrepreneurs”, often appearing as a man with his wife promoting a free salsa festival. In most of the cases, the salsa festival is never seen, but the friendly locals instead introduce the tourists to highly over-priced restaurants and souvenirs. The network and collaboration appears in sincere forms as well. Almost all owners of Casas Particulares suggest tours, accommodation and cigars sold through them, which are commonly a result of networks and connections.

“Our host arranges everything: the restaurants we go to, the best tours, taxis or accommodation in other provinces- everything. Of course, he knows we pay good money” (Svein, 2012-10-23).

“I think all tourists visiting Cuba have been tricked by Cubans to pay more, at least once, that just how it is to be a tourist in Cuba” (David, 2012-12-12).

It is observed that when owners refer to their Casa Particular, the term “enterprise” is rarely used; rather the venture is spoken of as a “Negocio”-negotiation. The network of Casas Particulares is highly social rather than business-like where neighbours, together with friends and families, are part of the business. In Cuba everybody seems to know one-another. Regardless of how the relationship was initiated it is likely to develop into a social contact. Patricia and Penelope (2012-12-14) explained that they did not know Ricardo or of his website before he contacted them in the purpose of business, but now they are close friends. Owners of Casas Particulares help each other out and provide one another with tourists. If one Casa particular is fully booked, tourists are sent to another house, creating a good service as well as helping a fellow owner. Owners are eager to help each other out and promote Casas that are less popular and might need the promotion to receive guests. Commissions are frequently used as soon as any business is promoted, where locals may approach a tourist with recommendations in order to gain a percentage of the product or service price. It is eminent that owners take advantage of their social network, promoting friends and
families’ services, by encouraging tourists to buy crafts or recommending services such as taxi. A network and business exchange exists where different businesses work together with Casas to organise trips and promote themselves.

“The diving instructors have contact with different Casas Particulares to promote and organise excursions for tourists” (Angel, 2012-12-08).

We were told that we paid more for the accommodation, since the price now had to include a commission for the person that recommended the Casa” (David, 2012-12-12).

“This Casa particular is always full due to the owners many contacts and recommendations from other cities” (Amelia, 2012-12-07).

“When his Casa Particular is full, he sends the guests here- he is my wife’s sisters husband” (George, 2012-11-19).

Using the knowledge of the Casas Particulares owners can often be favourable, where those with the right connections for example have the possibility to represent a travel agency, organising trips, recommendations and giving general advice. It was expressed by several tourists that they highly valued the recommendations that often proved to be a better option than following traditional guidebooks. Owners also considered their guests as the best recommendations, giving business cards so that their guests could recommend their Casa to other tourists and re-visits were highly valued.

“The first Casa Particular that we stayed at arranged our whole trip, it was really helpful” (Canadian, 2012-12-08).

Casas Particulares are like travel agencies, organising my entire trip, for me who is travelling alone, it has been very helpful” (Fernando, 2012-11-30).

“Our whole travel route was arranged through a list of recommendations we received at the first Casa Particular that we stayed at” (Dutch female, 2012-12-09).

“For us, it has worked better to follow recommendations from the owners rather than the guidebooks” (Felix, 2012-11-14).

A network is often advocated as a crucial factor for starting and running a business. The possibility to establish connections enables Casas Particulares to extend the business through offering and make earnings from services provided by others. Moreover, the large network creates prospects to increase the number of visitors through recommendations, since promotion through other channels is limited. A social network has shown to be imperative due to the lack of insignificant resources to convey their business proposal externally.
Encourage or Discourage Entrepreneurial Activity

“We weren’t allowed to start the business earlier due to political conditions. But when regulations eased, Casas Particulares boomed in Trinidad as it is a good business- although not everyone can or wants to engage in it” (George, 2012-11-19).

Since 2010 it is possible to start a business within the allowed categories, after seeking permission and paying taxes. It has been witnessed that locals are constantly being forced to create new innovative ideas to improve living situations and serve basic needs, implying that entrepreneurship is not a recent concept in Cuba. Entrepreneurial activities in the shape of inventive solutions can be seen almost everywhere in Cuba. Cars are maintained with wall paint and appear to be held together with glue. Most things are recycled, once an item has served its purpose it becomes used in other areas, the field of application is solely moved to another one; plastic cups used as ice-cream bowl are reused, caps are attached to a string comprising the flush mechanism on a toilet and old car parts are used to build a bicycle taxi.

Despite eased regulations around private businesses, individuals who would like to open a business need to have the funds to do so (Ricardo, 2012-10-25). That regulations play a large part in whether it is possible to become a private room renter becomes particularly obvious in some parts of Cuba, for example in Trinidad and Varadero, two of the largest tourist destinations in the country. In Varadero Casas Particulares became legal as recent as in year 2011. Since it is the most popular tourist attraction in Cuba, receiving half of the total tourist arrivals in Cuba, Casas Particulares entail an essential resource. Casas Particulares are considered a necessity during high season as they fill an important gap when all the hotels are fully booked (Julio and Margarita, 2012-11-05).

“As we already had a large house, we started renting rooms as soon as it became legal to do so” (Alicia, 2012-11-13).

“We knew about the business Casa Particular and thought about it before it became legal here in Varadero, but Varadero is our home and we did not want to move in order to start the business” (Tomas, 2012-11-13).
After the revolution in 1959 Cubans were not allowed to possess or purchase a house. This meant that Cubans had to live in the house they were born in, and could only move through marriage or changing apartments with somebody else on the black market. In 2011 President Raul Castro changed the laws and made it possible to purchase houses and apartments, however to a price most Cubans cannot afford (Hills, 2012). In order to operate a Casa Particular a suitable house is essential. The government inspects all new possible Casas Particulares and decide if the house is suitable enough. If the house do not live up to the right standards, the owners are declined the right to present the business. Hence, Government laws and regulations are central in the development of private business in Cuba.

“Our neighbour wanted to open a Casa Particular but the inspector did not assess the house as suitable enough, so he has to make some renovation in order to start” (Julio, 2012-11-05).

“To be able to start you own business and a Casa Particular you need the funds to do so, something most Cubans do not have” (Ricardo, 2012-10-25).

“Inspections can occur anytime, so everything has to be up to date at all times”(Angel, 2012-12-08).

As houses are very expensive, and salaries in Cuba are extremely low, few individuals can afford to purchase a house to start their own business. A smaller apartment in Havana costs around 5000-8000 CUC (Hilde, 2012-11-24) and a larger one with standards suitable for renting around 20 000 CUC (Carlos, 2012-10-26). Consequently, most houses have been inherited from relatives and the business started when the space became available.
UNDERSTANDING THE ENTREPRENEUR

In order to establish a deeper understanding of the studied phenomena Casas Particulares and entrepreneurship it is crucial that findings are related to the general. The general is here outlined as relevant theories enabling the studied phenomena to be viewed as a part in terms of the whole. From a hermeneutic approach this enables findings, interpreted from a subjective point of view, to be connected to concepts representing the general idea of entrepreneurship. Bjerke (2005) argues that connections are localised through performing a constant transition between the general and specific. The empirical study has concluded certain determining factors of tourism entrepreneurship in Cuba. It is conveyed that authenticity is an important factor for the tourists’ experience where Casas Particulares are an important role in the creation of visitors’ experience of their total stay. The will to become an entrepreneur through Casas Particulares appear to be stronger than the hardships caused by the socialist state, where Casas Particulares owners’ existing resources are central in enabling the venture. Also, contextual factors are imperative for entrepreneurial frequency and directly impact on the existence of Casas Particulares.

The Entrepreneur: a Role in Authentic Cuba

Cuba is often promoted as an opportunity to experience a travel back in time “before it changes” illustrated by old cars, cigars and salsa (lasochres.se, 2012-09-11). Tourists’ perception of Cuba has shown to be coherent to how the destination is promoted. This is also want motivate tourists to visit the country. Hall (2005) suggests that a tourism product can create a symbolic value that represents an identity and lifestyle attractive to a specific group of tourists. Destination promoters then have the possibility to bundle a collection of representative tourism products to create a destination identity (Hall, 2005). The tourism product Casa Particular is used by marketers as a factor in the creation of Cuba’s identity, promoted as a way to experience local culture and has since the legalisation in 1996 developed into one of the most important and common forms of accommodations. It is argued by Page (2007) that accommodation is in the centre of the tourism product and a component of the hospitality sector from where tourists engage in the destination. Hospitality involves hosting and hospitality, where in the modern society the tourist purchases a
commercialised experience where they consume services and goods (Page, 2007). It is noted by Holloway et al. (2009) that smaller forms of accommodation have benefitted from an increased desire to experience a more intimate relationship with the culture of the country visited. These are acknowledged as a valuable resource for the industry, offering an informality that the many tourists strive for. It was stated by an Austrian traveller (2012-11-07) that the choice of staying at Casas Particulares was a certainty due to the rare experience of eating and living so close to the locals. Following Holloway et al. (2009), findings indicate that tourists are motivated to stay in Casas Particulares by the want for a closer relationship to the local culture.

All attractions, facilities and services used or visited by the tourist during the stay, combined with the experience of the tourist, are what comprise the tourism product (Doswell, 1998). When the tourist consumes products, the different products loose their identity and fuse into one total tourism product. The tourists’ perception of the tourism product entails their experience and opinion of the product utilized. It is argued that the complexity of the product is revealed by the relationship between the tourist and supplier (Ivanovic, 2008). MacCannell (1999) reasons that tourists’ approach of seeking authentic experiences is through integration with locals. The choice to stay at Casas Particulares is highly connected to the anticipation to encounter the local community. How well the owners manage to represent their Casa Particular in coherence with the tourists’ expectations has been noted as one of the most important factors for the creation of the total tourism experience. A general argument from tourism scholars is that the tourism product consists of a combination of intangible and tangible elements (Doswell, 1998; Page, 2007). Tangible products can be assessed, measured and include natural, cultural, historical, infrastructure and construction components. Intangible products arise from the atmosphere of a destination; the feeling of friendliness and appreciation attained at the location and cannot be measured and evaluated in the same aspects as tangible products. How the tourist feels and is treated influence the overall response to a destination (Doswell, 1998). Intangible elements formed as expectations from the consumer create a difficult relationship between the tourists and the owners. Hence the notion can be made that Casas Particulares are highly connected to a complex relation based upon intangible factors, where in order to deliver a successful product owners are urged to create the expected atmosphere.
Mantecón and Huete (2008) state that authenticity is not identified by practitioners as an important factor for attracting tourists, but can be considered either as a factor enhancing original or genuine elements, or imply the creation of cultural imitations. Further argued is that authenticity is a socially constructed concept, which is not related to the actual authentic value of an object. Authenticity as a pull-factor is dependent on the relationship between the object or product consumed and the individual experience derived from its consumption (Ivanovic, 2008). How well the image of Cuba and Casas Particulares comport with the experience on location, regardless if authenticity is a constructed concept has been proven as a deciding factor for the level of experienced authenticity. Wang (1999) recognises two different types of object-related authenticity, the tourists association and experience of authenticity-regardless of how it is illustrated, or the kind that is projected onto objectives creating a symbolic value or belief. A Swedish lady (2012-11-11) states that staying at an all-inclusive hotel was not an option, since she believed you do not experience the authentic culture through hotels. Also, a Norwegian (2012-10-23) stressed that Casas Particulares offers an interaction with Cubans in a manner that hotels cannot offer. Hence, authenticity has been verified as an important factor for the choice of accommodation as well as destination, contradictive to the notion of Mantecón and Huete (2008) stating authenticity as not important for tourists.

Page (2007) argues that trends within the accommodation sector are formed by tourist demand and take different shapes, whereas many forms do not fit the conventional image of a hotel. The notion can be connected to the statement that consumers increasingly crave authenticity in a world perceived as “real” or “fake”. In a commercialised reality people seek engagement and personal experiences, where tourists might escape the secure environment of hotels in their quest (Gilmore and Pine, 2007; MacCannell, 1999). A product appearing as inauthentic will therefore risk a loss of sales (Gilmore and Pine, 2007). Empirical findings have revealed that tourists are generally drawn towards private housing in Cuba with the anticipation to experience the local culture. The trend where tourists seek a more intimate relationship with the local culture has shown a positive contribution to the business, where it is noted that most owners are aware of tourists’ will to experience authenticity. It was stated by an Austrian travellers (2012-11-07) that the hostesship of the owners was directly connected to their impression of authenticity and
experience of Cuba and Casas Particulares. Factors such as standardisation and unfulfilled expectations are connected to the risk of a downgraded experience of authenticity. Cuba and Casas Particulares are promoted as authentic choices, and in line with Gilmore and Pine (2007), if Cuba and Casas Particulares are appearing as “fake” due to standardisations they might risk a loss of visitors. According to MacCannell (1999) tourists constantly seek the authentic. Once the search has started the tourist is trapped and new paths are forced to be explored. If authentic values are insufficient, tourists might seek other sources for personal experiences, where Casas Particulares are not favoured.

**Recognising the Entrepreneur in Cuba**

The issue of “who is the entrepreneur?” is the most common question in the academic area of entrepreneurship (Kuratko et al, 2011). According to the Oxford English Dictionaries (OED Online, 2012-10-02) an entrepreneur is defined as: “One who undertakes an enterprise; one who owns and manages a business; a person who takes the risk of profit or loss”. Oxford advanced learners dictionary (2010: 509) provides a definition of an entrepreneur by economic aspects: “A person who makes money by starting or running businesses, especially when this involves taking financial risks”. Schumpeter is considered a leading scholar of entrepreneurship. His definition of entrepreneurship is, “the carrying out of new combinations we call ‘enterprises’; the individuals whose function it is to carry them out we call ‘entrepreneurs’ ” (Becker et al, 2011: 4). In addition, Huijbens et al (2009) states that entrepreneurs are eager to launch new projects and the potential of growth and development is considered imperative. As mentioned in the empirical findings, the owners refer to their Casa Particular, as a “negotiation” rather than an enterprise. This can be connected to the notion that most owners have little ambition to introduce new projects and expand, since they do not perceive Casas Particulares as a business. It can be argued that entrepreneurship within Casas Particulares in several ways does not comport with traditional views, although arguments that owners in fact are entrepreneurs according to classic theories can still be made.
In his early work Schumpeter stated that entrepreneurs push economic growth and engage in “creative destruction”, involving replacing inefficient and ineffective approaches with improved tactics (Becker et al, 2011; Lee-Ross and Lashley, 2009). Moreover, Schumpeter claimed that entrepreneurs are motivated by the joy of creating, the will to conquer, and the dream to establish an empire, the primary drive is not to maximise profit. In his earliest work Schumpeter refers to the entrepreneur as a “man of action” that do not accept the existing reality. Also, an entrepreneur do not grasp restrictions, if a demand is inexistent the entrepreneur will create a demand and produce a ‘want’ for the product. Schumpeter also connected entrepreneurship to the determination to dominate or win. In his later work Schumpeter evaded the notion that entrepreneurship was a gift granted to a few special individuals and instead associated entrepreneurship with the social concept of attitudes (Becker et al, 2011). Casas Particulares have become an important asset for the Cuban tourism industry and economy, providing tax revenues and employment. Still, being an entrepreneur within the sector is connected to strict regulations, high fees and surveillance. The will to engage in entrepreneurship through Casas Particulares exceeds the obstacles, which is in line with Schumpeter’s (Becker et al, 2011) notion that entrepreneurs do not accept the existing reality. In coherence with Schumpeter’s (Becker et al, 2011) notion of creative destruction, owners confront the reigning conditions of the socialist regime by presenting a product challenging the government owned hotels.

It is stated by Lee-Ross and Lashley (2009) that a person recognising an opportunity embodies the concept of the entrepreneur and after identifying an opportunity the endeavour must be considered in combination with resources commanded by the entrepreneur. Gasparski (2011) argues that within economic theory an entrepreneur is considered someone that initiates market deviation and an entrepreneur’s achievements depend on the ability to predict future trends and envision consumers’ expectations better than competitors. Ricardo (2012-10-25) is an example of an entrepreneurial venture that successfully managed to predict the market needs, and launch an attractive and desired product despite strained conditions. Through knowledge and connections an opportunity was recognised, where Ricardo, despite government control and restricted communication resources, managed to start a booking site. Yet another example is the development of Casas Particulares in Varadero. When the government did not manage to provide the quantity of
accommodation required for the amount of tourist arrivals, Casas Particulares became an essential contribution. The new product offered implied a cheaper option and a closer relationship to the local community that are an important motivator for tourists’ choice of destination and accommodation. The accommodation form Casas Particulares have developed into more than a complement to government owned hotels where the owners compete with a product well recognised by tourists.

Risk-taking is an important aspect of entrepreneurship within Casas Particulares. A common notion is that owners give up their former employment, even academic positions, to fully invest in the business. Engaging in the business Casas Particulares on Cuba further implies risk-taking in terms of high fees and licence payments combined with regular inspections urging conditions and economy to be well kept, in order to avoid infractions and a possible loss of licence. It is further recognised that owners commonly cheat with the accounting, which imply a huge risk for the owner (Rafael, 2012-11-01). Clarke and Holt (2010) argue that entrepreneurs recognise the risk of failure and uncertainty of the entrepreneurial conditions. Nevertheless, they choose to exist outside structured organisations, in spite of the unsecure life of the entrepreneur. A recognised view is that entrepreneurs look at the world with different eyes, possessing the ability to see opportunities that others may not, and may be willing to take risks to a larger extent (Clarke and Holt, 2010). It is stressed by Kuratko et al. (2011) that entrepreneurs have to demonstrate a high tolerance towards uncertainties as they are calculated risk-takers, implying that the endeavour involve a realistic chance of costly failure. Furthermore, Shane and Venkataraman (2000) suggest that entrepreneurs may possess a specific knowledge within a subject allowing them to determine a mission as less risky than others may find. It can be argued that entrepreneurs within Casas Particulares are willing, and have to take risks in order to carry out their business, although, pinpointed is that private housing produce a higher income than most other employments. This is an equation minimising the level of risk-taking, as the income earned from the business cannot be compared to alternative losses.
The Effectual Entrepreneur

Effectuation is a concept of entrepreneurship produced by Saras Sarasvathy in 2001. The model was based on grounded theory development, comprising a special approach for decision-making (Chandler et al, 2011). Sarasvathy (2001, 2008) emphasises that entrepreneurs have different starting positions and reach different decisions. Entrepreneurs using the effectuation approach are likely to try various tactics within an arena before settling on a business idea.

Argued by Sarasvathy (2001, 2008) is that every entrepreneur begins with the questions: Who am I? What can I? And whom do I know?, implying that development of a venture depends on the knowledge and the network of the entrepreneur. Who am I builds on the traits, abilities and attributes of the individual. What I know consists of education, experience and expertise of the individual. Whom I know involves the social network of the individual. The sum of these three classifications is the entrepreneur’s pool of resources. This is what the entrepreneur has to start a business with, rather than focusing on market research and goal making (Read et al, 2011). Additionally, Chandler et al. (2011) stress that resources are the most important factors in the effectuation processes. Cubans have little possibilities to obtain material resources as they are restricted by market regulations and insufficient capital. Further, regulations and lack of technology and communication possibilities disable market research on a larger scale to be conducted in Cuba. Casas Particulares are dependent on the national market where the flow of tourists can be acknowledged as a vital resource for the business existence.

A focus in effectuation according to Read et al. (2011) is the notion of ‘means’, suggesting that the effectual entrepreneur work with their existing resources. As Sarasvathy (2001, 2008) outlines, the business idea is formed in coherence with the means of different persons and their starting position being imperative. Effectuation implies that entrepreneurs advance with a venture from existing resources, and develop goals along the course of experience (Sarasvathy, 2008). Entrepreneurship within Casas Particulares are initiated by existing resources, and how these can be used as a path towards the creation of a better standard of life. In line with Sarasvathy’s (2001, 2008) theories on effectuation entrepreneurship, it can be argued that the entrepreneurship recognised connected to Casas Particulares is highly linked.
to the individual’s already existing resources and how these can be used in the existing market. Sarasvathy’s effectuation theory has been exceptionally prominent in the questions of what can I and whom I know in connection to material resources. Examples can be stated through Elena (2012-11-09), deciding on starting the business after inheriting a house, based upon her prior knowledge from the hotel sector. Also, Ricardo (2012-10-25) may not have had a house in order to start a business himself, but did instead use his knowledge and connections to create a website to make reservations at Casas Particulares.

A core idea with the effectuation approach is that the future is not possible to control. Imagining several possible courses of action is the beginning for the effectual entrepreneur where consequences are most uncertain; hence, actions are evaluated in terms of potential loss, instead of potential profit (Read et al, 2011). In a recent study on the subject by Chandler et al. (2011) it was suggested that effectuation is a creative, multidimensional construct with three associated sub-dimensions; experimentation, affordable loss, and flexibility. Pre-eminent is that the environment where the Cuban entrepreneur operates the business and its course of development is determined by unsusceptible factors as governmental regulations. Tomas and Alicia (2012-11-13) explained that they did know about the business Casas Particulares before it became legal to operate in their hometown Varadero, but did not consider starting up the business elsewhere due to the loss of family connection. When market reforms in the year 2011 enabled the business to be operated in Varadero the owners re-evaluated the situation and decided to start renting out rooms. Sarasvathy (2008) and Read et al. (2011) state that effectuation is about a decision-making process that does not involve forecasting the future with market research, proposing that the entrepreneur tries to control the future without predicting it. Effectuation in Cuban entrepreneurship through Casas Particulares can be connected to the recognition of resource value in an unforeseeable future. It is stated by Chandler et al. (2007) that the effectuation approach is loosely defined and in need of more extensive research and empirical evidence. The study findings can argue for the existence of the effectuation approach in Cuba and Casas Particulares through the importance of material and knowledge-based resources. Consequently, the questioning of who I am can be linked to the ability of recognising resources, which enable entrepreneurial prospects.
Entrepreneur in a Social Network

The world today is made up of networks and it is argued that tourism has always been a networked industry, comprising of relationships between tourism offices, hotels, attractions, travel agents and restaurants (Scott et al, 2008). An investigation conducted by Costa et al. (2008) showed that within the tourism sector entrepreneurs consider networking as a key instrument to survive and compete as the tourism industry encompasses a dynamic and changing environment. The network surrounding Casas Particulares is based on the relationships between owners as well as their social contacts within various businesses. It has been observed that the relationships around the owner are what enabled the start and development of the business. The relations of the owners have also been found to be crucial in terms of promoting the business to attract tourists. Owners are usually reliant on their social network to receive guests. It is mentioned by Amelia (2012-12-07) that the Casa Particular where she works is always full due to the many social contacts of the owner. It is further discussed by Scott et al. (2008) that networks are imperative for tourism businesses as it is the relationships within the businesses that help to compensate for the fragmented nature of tourism. It is additionally conveyed by Lockett et al. (2012) that entrepreneurs materialise and self-organise through common needs, requirements and goals, suggesting that an entrepreneur’s network is an important asset. Conclusively, collaborative relationships and working towards common goals are central in the development of a destination network (Hall, 2005).

As Cuba is strictly regulated and sources of communication are kept to a minimum it is difficult for owners to promote their business to tourists, hence, it can be argued that connections and the ability to develop a network system are the most important ingredients in running the business Casas Particulares. It has moreover been detected that creating a network, providing other businesses with tourists has become a business itself. “Street entrepreneurs” that might not have a product to sell the tourists themselves, use a network to earn an income from promoting others businesses, such as promoting Casas Particulares and touristic items.

In order to compete entrepreneurs have recognised the need to tightly connect with the surrounding environment, as the organisational environment is crucial for the success of the organisation. Everyone within an organisation or business depend on each other (Costa et al, 2008). Numerous Casas Particulares exist in Cuba and all are
competing for the tourists. However, even though they are competitors owners have organised themselves in groups to promote and help each other out to “share the tourists”. When a Casa Particular is occupied they promote Casas Particulares that are new and less popular (Ricardo, 2012-10-25). It is stressed by Hall (2005) that the relationships between competitive organisations forms a network comprised by social and economic transactions, creating a cooperative through collaboration, partnership and coordination. The networks of Casas Particulares comprise economic agreements, when a person recommend and help with a booking the owner have to pay a commission to the individual supplying the recommendation. Furthermore, Costa et al. (2008) stress that cooperation encourages enterprises to grow and adjust to change. A developed business and network enable Casas Particulares to be more flexible towards insusceptible changes if fees for example are raised and the owners are forced to reduce the number of rooms for rent, an extensive network enables the business to gain income from alternative ventures. It is noticed that the business Casas Particulares has managed to gain market shares through successful network connections.

Jack et al. (2010) found in their research that even though a network is originally artificial and manufactured the network take a meaning and purpose of its own. They stress that networks transform in terms of structure, purpose and the bonds between members, private interests mature to shared interests, mutual support and knowledge exchange (Jack et al, 2010). Ricardo (2012-10-25) based his entire business, a booking website for tourists, on networks. Social connections were initially what enabled the business to exist. The network has gradually grown, where business contacts have developed into social. It is stated by Jack et al. (2012) that links in the network are built upon social relationships and affective connections, thus social ties are imperative for the operation of a network. Development of networks also relies on social aspects and is dependent on social consistency and social interaction over time (Jack et al, 2010). The relationships in the networks of Casas Particulares have proven to be highly social. Either the business network is initiated by an existing social relationship, or the business opportunity gradually develops into a social relation, forming mutual interests and goals.
Entrepreneurship: a Necessity or an Opportunity?

It can be argued that entrepreneurs are affected by push and pull factors in a variety of forms creating opportunities or disadvantages for entrepreneurial activity. The differentiation of these factors and how push respectively pull dynamics affect a person to become an entrepreneur has lead to the notion of necessity entrepreneurs (push) and opportunity entrepreneurs (pull) (Geacomin et al, 2007). Although intentions of starting a business may be planned, Ajzen (1991) argues that intentional actions are deeply connected to the presence of other immediate factors. The difference between necessity and opportunity entrepreneurs is categorised by different motivating factors driving the person to start a venture (Block and Sandner, 2009).

Brown and Ulijn (2004) discuss how pull factors are concerned with the idea of being better off as an entrepreneur and that self-employment implies prospects to develop material or non-material benefits. Additionally, Schevyens (2011) argues that people in poor countries increasingly turn to the tourism industry with the prospects of creating a better life for themselves. Carlos (2012-10-26) stressed that by running the business his family could create a life under better conditions. He further emphasised that in order to attain a better life it is crucial to work hard for it, and that it was up to every person to create ways to improve standard of life. This statement was strengthened by Juan (2012-11-09), expressing that one job was not enough for a Cuban, because everyone have to find additional income. Most owners did express a passion for their job but agreed that money and the opportunity to create a better life for themselves and their families was the main reasons to start the business.

It is argued by Botha (2006) that push factors are often connected to dissatisfaction and may work as a force driving people to become entrepreneurs. Motives for starting a business are individual: entrepreneurial activity can be seen as a necessity when work opportunities are low and a source of income is required, or an opportunity is recognised (Kelley et al, 2012). It is evident that since starting a Casa Particular the owners have gained a more profound life situation both for themselves and their families. For example, Tomas and Alicia (2012-11-13) highlighted that their life as entrepreneurs are much better than the life before when they were employed by the government. Before the business they had to work very hard to earn very little, now they work less and earn more, and the business enables their children to receive a
better life. Empirical evidence can to a large extent be connected to the notion of necessity entrepreneurship within the business Casas Particulares. As salaries and work opportunities are considered low and uncertain in Cuba, individuals turn to private businesses as to earn themselves a stable income. It is stated by Amelia (2012-12-07), a housekeeper, that employment at a Casa Particular is popular because the work environment is very unsafe in Cuba at the moment, stressing that Casas Particulares involve a lot of work, but it pays more. Associations between push factors created by unsatisfactory living- and environmental conditions, and the engagement of Casas Particulares are significant, creating the largest motive for becoming an entrepreneur.

Imas et al. (2012) present a work on the entrepreneurial practices of people living in poor, marginal and excluded contexts. Their study contributes to the concept of entrepreneurship and what values really identify “the entrepreneur” as it seeks to find explanations to how these individuals can use their skills and creativity as entrepreneurs to personal and communal wellbeing. Imas et al. (2012) exemplify with a family in Buenos Aires, known as “cartoneros”, people who collect cardboard in the streets:

"As our opportunities for work are minimal we create our jobs as they come along. In Matanza where we live, there is not much to do so we come here to collect cardboard and then all that we collect is sold and the money is divided among all of us who collect” (Imas et. al, 2012: 572).

Imas et al (2012) argues that necessity entrepreneurship has been equalised to the poor’s definition of opportunity entrepreneurship. The “cartoneros” states an example of individuals that create and see opportunities that others may not. Therefore, entrepreneurship reaches beyond solely “necessity” (Imas et al, 2012). A discussion raised by Karnani (2009) regarding entrepreneurship and poverty is that the poor may be regarded as entrepreneurs in a literal sense as self-employed, manage businesses and raise capital. Some poor may be classified as true entrepreneurs, even in the classic view of Schumpeter as a person who converts an idea into a successful venture. What contradicts these success stories, according Karnani (2009), is the empirical evidence showing that a majority of the poor lack the vision, creativity and skills to be regarded an entrepreneur. Owners of Casas Particulares may lack the vision in terms of future plans, creativity to expand the business and skills to be
considered entrepreneurs according to traditional views. Hence, Karnani’s (2009) notion of entrepreneurship and the poor has been proven accurate. Although accordingly to the study conducted by Imas et al (2012) the entrepreneur in Casas Particulares have successfully managed to change their course of life through managing a successful venture. Hereby it can be questioned whether innovation, vision and future plans is of significance for the concept of entrepreneurship and the achievement of a business.

Findings in an extensive report on motives for starting a business produced by The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor research Program, GEM, shows that over 90 % of the respondents’ answers could be classified as motivated by either necessity or opportunity, of which the majority of answers favoured toward opportunity (Reynolds et al, 2005). Noted by Rosa et al. (2006) is that one plausible explanation for why the worlds’ largest economies shows lower rates of entrepreneurial activity than poor countries is necessity entrepreneurship. National income has, according to GEM, been proven as an indicator of the varying levels of necessity entrepreneurship. Countries with higher per capita income present lower rates of necessity entrepreneurial activity (Acs et al, 2004). Limited resources, disabling basic needs to be fulfilled and merchandise to be purchased, has urged Cuba to become an entrepreneurial society. A strong connection between necessity entrepreneurship and Casas Particulares has been recognised, where it is clear that a government occupation does not provide an adequate income. Empirical evidence strengthens the theory of connecting poverty and necessity entrepreneurship. Although, according to the notion made by Imas et al. (2012) that entrepreneurship reaches beyond “necessity”, this study can argue that the notion of “necessity” can generate opportunity recognition. This combination results in the creation of entrepreneurship and enterprising in order to improve standards of life. Poverty does solely outline a motive to become an entrepreneur but cannot be equalised to the opportunity recognition that is crucial for starting a business.
Entrepreneurship in a Socialist State

Dimonov (2007) argues that scholars tend to focus on individual characteristics and skills, where the environmental forces of the entrepreneur are overlooked. Elements outside the entrepreneurs’ control influencing success or failure represents a context (Austin et al, 2006). The context in Cuba represents strong governmental control and countless regulations and has shown to be crucial in the development of entrepreneurship. Austin et al, (2006) additionally stress that specific contextual factors as the economic environment, levels of employment and politics can frame the opportunities and disadvantages of new ventures. Holmquist (2009) argues that it is either the context as such, implying structural conditions of the society or changes in the context that enables or disables the identification of business prospects. The environment outside Casas Particulares is imperative for the development of the business. Laws and regulations control the prospects of starting the business Casa particular and high fees and taxes imply a difficult situation for the owners. It is clear that changes in the context enable or disable the development of private businesses in Cuba. A new approach, encouraging entrepreneurship in order to boost the Cuban economy, has lead to an increasing number of private businesses and Casas Particulares. In line with Holmquist (2009) is can be argued that changes in the context are imperative for the existence of Casas Particulares, as well as any entrepreneurial activity in Cuba.

It is reasoned by Folsom (1991) that external factors such as economic freedom and market regulations work as discouragers or encouragers of entrepreneurial activity, where limitations of freedom have negative influence on entrepreneurial success. Cuban entrepreneurship is only encouraged if it represents one of the 181 allowed categories. Casas Particulares belong to one of the categories approved for privatising, although restricted through market regulations and constant inspections. Common arguments for becoming an entrepreneur are the prospect to become independent and to make a living in the absence of an occupation (Holmquist, 2009). Running a Casa Particular is not primarily an occupation in absence of another one, since many owners quit their employments. Salaries from professions requiring an education can rarely compete with earnings from private room renting. Holmquist (2009) also reasons that becoming independent only represents a small part of the reality. Cuba
states an example where the most essential motive for starting a business is the prospect of earning money. The business Casas Particulares can only be acknowledged as a successful venture as it grasps the very source of foreign currency-tourists. Although, becoming a private room renter does imply independence through a sufficient income and safer employment than the government can provide.

Short et al. (2010) stresses that opportunities are what give birth to entrepreneurship, without an opportunity to enable the characteristic of the entrepreneur entrepreneurial undertakings cannot materialize. It is shown in the study that contextual factors in Cuba are highly related to the individuals’ prospects of recognising entrepreneurial opportunities. Recent contextual changes implying eased regulations and possibilities of starting a business in Cuba had an impact on the frequency of Casas Particulares and other ventures. An example of the implications of contextual changes becomes obvious in Varadero, where private room renting became legal as late as in 2011. Stated by Tomas and Alicia (2012-11-13) is how they started the business as soon as it became possible. Carol and George (2012-11-19) also started their business as soon as the market regulations allowed more Casas Particulares to open up in Trinidad. It has become clear that the government possesses the role to allow the existence and frequency of businesses of all forms, limiting or increasing opportunity recognition.

The ways we perceive the world are highly related to the lenses we look through, formed by prior experience, knowledge and behaviour. In addition, social influences affect the shaping of entrepreneurial ideas behaviour (Douglas, 2009). Interests are fostered by social structures to orientate people towards given occupations and working positions (Holmquist (2009). According to Bourdieu (2005) individuals are shaped by their collective history, where social structures form their way of thinking and their actions. The choice of occupation conforms to the social structure and sets an order by which people position themselves according to where “they belong” (Bourdieu, 2005). Entrepreneurship might not be considered a recent concept in the Cuban society. Locals are constantly being forced to come up with new ideas to improve their living situation. Entrepreneurship in Cuba has until recent years been kept to a minimum, or has been prohibited, where employments were only provided through the government, giving little room for considerations of alternative sources of income. Now, reforms are increasingly encouraging private enterprising within the
range of allowed categories in order to expand the private sector, reduce government
of total entrepreneurial activity is linked to country-specific enduring trends.
Holmquist (2009) further maintains that changes imply new business opportunities,
and reversed, the more stable context and structure of society the less entrepreneurial
activity can be seen. Approving of private businesses is a new trend in Cuba where
being an entrepreneur has not been considered the norm. In line with Bourdieu’s
(2005) notion the involvement of Casas Particulares does not comport with the norms
created by the social structures in Cuba. The resent positive approach toward
entrepreneurship can be seen as a trend that yet not has received fully acceptance.
Overtime it has the possibility of changing the socialist model turning
entrepreneurship into a common notion.

Blundel and Lockett (2011) emphasise that financial resources are imperative for a
new venture to advance no matter how good the business idea might be. Regardless of
eased regulations, starting a business in Cuba is a costly venture. The resources and
investments required are something that most Cubans do not possess or can afford
(Carlos 2012-10-26). It is crucial for the businesses’ feasibility to possess a house
suitable for renting out. Since 2011 it is possible to buy houses, even though the
prices by far exceed the affordable limit, previously, houses could only be inherited
(Hills, 2012). Regardless if the owner was lucky enough to inherit a house or
managed to save enough money to provide the standards required to become a private
room renter, the most important issue is the presence of tourists. Doswell (1998)
states that a destination, in difference to natural resources and climate, may control
infrastructure and the development of facilities. Hence, the business is highly
dependent on the location since the owners have little possibility of changing it and
whether Cuba as a destination can direct the tourist flow there. It is reasoned by Lee-
Ross and Lashley (2009) that the political, social and technological scene is
imperative for entrepreneurship to flourish. Casas Particulares suffer from several
limitations of business development where an underdeveloped technological scene
has been expressed as one significant factor. The study shows how social network and
business cards outlines the main marketing channel, with little possibility to reach an
audience outside the walls of the regime. Similarly, no deposit is possible, creating an
insecure environment for tourism entrepreneurship in Cuba to mature.
Binswanger (1991) argues that although situational factors can contribute, or even prevent the existence of entrepreneurship, they do not solely cause the birth of the activity. Factors outside the control of the entrepreneur have been proven to not only encourage or discourage, but also determine the course of entrepreneurship. An observation is that many owners of Casas Particulares have turned into “entrepreneurial book-keepers”, creating false numbers on receipts in order to retain as much of their income as possible when high fees and taxes reduce the income considerably. The study can conclude that situational factors might directly influence the frequency of entrepreneurship, although Casas Particulares are ultimately viable due to individuals’ initiatives.
CONCLUSION

The central point of the tourism product is accommodation, where the role of Casas Particulares can only be acknowledged as a crucial part of the perception of Cuba as a destination. It can be concluded that the role of the entrepreneur as an owner of a Casa Particular represents the most important factor for the implementation of tourists’ anticipations: the meeting with the local community. How well the expectations are met creates the largest influencing factor of the total stay and how the opinions of Cuba are formed.

Individuals increasingly turn to private businesses and Casas Particulares to create themselves a better standard of living. Eased regulations, enabling private businesses to develop, could increase the means for Cubans to improve personal as well as the national economy; although the prospects are disabled by the low purchase-power of the local economy. Circumstances in Cuba, limiting import and export and the ability to become visible outside the walls of the regime, force ventures to a complete dependency on the national market. Individuals devoting themselves to Casas Particulares have the benefit of reaching a foreign market entering the Cuban regime. The business proposal is directed towards tourists and therefore not dependent on the insufficient local economy, turning Casas Particulares into highly attractive. Engaging in a business associated with tourists does not solely imply a higher income than the majority of alternative employments; it means the access of the convertible peso. In Cuba, this is crucial for an endurable life, as the currency constitutes the only source for essential purchases. The presence of the tourism industry is undeniable and highly necessary in Cuba, as it contributes to the local economy and assists individuals in creating an income. Although, not everyone is granted access to the tourists and their treasures. Eased regulations and increased number of privatised businesses in Cuba has to a great extent been presented as positive, but recognised is also the creation of increased segregation, where people with access to CUC and tourists have more benefits than the average Cuban.
Tourism entrepreneurship through Casas Particulares has been concluded as prominent in the will to become an entrepreneur and overcome obstacles, where in the socialist state of Cuba, being an entrepreneur is not the norm. Entrepreneurship within Casas Particulares has shown being highly regulated by governmental frameworks, creating special conditions for the development of the business. Factors as the presence of tourists and access to a suitable house with the right location are crucial for becoming an owner of a Casa Particular, factors that to a great extent are insusceptible for Cubans due to the lack of monetary resources. Little ability to act outside the frames of the context has created an environment where entrepreneurship in terms of opportunity recognition and innovation is limited. The study outlines the question whether the concepts most often associated with entrepreneurship being vision, innovation, creativity, market research and expansion truly are imperative for the success of a business. It is suggested that the notion of entrepreneurship in developing countries needs to be incorporated into the common idea of the concept in order to develop new theories and create a wider and deeper view of entrepreneurship.

**Suggestions for Future Research**
The aim of this study has been to increase and develop the knowledge of tourism entrepreneurship in Cuba through focusing on the business Casas Particulares. The Cuban government has during recent years taken a more encouraging stand towards entrepreneurship, enabling more people to benefit from the tourist industry. Although, pointed out in this study is that only a limited number of businesses are allowed, restricting prospects for entrepreneurship to fully blossom. A suggestion for future research is to perform a similar study of larger proportions to investigate how laws and regulations influence Cuban tourism entrepreneurship.

This study has acknowledged Casas Particulares as one of the most economic beneficial businesses for private persons. Noted is that entrepreneurship in Cuba has created a society where some individuals have more benefits than most Cubans. Advised is to a larger extent examine how private businesses can contribute to the national economy and if it can be used as a tool for development.
Entrepreneurial Opportunities

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Swedish Embassy, TM Landsrapport för Kuba 2011


Camilla Larsson & Sara Öst Grundemark, 2013
limited. Harlow, England

Oral Sources – Owners of Casas Particulares
Alicia, 2012-11-13
Amelia, 2012-12-07 (Housekeeper at a Casa Particular)
Angel, 2012-12-08
Carlos, 2012-10-26
Carol, 2012-11-19
Elena, 2012-11-09
George, 2012-11-19
Jennifer 2012-12-01
Juan, 2012-11-09
Julio, 2012-11-05
Margarita, 2012-11-05
Maria, 2012-11-01
Patricia, 2012-12-14
Penelope, 2012-12-14
Rafael, 2012-11-01
Ricardo, 2012-10-25 (Manager of a website for reservations at Casas Particulares)
Sandra, 2012-12-08
Tomas, 2012-11-13

Observations
Alex, 2012-11-17: Musician in Varadero.
Austrian, 2012-11-07: Travelled with two friends; encountered in Havana.
Bartender, 2012-12-05: Works at a popular bar in Cienfuegos.
Ben, 2012-11-30: An English traveller, travelling through Cuba for the first time.
Bicycle taxi, 2012-12-01: Works in Cienfuegos.
Carla, 2012-10-24: Cuban student encountered in Havana.
Daniel, 2012-11-30: Young traveller from South Africa visiting Cuba for 2 weeks.
David, 2012-12-12: Belgian traveller on vacation in Cuba; encountered in Playa Girón.
Diego, 2012-12-20: Cuban student, encountered in Havana.
Dutch Female, 2012-12-09: Travelling with 2 friends.
Dutch trio, 2012-12-09: Three females travelling in Cuba for 3 weeks
English traveller, 2012-12-05: English gentleman visiting Cuba for the first time.
Felix, 2012-11-14: German traveller, experiencing Cuba for the first time.
Hilde, 2012-11-24: Swedish female living in Havana, has also worked as a tour guide in Cuba.
Jack, 2012-11-29: Middle-aged man from Montreal, travelled with a group of friends.
Josef, 2012-12-03: Male from Former Soviet Union.
Michael, 2012-11-14: German traveller, experiencing Cuba for the first time.
Michel, 2012-12-09: Employee of a hotel in Cuba.
Sebastian, 2012-10-24: Cuban student met in Havana.
Svein, 2012-10-23: Middle aged man from Norway, travelled with his brother. Second time in Cuba.
Swedish backpacker, 2012-11-21: Swedish traveller experiencing Cuba for 2 months with 2 friends.
Swiss, 2012-12-10: On a bicycle vacation across Cuba with his wife.
Young backpacker, 2012-11-02: Swedish female travelling around Latin America with her boyfriend.
Appendix A

Questions to tourists

• What was your reason for choosing Cuba as a destination?
• Why did you choose to stay at Casas Particulares instead of a hotel?
• What was your perception of Cuba before you arrived?
• Have your expectations been fulfilled?
• What is your experience of staying at Casas Particulares?

General questions to owners of Casas Particulares

• What is your opinion of the importance of tourism for Cuba?
• What made you decide to start the business?
• How long have the business been operated, and do you enjoy it?
• What was your occupation before the start of the business?
• Have your life changed since the launch of the business?
• What is your perception of tourists?
• Why do you think tourists should visit Cuba?
• Do you have any plans for the future?
Linnaeus University – a firm focus on quality and competence

On 1 January 2010 Växjö University and the University of Kalmar merged to form Linnaeus University. This new university is the product of a will to improve the quality, enhance the appeal and boost the development potential of teaching and research, at the same time as it plays a prominent role in working closely together with local society. Linnaeus University offers an attractive knowledge environment characterised by high quality and a competitive portfolio of skills.

Linnaeus University is a modern, international university with the emphasis on the desire for knowledge, creative thinking and practical innovations. For us, the focus is on proximity to our students, but also on the world around us and the future ahead.