

# UC Berkeley

## UC Berkeley Electronic Theses and Dissertations

### Title

Spatial Politics in Metropolitan Miami: Cuban American Empowerment, Municipal Incorporations, and Cultural Production

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/547576p8>

### Author

Burga, Hector Fernando

### Publication Date

2013

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation



Spatial Politics in Metropolitan Miami:  
Cuban American Empowerment, Municipal Incorporations and Cultural Production

By

Hector Fernando Burga

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

Requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

City and Regional Planning

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Teresa Caldeira, Chair

Professor Nezar AlSayyad

Assistant Professor Malo Hutson

Professor James Holston

Fall 2013

Copyright Hector Fernando Burga 2013

Abstract

Spatial Politics in Metropolitan Miami: Cuban American Empowerment,

Municipal Incorporations and Cultural Production

By

Hector Fernando Burga

Doctor of Philosophy in City and Regional Planning

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Teresa Caldeira, Chair

This dissertation examines the political tensions between metropolitan planning and immigrant incorporation in Miami over the past 50 years. I develop a planning history encompassing the transformation of metropolitan planning in Dade County from the early 1960's to the post-Cuban period in contemporary times. By combining the historical analysis of planning documents, data from interviews with different actors shaping planning practice - metropolitan planners, community development practitioners, residents and artists - and participant observations of *charrettes* and grassroots mobilizations of local residents, I analyze how immigrant empowerment influenced the work of metropolitan planners and currently yields political practices through the deployment of discourses that uphold cultural production as a place-making strategy.

By developing the concept of *spatial politics*, I argue that an analysis of urban space is crucial to understand immigrant incorporation and empowerment in American Cities. I define *spatial politics* as the practices and tactics carried out by social groups to achieve political empowerment in the City. By tracing the effects of immigration in the history of metropolitan planning in Miami, I consider how *spatial politics* is exemplified by linkages between planning, community development, and political mobilizations carried out by social groups competing for political control in an urban context transformed by the status of immigrants as the social majority.

In Chapter One, I introduce the physical context of metropolitan Miami. I provide a mapping of Miami's urban geography, government structure and socio-demographic composition. I continue by developing the narrative of a participant observation based on a contentious policy measure voted upon in 2010 that aimed to give control of planning decisions to local community groups: Amendment Four. The Amendment Four debate illustrates the underlying tensions of Miami's urban politics as it is defined by claims and counter-claims defined by ethnicity and the experience of immigration. I continue by explaining the need to explore the relationship between immigrant incorporation and urban planning through an analytical lens that considers the empowerment of immigrant groups.

In Chapter Two I draw on archival evidence from Dade County's Department of Planning and Zoning and carry out a review of Miami's architectural, urban design and urban

history literature to develop a history of metropolitan planning in Dade County. I argue that Miami's urban historiography has mostly emphasized developers, architects and entrepreneurs as the main actors of urban transformation. Due to this tendency, the relationship between social history, immigration and planning has remained mostly unexplored. By considering the work of metropolitan planners from the introduction of the "Home Rule" Charter and the Two-tier System of governance through the development of Miami's first set of comprehensive development master plans, I analyze how demographic change and immigrant influx were important factors in planning practice. From its inception, metropolitan planning was envisioned as a tool for regional management in behalf of the public interest. Its goal was to facilitate the management and distribution of resources through a centralized system of government exemplified by two tiers; an upper tier for regional issues and a lower tier for local issues. The two-tier governance structure, however, led to the political under-representation of residents of unincorporated areas, who did not have the direct representation of municipal representatives. This condition would have consequences in the following decades as demographic growth and immigrant political empowerment transformed the city's political status quo.

The demographic growth of Hispanics resulting from immigration led to the political empowerment of Cuban Americans during the 1980's. In Chapter Three, I explore this particular period by combining archival evidences from Dade County's Department of Planning and Zoning, interviews with retired planners and practicing community development specialists, spatial analysis of demographic data, and a review of civil rights legal history. I consider how the work of metropolitan planners was influenced by the electoral empowerment of Cuban Americans at the municipal and county levels. I begin by reviewing of the existing literature on Cuban American incorporation in Miami to argue that it has remained a-spatial. The political, economic and cultural tensions that affect urban space have not been considered in the incorporation of Cuban Americans. I continue by arguing for the consideration of Cuban American *spatial politics* through three phases – crisis, community development and empowerment - and four types of practices - planning, electoral, discursive, and allied. During the refugee crisis of the Mariel Boatlift, metropolitan planners produced demographic data that facilitated the planning agenda of a burgeoning Cuban American community development system focused on public policy, economic development and housing. This planning apparatus facilitated the concentration of electoral voting blocs in Miami's ethnic enclave of Little Havana, which mobilized to elect Cuban Americans at the municipal and county levels by generating discourses upholding the positive economic contributions of Cuban Americans in Miami. A decade after the Mariel Boatlift the demographic changes brought forth by crisis and continuing immigration led Cuban American and African Americans to ally and join suit against Dade County in the Meek v. Metropolitan Dade County lawsuit. This coalition argued for a change in the composition and number of county commission seats given the socio-demographic make up of Dade County. The lawsuit's decision changed the numbers and re-drew commission district boundaries, establishing a new political order in Miami based on minority power. Metropolitan planners were protagonists in this process by providing demographic data and mapping alternatives for the new commission districts.

In Chapter Four I connect archival data from the Dade County Planning Department and the Miami Herald – Miami's most prominent news daily - with interviews of retired planning practitioners to consider how *communities of interest* countered the empowerment of Cuban Americans. Beginning in 1991 with the municipality of Key Biscayne, a wave of grassroots incorporation efforts led by ultra-local neighborhood groups swept throughout unincorporated

Dade County. These mobilizations were based on the perception of donor communities that metropolitan government was inefficient inadequately used taxes for the local service provisions of recipient communities - residents in unincorporated Dade County. Miami's Cuban American community considered the rebellion of municipal incorporations a backlash to their political gains. Fearing the prospect of political and economic fragmentation, metropolitan planners attempted to resolve the problem of political under-representation and economic imbalance embedded in the Two-Tier system by establishing community councils. Community councils were envisioned as units of local government that would to bring government closer to the people by giving local residents control over zoning issues and budgetary decisions. Nevertheless, community councils became training grounds for ethnic leadership across unincorporated Dade County. As the decade of the 1990's ended the evolving process of *spatial politics* was defined by a new political geography exemplified by newly minted municipalities.

In Chapter Five I turn to Miami's recent history to consider how the practices of cultural producers— developers, artists, art collectors, and community development specialists – offer a new field of spatial politics. I carry out participant observations between two sites - the District of Wynwood in the City of Miami and the Municipality of Opa-Locka in northwest Dade County – to explore how art is used as a tool of urban revitalization through the deployment of collective and individual discourses formed by notions of community, identity and multiculturalism. I develop the first part of this analysis in the art district of Wynwood where I consider the collective mobilizations of urban developers, gallery owners, artists and art collectors against big development as well as the individual practices of artists who negotiate their immigrant identity to access resources and social capital in Wynwood's artistic milieu. I continue by turning to Opa-Locka's, where a robust community development system led by African Americans uses a discourse of pan-african multiculturalism to revitalize impoverished areas of the municipality.

I finalize the dissertation by providing a brief call for the need to consider the figure of the empowered immigrant to re-evaluate the role of urban planning in immigration debates. Urban planning practice has traditionally been defined by an assimilationist ideology underlined by the imperative of adaptation and incorporation into the mainstream of society. Because of this undercurrent, the political agency of immigrants in American cities remains under-studied and bound by a framework of identity politics, cultural rights, and national citizenship. The case of spatial politics in metropolitan Miami, however, offers an example of the urban citizenship that organized immigrant groups can develop through the claim, control and transformation of urban space.

## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter 1: The City Beyond the Skyline: From the Pelican’s Gaze to <i>Cortadito</i> Politics</b>	<b>1</b>
Introduction	1
From the Pelican’s Gaze to <i>Cortadito</i> Politics	2
The Political Theater of Amendment Four	6
Metropolitan Planning and the Empowered Immigrant	9
Overview of Chapters	10
<b>Chapter 2: Measuring Democracy by the Width of the Sidewalk:</b>	
<b>The History of Metropolitan Planning in Dade County (1958 – 1975)</b>	12
Measuring Democracy by the Width of the Sidewalk	12
The History of Metropolitan Planning in Miami	16
Methods: Fieldwork and the DP&Z	17
Developing a Planning Historiography	19
Early Metropolitan Miami: Incorporations and Exclusions	21
Planning for Growth: The Two-Tier System and Metropolitan Planning	23
Unresolved Politics: Centralization v. Decentralization	36
Conclusion: Setting the Stage for Cuban American Spatial Politics	37
<b>Chapter 3: Cuban American Spatial Politics in Metropolitan Miami:</b>	
<b>Crisis, Community Development and Empowerment (1980 – 1991)</b>	38
The <i>Municipios de Cuba en El Extranjero</i> in <i>El</i> City of Miami Archives	38
Cuban American Spatial Politics in Metropolitan Miami	39
Methods: Searching for Spatial Politics	40
Literature Review: A-spatial Miami	42
Crisis: The Mariel Boatlift	44
Metropolitan Planning and the Crisis of Demographic Data	46
Cuban American Community Development: The CNC and CODEC	51
CNC: Public Policy and Discourse	52
CODEC: Economic and Urban Development	53
Metropolitan Planning and Bloc Voting: Ethnic Interests v. the Public Good	55
Empowerment: Municipal Elections and County Re-districting	55
Metropolitan Planning and Redistricting: Ethnic Territorialization and Alliances	58
Conclusion: Setting the Stage for Counter-Spatial Politics	63
<b>Chapter 4: Spatial Politics Redux: The Rebellion of Municipal Incorporations in metropolitan Miami (1991 – 2005)</b>	64
The Rise of <i>Communities of interest</i>	64
Methods: Mapping the Rebellion of Municipal Incorporations	66
Metro in Context: The Second Tier and Demographic Change	67
Metropolitan Planners Confront Incorporation: Donor v. Recipient Communities	69
Metro Confronts Incorporation: The Citizen’s Advisory Committee	71
The Three Waves of Municipal Incorporations	74
The First Wave (1991 – 1994): Key Biscayne Incorporates Coconut and Kendall Ally for Independence	74
Key Biscayne Incorporates	75
Coconut Grove and Kendall Ally for Independence	77
The Second Wave (1995 – 1997): Aventura, Sunny Isles and Pinecrest Incorporate, Destiny Fails	83
Metro’s Alternative: Community Councils (1997 – 2000)	88
The Third Wave (2000 – 2005): Miami Lakes, Palmetto Bay, Doral, Miami Gardens and Cutler Bay Incorporate	91
Conclusion: Setting the Stage for a Post Cuban Spatial Politics	92
<b>Chapter 5: Cultural Production as Spatial Politics: Community, Identity, and Multiculturalism in Metropolitan Miami</b>	93
The Ghost in the Living Room	93
Cultural Production as Spatial Politics	96
Methods: Fieldwork between Wynwood and Opa Locka	100
From Global City to the Local Practice: Yúdice’s Cultural Industries	102
The Discourse of Absent Urbanisms: Displacing Culture to New Sites	104
Wynwood: Re-valuing Culture for a Destination	106
Art v. the Mega-casino: Cultural Production as a Political Community	108
Primary Flight: The Cultural Production of Identity	111
Opa-Locka: Re-valuing Culture for Pan African Multiculturalism	116
Conclusion: Re-visiting the Ghost of the Living Room	119
<b>Conclusion: Spatial Politics: from Identity Politics to Urban Citizenship</b>	120
<b>Bibliography</b>	122
<b>Appendix: Interviews</b>	133

## List of Figures

### Chapter 1

Figure 1	View of the Rusty Pelican .....	2
Figure 2	View of Versailles in Calle Ocho .....	2
Figure 3	The Miami skyline from the top of the Rickenbacker Bridge .....	3
Figure 4	Metropolitan Miami .....	4

### Chapter 2

Figure 5	Stephen P. Clark Center.....	12
Figure 6	The location of Stephen P. Clark center in the municipality of Miami .....	13
Figure 7	The Florida gold rush of 1925 .....	24
Figure 8	The grid of Hialeah circa 1922 .....	24
Figure 9	Canal next to the Miami River on what is today SW 27 <sup>th</sup> Avenue .....	24
Figure 10	Miami's Colored line c. 1920 .....	25
Figure 11	The Growth of Miami in 1925 with the location of colored town .....	25
Figure 12	Negro Housing Areas 1951.....	26
Figure 13	The metropolitan growth of Miami as seen in 1925 and estimated to 1935 .....	27
Figure 14	Dade County Preliminary Land Use Plan 1960.....	30
Figure 15	Dade County Existing Land Use Plan 1960 .....	31
Figure 16	Dade County General Land Use Master Plan 1965 .....	32
Figure 17	Latin Immigration to Dade County.....	33
Figure 18	First Generation Comprehensive Development Masterplan 1975 .....	34

### Chapter 3

Figure 19	Mariel Refugee Encampments in Metropolitan Miami .....	47
Figure 20	INS Processing center in Key West.....	48
Figure 21	Tent City underneath I-95.....	48
Figure 22	Tent City in Miami's Orange Bowl .....	49
Figure 23	Cuban Americans waiting for refugees outside the Dade County Fairgrounds.....	49
Figure 24	Population Increase in Miami-Dade County, 1961-2000.....	51
Figure 25	Concentrations of CODEC Properties, 1987-2009.....	54
Figure 26	Mayor Xavier Suarez's letter endorsing the 1989 South Florida Latin Market study.....	57
Figure 27	Hispanic Population in Miami and Dade County, 1980 .....	58
Figure 28	Hispanic Population in Miami and Dade County, 1990 .....	58
Figure 29	The Political Reconfiguration of Dade County .....	62

### Chapter 4

Figure 30	Municipal rebellions in 1994 .....	70
Figure 31	Tax Base per census tract 1994.....	70
Figure 32	The Rebellion of Municipal Incorporations in chronological order .....	73
Figure 33	The Tennis Center at Crandon Park, Key Biscayne .....	78
Figure 34	The location of the clearing for the Tennis Center access ramp.....	78
Figure 35	City of Miami Poverty Rates by Neighborhood 2000 .....	79
Figure 36	City of Miami Predominant Ethnic Group.....	79
Figure 37	The Coconut Grove Citizen's committee organizes.....	80
Figure 38	Voting for the Coconut Grove Village Council .....	80
Figure 39	Promoting for the Coconut Grove Village Council .....	80
Figure 40	Hurricane Andrew over Miami .....	82
Figure 41	Coconut Grove after Andrew.....	82
Figure 42	The City of Aventura .....	83
Figure 43	Sunny Isles Beach.....	86
Figure 44	Joe Robbie Stadium .....	86
Figure 45	Miami Dade Community Councils .....	90

### Chapter 5

Figure 46	Living Room 2001 .....	93
Figure 47	Living Room 2005 .....	93
Figure 48	Living Room 2009.....	93
Figure 49	Living Room 2011 .....	93
Figure 50	Map of <i>spatial politics</i> as cultural production .....	98
Figure 51	Wynwood and the Garment District 1979 .....	107
Figure 52	Genting's Resorts World Miami.....	108
Figure 53	Art and Place-making in Wynwood.....	108
Figure 54	Gambling our future" Forum at the Light Box Theater .....	109
Figure 55	Fado's Soup .....	115
Figure 56	"O" Cinema Mural .....	115
Figure 57	Miami's Wishing Tree .....	115
Figure 58	Pyke & Bros Workshop Mural .....	115
Figure 59	Opa-Locka City Hall.....	117
Figure 60	Image of artist interventions in the Magnolia North Art Masterplan .....	117

## Acknowledgements

Thank you for demonstrating faith and commitment in the forthcoming words with your time and concrete actions: my wife: Evalyn Carbrey, my family: Isabel Burga, Lucia Burga, Hector Burga, the fellows: Erica Boas, Margo Mahan, Ellen Moore, Ricardo Huerta-Niño, the editors: David Minkus, Deborah Lustig, Christine Trost, the committee: Nezar Alsayyad, Malo Hutson, James Holston and specially my advisor: Teresa Caldeira, for her mentoring and patience.



## Chapter 1: The City Beyond the Skyline: From the Pelican's Gaze to *Cortadito* Politics

A place belongs forever to whoever claims it hardest, remembers it most obsessively, wrenches it from itself, shapes it, renders it, loves it so radically that he remakes it in his own image.

Joan Didion<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

In this dissertation I combine historical research, ethnographic fieldwork, and GIS spatial analysis to consider the tensions between the empowerment of a Hispanic immigrant minority and urban planning processes that shape a city. The immigrant incorporation of Hispanics/Latinos in the US has been understood through citizenship rights for individuals and/or the collective mobilization of social movements bound by ethnicity, culture and identity.<sup>2</sup> My analysis departs from these understandings to examine how a Hispanic immigrant group becomes a demographic majority and gains political control of a major American city through a process I call spatial politics.

I define *spatial politics* as the practices and tactics engaged by social groups in urban space to achieve empowerment. By tracing a history of metropolitan planning in Miami to the present, I consider how *spatial politics* takes place through the use of urban planning, community development, and electoral politics by competing social groups in the City, which compete, and harness political, economic and cultural influence in the backdrop of an urban historical context defined by immigrant empowerment. By combining the analysis of historical planning documents, interviews with different actors shaping planning practice in metropolitan Miami - metropolitan planners, community development practitioners, residents and artists - and participant observations of contemporary community development processes to consider the following question: How does the legacy of immigrant empowerment shape planning processes and acquires new reconfigurations through the use of culture as a place-making strategy in contemporary times.

Over the course of the next five chapters I will investigate how metropolitan planning dealt with the demographic, social and political challenges brought by Cuban immigration to metropolitan Miami. Previous studies on Cuban American immigration, incorporation and assimilation in metropolitan Miami have focused on this community's paradigmatic status as an exemplary "moral enclave" forged by ethnicity, entrepreneurship and political mobilization (Portes & Stepick 1993, Grenier 1992). While important contributions, these analyses have remained a-spatial. They have not considered how metropolitan Miami becomes a contested field of ethnic politics where urban space planning, community development, and place-making practices are reshaped by immigrant political empowerment.

By charting a history of Cuban-American empowerment and its effects in metropolitan Miami from 1980 to 1991, I derive the concept of *spatial politics*. *Spatial politics* refers to practices and tactics carried by different social groups to gain power and assert their claims in the city. As I will demonstrate in this dissertation these practices comprise the use of urban planning methods and knowledge to capacitate a political agenda, the formation of discursive frames to envision alternative political order, the mobilization of votes according to residential concentration, and the composition of political alliances to reconfigure urban territory.

---

<sup>1</sup> This quote is from Didion's book *The White Album Essays* (1979) p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> For an in-depth analysis of immigrant incorporation based on a comparative approach between Canada and US, as well as LA see Bloemraad 2006, and Garcia-Bedolla 2005, 2009, & 2012.

Additionally spatial politics involves the formation of new political jurisdictions such as municipal incorporations and the use of cultural production to achieve physical transformation in urban change. The concept of *spatial politics* allows me to link the history of metropolitan planning in Dade County to the process of Cuban American political empowerment in municipal and county government. This link is important to consider because spatial politics articulates the agency of immigrants in the city. Empowered immigrants and their legacy of social change provide the history, data, and evidence that define Miami.

In this introductory chapter, I set the context of metropolitan Miami through narratives based at two restaurants: the Rusty Pelican and Versailles. These locations offer juxtaposing vignettes capturing the conflicting political ideologies resulting from the effects of immigration to metropolitan Miami. They correspond to competing public spheres in the city and illustrate the key tensions that I will develop in forthcoming chapters. The use of vignettes is meant to illustrate metropolitan Miami as a set of moving frames in conflict where the immigrant life has challenged normative social order common to American cities. This process is repeated in subsequent chapters to derive an understanding of immigrant life in relation to built form and new ways of mapping the city.

In the following section, I discuss the political theater of Amendment Four, a ballot measure focused on comprehensive planning, through an analysis of a political forum where competing political actors debate the relevance of metropolitan planning. This forum provides a stage to observe the challenges faced by metropolitan planning practitioners as well as the micro-political claims carried out by residents in the city's everyday life. These dimensions are important to capture because they demonstrate how metropolitan planning as well as social relations between individuals take place in an urban context where a particular set of immigrants hold a degree of power. This shift of power and influence results in the deployment of a number of rhetorical statements based on claims of corruption, access to better governance, and political repositioning in the forum. I follow by turning to the figure of the empowered immigrant and her spatial politics as a dominant factor shaping metropolitan planning practice and social life in Miami. I conclude in the last section of this introduction by providing an overview of the chapters that will follow the analysis of metropolitan planning history and spatial politics.

### **From The Pelican's Gaze to *Cortadito* Politics**



**Figure 1** View of the Rusty Pelican  
Source: Author



**Figure 2** View of Versailles in Calle Ocho  
Source: Author

The Rusty Pelican stands like an architectural sentinel from another time on a sandy outcrop on an artificial island en route to the municipality of Key Biscayne (Figure 1).<sup>3</sup> Located a conch's throw from the placid waters of Biscayne Bay and the inter-coastal, it is an apt place from which to describe metropolitan Miami.<sup>4</sup> The vast views from the restaurant's private dining hall offer a captivating perspective of the city of Miami's skyline inciting an imagination of what lies beyond.<sup>5</sup> Patrons usually come to the Rusty Pelican to enjoy a typical South Florida dish of fresh seafood. But its premises also provide forums for political debates concerning mayoral and county politics as well as planning policy.

The drive to the Rusty Pelican represents a trip through Miami's most iconic views. The scenery from the mainland to Key Biscayne frames the city's physical transitions. First, you turn east off I-95 to find the entrance to Rickenbacker toll way, one of the few areas in the coastline that offers a full panorama of the Atlantic Ocean. While visitors may imagine metropolitan Miami as a lush tropical landscape defined by turquoise water and white beaches, a large percentage of Dade County's residents in unincorporated areas and mainland municipalities lack public access to Biscayne Bay and its beaches. They remain landlocked from Miami's most coveted landscape amenity by a belt of private properties and gated communities buffering the coastline.<sup>6</sup>

The entrance of the Rickenbacker Causeway is adorned with a kitschy revolving sculpture of Flipper. A throwback to the region's 1960's and 1970's tourist industry, the fiberglass dolphin signals the direction to the Miami Sea-aquarium a mile from the Rusty Pelican. You pay \$1.25 at the Rickenbacker tollgate to enter the expressway into Key Biscayne and speed through a splendidly manicured tropical corridor offering cinematic views of Miami's skyline. This is the telegenic Miami, the city of glossy surfaces and opulent high-rises represented in television, media, tourism, music and art.



**Figure 3** The Miami skyline from the top of the Rickenbacker Bridge. Source: Author.

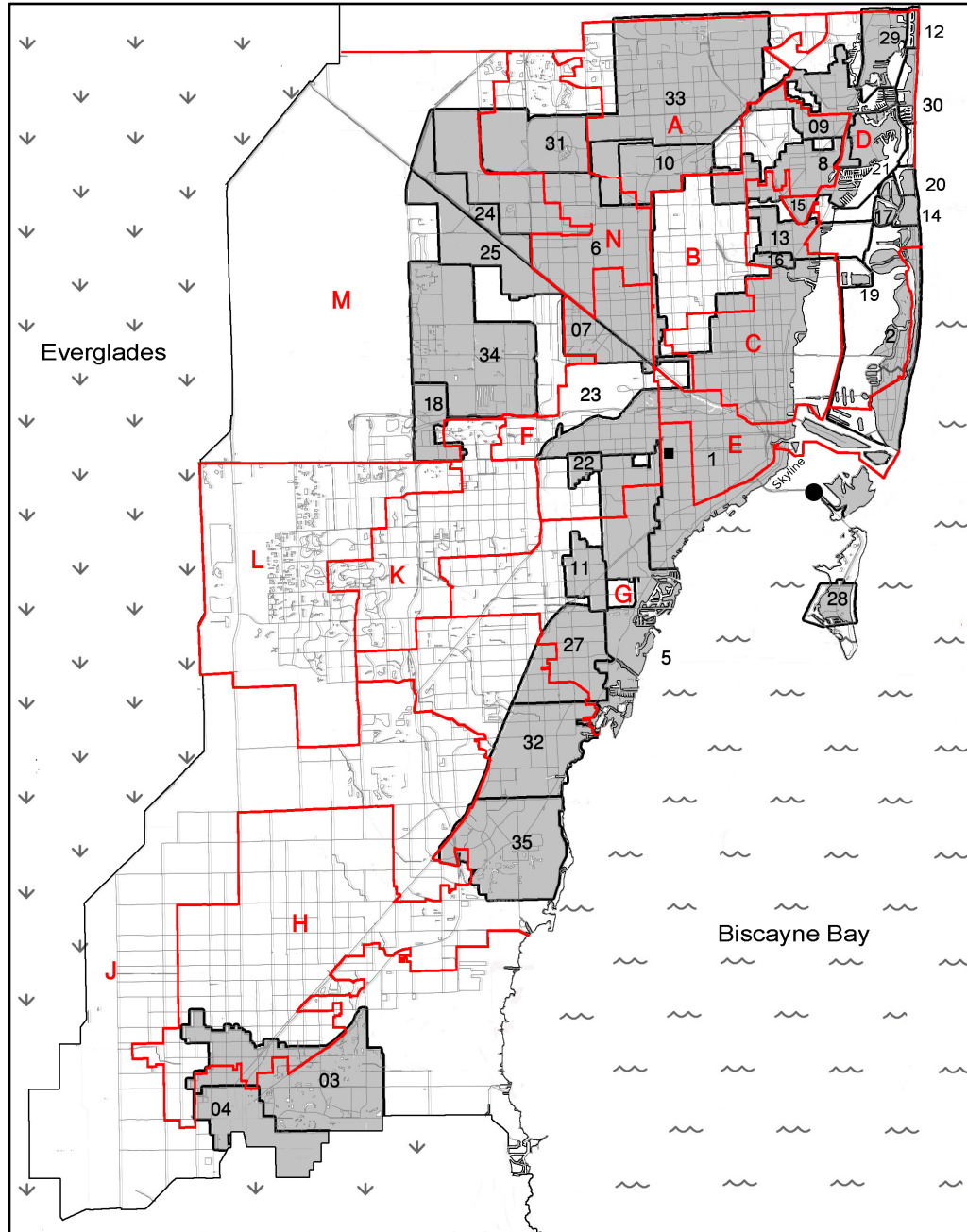
---

<sup>3</sup> In Chapter Four, where I consider the rebellion of municipal incorporations, I delve into more detail on the incorporation of Key Biscayne. The genesis of this municipality served as a catalyst for a wave of municipal incorporations that took place in the 1990's and the early 2000's.

<sup>4</sup> In this dissertation I will use the term metropolitan Miami to refer to all of Dade County: its' Municipalities and unincorporated areas. I will use metropolitan Miami, Dade County and Miami-Dade interchangeably to refer to the same geographic, political and economic region.

<sup>5</sup> In this dissertation I will use the term Miami to refer to the municipality of Miami, Dade County's largest city. I will use the names Miami, municipality of Miami and city of Miami interchangeably. According to the United Census Fact finder, the municipality of Miami has a total population of 399,457. The demographic break down is as follows: Hispanic or Latino 70%, Black or African American 19.2%, Non-Hispanic White or Caucasian 11.9%. The city of Miami has a total area of 35 square miles (land).

<sup>6</sup> The geographic privilege of public beach access belongs to the island municipalities in the inter-coastal, including Key Biscayne and Miami Beach, all the way to North Miami Beach and Sunny Isles.



**Figure 4** Metropolitan Miami. The Rusty Pelican is shown by the black dot. Versailles is shown by the black square. Red lines represent county commission seats. Black lines represent municipal boundaries. Un-shaded areas represent unincorporated Dade County. Shaded areas represent municipalities. 1. Miami, 2. Miami Beach, 3. Homestead, 4. Florida City, 5. Coral Gables, 6. Hialeah, 7. Miami Spring, 8. North Miami, 9. North Miami, 10. Opa-Locka, 11. South Miami, 12. Golden Beach, 13. Miami Shores, 14. Surfside, 15. Biscayne Park, 16. El Portal, 17. Indian Creek Village, 18. Sweetwater, 19. North Bay Village, 20. Bal Harbour, 22. West Miami, 23. Virginia Gardens, 25. Medley, 26. Islandia (no longer incorporated), 27. Pinecrest, 28. Key Biscayne, 29. Aventura, 30. Sunny Isles Beach, 31. Miami Lakes, 32. Palmetto Bay, 33. Miami Gardens, 34. Doral, 35. Cutler Bay. (A) District 1, (B) District 2, (C) District 3, (D) District 4, (E) District 5, (F) District 6, (G) District 7, (H) District 8, (J) District 9, (K) District 10, (L) District 11, (M) District 12, (N) District 13.

On your left, the monumental spine of skyscrapers presents a record of Miami's urban development over three decades (Figure 3). There's the Atlantis, built in the early 1980's with its square opening turning the idea of a courtyard building into a vertical condominium. Next to it, the Santa Maria, built in the mid 1990's, with its exclusive penthouse fitness club on the top floor. Close by, the Four Seasons, built in the mid 2000's, a hotel/condominium/fitness club/financial center and the tallest building in the southeastern United States. Just a block away, the Jade assimilates Havana's *malecon* at its base to integrate the bay front into an urban walk celebrating the city's relationship with ocean. These architectural marvels sprout from the coastline creating an immense architectural wall that blocks the view of metropolitan Miami beyond. On the other side, Dade County's suburban sprawl extends into the Everglades. In between, 200 square miles of suburban communities, historic municipalities, and county commission districts compose an immense puzzle of legal jurisdictions (Figure 4).<sup>7</sup> As you continue you reach the top of the Rickenbacker Bridge.

On the other side of the skyline, where these layers come together and produce social friction, you may find the best *cortadito* in Miami.<sup>8</sup> To get this concoction you need to stop at one of the many window stands attached to local eateries located throughout the city. Almost invisible to the pedestrian due to their non-descript window frontages, these locales serve as areas of encounter for local residents, where daily debate erupts and political positions are sharpened. The most emblematic of them is Versailles (Figure 2) in the neighborhood of Little Havana. Versailles as well as its surrounding neighborhoods makes up the epicenter of Miami's Cuban exiled community. On this side of the skyline, the practice of drinking *cortaditos* is accompanied by an ardent discussion that encapsulates a portrait of the urban politics. Local battles for county and municipal leadership are won and lost at the *cortadito* stand in Versailles over fierce debates concerning the 40 year old Cuban embargo and Fidel Castro.

The Rusty Pelican and Versailles represent theaters of public life in a city where the absence of a grand public space signifies a dearth of civic consciousness for some. These informal gathering spaces exemplify zones where political encounters are staged for the public with different degrees of access.<sup>9</sup>

Growing up in Miami as a native Spanish speaker, Versailles always conjured up the familiar sound of Spanish for me, while the Rusty Pelican seemed foreign, part of a parallel English-speaking social world intersecting the city I lived in. Other islands and distinctive enclaves made up this parallel urban geography, each of them bound by a distinctive set of social relations with specific legacies of disenfranchisement and privilege: the African American enclaves of Liberty City, Overtown and the West Grove, as well as the inter-coastal municipalities of Aventura, Sunny Isles, Palmetto Bay, and Pine Crest. Over the years, I had learned to navigate the their parallel social world with ease, curiosity, and ultimately affection. They had become foreign yet familiar neighborhoods overshadowed by the skyline of Latin American mongrel city I belonged to.

---

<sup>7</sup> Dade County is comprised by a total of 35 municipalities, 13 county commission districts, and two national parks. According to the US census fact finder, the demographic breakdown of Dade County is as follows: total population: 2,496,435, Hispanic 65%, Non-Hispanic White or Caucasian 15.4 %, Black or African American 18.9 %.

<sup>8</sup> A *cortadito* is the Cuban name for a very sweet concoction of sugar, milk and dark coffee.

<sup>9</sup> The discussion of the absence of a grand public space such as Central Park in New York City pre-occupies urban geographer Jan Nijman in his book *Miami Mistress of the Americas* (2011).

## The Political Theater of Amendment Four

I arrived at the Rusty Pelican as part of my ethnographic research to witness an important debate on a controversial ballot measure, Amendment Four. This was a highly contested referendum in the mid-term municipal electoral cycle of 2010. The measure aimed at:

Establishing that before a local government may adopt a new comprehensive land use plan, or amend a comprehensive land use plan, the proposed plan or amendment shall be subject to vote of the electors of the local government by referendum, following preparation by the local planning agency, consideration by the governing body and notice.<sup>10</sup>

The proposal meant that the future of metropolitan Miami, its shape, politics, and development industry, would be determined by an act of direct democracy. The debate was one of many events organized by the Urban Environment League (UEL), one of Miami's most important and prestigious civic organizations. The mission of the UEL is to preserve and promote the value of public space in the city of Miami.<sup>11</sup> Aside from this primary goal, the UEL also serves as an important role in Miami's public sphere. The organization gathers people from Miami's liberal/ progressive political and professional elites to discuss critical issues pertinent to urban development. The explosive rate of urban growth during Miami's first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century defined the agenda of the UEL's events. Included in its roster were topics relating to politics, public space access, historic preservation, gentrification and metropolitan planning.

I was invited to be a spectator at the live debate on Amendment Four after spending the day with Mayor Maurice Ferre. Ferre was the first Hispanic mayor of Miami, holding office from 1973 to 1985. A prominent figure in local politics and Florida's Democratic caucus, Ferre had presided over city administration during some of the most convoluted periods in the city's history: the Cuban boat lift of El Mariel, the influx of Haitian immigrants to the city, the crime spree of Miami's cocaine cowboys, the Liberty City McDuffie riots, and the empowerment of Miami's Cuban community in mayoral and county commission politics. Of Puerto Rican descent and trained as an urban planner, Ferre had also been a key figure in Miami's development boom during the 1980's; a period that set the stage for the current wave of urban development.

That day began early, literally after having a *Cortadito* in Versailles. I met Ferre at nine o'clock in the morning in Calle Ocho in the offices of one of Miami's most listened to radio stations WQBA La Cubanísima. Following a preliminary interview, Ferre had invited me to see an early morning debate on Amendment Four in "Pedaleando con Bernie" a popular morning show heard by the Cuban American exile community. Mayor Ferre, or "Alcalde" as he was known in the streets of Little Havana, didn't hold back any punches during the live broadcast. He proved to be a fierce supporter of Amendment Four in front of Jose Cancela, former president of the Latin Builders Association and CEO of Telemundo Canal 51. Mr. Cancela was an old adversary of Ferre. They had both competed against a list of other candidates in the Dade County mayoral elections of 2004, yet neither came out victorious. Before me I could see the contours of Miami's Hispanic political discourse composed by the conservative pro-business positions of Mr. Cancela, versus the progressive liberal positions of Mr. Ferre.

The morning debate exploded with full rhetorical force as both parties delivered talking points to try to overpower each other. Fresh from an upset in the Democratic primary for the United States senate race against Miami Democrat Kendrick Meek, Ferre used the morning

---

<sup>10</sup> See: <http://floridahometowndemocracy.com/on-the-ballot>.

<sup>11</sup> <http://uel.org/about/>



broadcast to set the day's tone.<sup>12</sup> He made an unprecedented announcement in support of Republican candidate Rick Scott for the Florida's governorship. Having been sidelined by his own party in support of Meek, he called on Florida Hispanics to support the Republican candidate for governor as a protest vote. Over the airwaves of Little Havana, he argued that the Democratic Party should not take him or Hispanics in Florida for granted. According to Ferre, the economic crisis required a dynamic personality like Rick Scott, someone who would provoke new and unprecedented ideas for Floridians. Alex Sink, the Democratic candidate, was not this person.<sup>13</sup>

Later that night, Ferre's political instinct was on display once again before detractors of Amendment Four at the Rusty Pelican. There, he joined former assistant city manager Frank K. Rollason in the "YES" camp against former Dade County District 8 Commissioner Katie Sorensen and former Miami Beach Mayor Neisen Kasdin (1997–2001) in the "NO" camp. Citing recurrent scandals of campaign contributions to the Dade County Commission and surging popular discontent over controversial urban development projects, Ferre and Rollason emphasized the financial power of special interests, the Latin Builder's Association and local developers in determining planning outcomes. Such decisions, they argued, should be placed in the hands of the public. The "Yes" vote would not only stand for the protection of the city's natural amenities, its physical resources and the need for responsible development practices, it would also send a strong message to corrupt politicians. Metropolitan Miami's urban development had to be placed on the hands of its residents for the sake of accountability, transparency and efficiency. Enough was enough.

Sorensen and Kasdin rebutted with force. Their position was clear: The passage of Amendment Four would bring unwarranted hardships to metropolitan planners in Dade County and its municipalities. It would also represent an undemocratic measure, taking power and responsibility from democratically elected representatives by placing control in the hands of the populace. In a metropolitan area where only an estimated 20 percent of the voting electorate participates in important elections, they argued that organizing referendums on every master-plan initiative would prove impractical, costly and inefficient. An ongoing quagmire of legal battles would ensue. And, instead of restraining the financial muscle of special interest groups, monetary contributions would flood local communities to leverage popular support and influence not only comprehensive planning but also local politics. What was needed, argued the "No" camp, was an education on democratic representation and urban development issues rather than a popular uprising. Direct democracy on planning issues was not the answer. They acknowledged that Amendment Four had good intentions, but said it was the wrong tool for the wrong problems.

As I sat in the back of the dining hall, listening and writing as fast as I could, details emerged before me and questions started to form. The opposing views highlighted the tensions defining Miami's metropolitan planning: the neutrality of planning work, the power of development interests driving urban growth, the ethnic undertones of urban politics and the strange way that a democratic measure was conceived as undemocratic by some of the strongest defenders of democracy in metropolitan Miami. What was really in contention before me and

---

<sup>12</sup> Kendrick Meek went on to lose the senate race for the state to Tea Party Republican candidate Marco Rubio. See: <http://enight.elections.myflorida.com/contestdetails.aspx?con=120000>.

<sup>13</sup> The Governorship of Florida went to Rick Scott. Dade County as well as the other major metropolitan areas - Orlando, Gainesville, Tallahassee and St. Petersburg/Tampa Bay - voted in favor of the Democratic contender Alex Sink. In the aftermath of the election, Ferre became part of Scott's gubernatorial transition team. See: <http://enight.elections.myflorida.com/contestdetails.aspx?con=160000>.

how did these positions form? Arguably, such tensions were present in any city and prevalent in the arena of urban politics, yet in Miami the shifting positions of these political players, like the provisional public spaces of the Rusty Pelican and *cortadito* politics, became ambiguous. Katie Sorensen, a traditionally fierce supporter of community rights stood against Amendment Four and its imperative of direct democracy. Maurice Ferre, a once visionary mayor who led the city during the development boom of the 1980's, now criticized those same forces, their actors and their influences.

While widely promoted as a public event, most of the people who filled the dining hall of the Rusty Pelican that night were members of the UEL. This was an older crowd composed of Anglos and a few white Hispanics of Cuban descent. There were no African Americans, Haitian Americans or non-white Hispanics present. There were also several metropolitan planners from Dade County in the room, not even flinching or showing emotion at any of the points fired between the debaters. The only reaction came during an accusation thrown by a man wearing a "Yes on 4" shirt, who suddenly stood up and called on Katie Sorensen to reveal how much developers had paid her to shape her position. When this happened the metropolitan planners reacted by showing support for Katie Sorensen – who was against the measure - by booing and asking the man to sit down and keep decorum.

As the debate unraveled UEL members were served dinner if they had paid the fee. I did not eat, instead choosing to sit at in a row of chairs that had been set up for the non-eating public in the back. Among the tables, I could recognize some prominent members from important grassroots organizations in Miami; lawyers, environmentalists and activists who followed the debate with attentive care. Next to me a man in his late 40 or early 50's sat quietly with his arms folded. We were the only members of Miami's non-eating "public" in the UEL dinner. I was not surprised. You needed time, a car, \$1.25 for a toll, and \$20.00 for dinner at the Rusty Pelican.

The man noticed my frantic writing. During a lull in the exchange, he turned to me and asked what I was doing. I explained that I was a graduate student from Berkeley and briefly told him about my research on urbanism and planning. Noticing a perplexed and rather suspicious look on his face, I switched tone and words. I pointed at the skyline and started to speak about the suburbs in unincorporated areas on the other side of the skyline and the questions regarding immigration, planning and urbanism that lay beyond. At this, he nodded with attentive curiosity.

"Where are you from... you have an accent." He said. After living in the United States most of my life I knew how to respond. "I was born in Peru," I said. "But I grew up in here, so I am a Peruvian-American-Miamian. I came here when I was 11, went to junior high and high-school here and then to college at the University of Miami." I continued, attempting to stake a symbolic claim on the skyline before us. He nodded in silence. Seizing on the opportunity for exchange, I asked, "So what do you do when you are not checking out the debates of the UEL?" He immediately proceeded by taking out his hand from his pocket and extended a business card, "I do cultural tourism, I am interested in bringing people to less recognized areas in Miami, like Calle Ocho and the like." "Watch out," I replied, "I may ask you for an interview one day".

"I look forward to it," the man continued as the debate reached another rhetorical peak before us. At that moment I thought about the intersection of our conversation and the debate. This reflection brought me back to the top of the Rickenbacker Bridge, where you can visualize a map of metropolitan Miami. I thought about the man's goals and my own, in this room and this city. I saw how he saw the same space I was seeing and laid claims to it, like I did. I thought about the competing legitimacies of our gazes and how we produced them. After an instant, the man leaned in to me as if he wanted to share a secret. "I haven't been in the Rusty Pelican for at



least 30 years.... since my high-school prom.” Pointing at the skyline he concluded, “It has changed so much... it never looks the same.”<sup>14</sup>

### **Metropolitan Planning and the Empowered Immigrant**

The debate over Amendment Four illustrates the central struggles that define the practice of metropolitan planning in Miami today. These tensions are bound by the re-alignments of political allegiances addressing shifting power dynamics in urban politics, community participation and the definition of the public interest in the work of metropolitan planners.

At one level, these tensions become visible in public forums, where concerns over the Miami’s future urban development and metropolitan planning are intertwined with the effects of political corruption before an interested citizenry. Yet, they are also characterized by smaller inter-personal exchanges, such as the conversation I had with the cultural tourism promoter. In these parallel encounters performances claiming identity, authenticity and culture form an arena of everyday micro-politics.<sup>15</sup>

In order to understand the Amendment Four debate, we need an understanding of how the history of Cuban and Latin American immigration to metropolitan Miami has resulted in formation of new arenas of political conflict between metropolitan planners and residents seeking control of the city. These conflicts involve government institutions, their branches and actors; Dade County government as well as the Planning and Zoning division, municipal and county leaders, but also local and immigrant residents who mobilize, vote and campaign to acquire political agency. They, as I, lay claims to the city according to, but also in reaction against, a legacy of immigrant empowerment.

Empowered immigrants are the main protagonists of the Amendment Four debate. But they are not present on that stage. Their presence however, is underlined by the re-positioning of the debaters, by the accusations of corruption thrown at Katie Sorensen; a stalwart defender of community rights, by Ferre’s preparatory morning circuit along radio stations in Calle Ocho, by the need to question the democratic ideal of giving local communities the decision-making power in planning processes and by a call for a better, more responsible government in Dade County Spatial politics is articulated through historical circumstances, demographic growth, , and the creation of discourses concerning the value of culture in Metropolitan Miami to empower specific ethnic communities. Indeed, while the Rusty Pelican exists in a parallel social world differing from the Latin American mongrel city I knew so well, it lies within a larger social sphere where immigration and Latin American identity remain the normative standards of difference.

The argument I would like to develop in this dissertation relates to that absence of those protagonists. To understand the arguments in this debate we have to consider a protagonist not mentioned explicitly in the discussion: immigrants and their power. In the course of the last half century, and especially after the 1980s, Cuban Americans, have become central to Miami’s politics. They acquired this role through a combination of practices and tactics that I refer to as “spatial politics” and will study in the forthcoming chapters.

---

<sup>14</sup> This exchange took place in October 15<sup>th</sup> 2010. Amendment Four eventually was defeated by an overwhelming majority: 67% No versus 33% Yes. See: <http://enight.elections.myflorida.com/contestdetails.aspx?con=900400>.

<sup>15</sup> In chapter five, I will go into more detail regarding the practice of these micro-politics and the negotiations of identity by considering how artists produce cultural value to access status, capital and resources in the arts district of Wynwood.

## Overview of Chapters

In the following chapters, I develop a history of metropolitan planning in Dade County from 1958 to the present to decipher the trajectory, mappings and processes of immigrant empowerment. My aim is to understand how immigration has shaped metropolitan planning in Miami and in turn to analyze how metropolitan planning decisions shaped immigrant empowerment in the city.

I start in Chapter Two, by drawing on archival evidence from Dade County's Department of Planning and Zoning to develop a history of the birth of metropolitan planning and the two-tier system of government. I examine how metropolitan planners historically confronted demographic growth in Miami, leading to an unresolved set of exclusions that eventually paved the way for the empowerment of the Cuban American community. By engaging a critique of Miami's current historiography I argue that Miami's history has emphasized developers, architects and entrepreneurs as the main actors of urban transformation without a consideration of immigrant life. This trend has disregarded the effects of social change in the city and political power in urban development. However, a series of waves of demographic growth comprised of the continuing influx of immigrants has traditionally defined metropolitan Miami's exclusionary urban development patterns before and after the birth of metropolitan planning in the early 1960's. While the "Home Rule charter" was meant to provide a centralized system of regional government that would confront Miami's prognosticated population growth and moderate urban development in unincorporated areas, its two-tier governance structure continued the spatial and political disenfranchisement of residents in unincorporated areas. The results of demographic change starting in the early 1960's in the aftermath of the Cuban revolution lay the groundwork for a period of Cuban American spatial politics that followed in the 1980's and its counter mobilizations in the 1990's.

I continue in chapter three by investigating how the expertise and knowledge of metropolitan planners was used by Cuban Americans to claim political power at the municipal and county level. I analyze archival evidences from Dade County's Department of Planning and Zoning, interviews with retired planners and practicing community development specialists, and maps of demographic change and housing concentration, to develop the concept of *spatial politics*. By reflecting upon the experiences of metropolitan planners in the aftermath of the 1980 Mariel Boatlift, I argue that Cuban American spatial politics can be understood through several dimensions – crisis, community development and empowerment. Throughout this period Metropolitan planners dealt with the Mariel Boatlift by producing demographic data that facilitated the agenda of a Cuban American community development system benefitting Cuban Americans and Cuban refugees through public policy, economic development and housing. This system assisted the concentration of voting blocs in Miami's ethnic enclave of Little Havana, which enabled the empowerment of Cuban American leadership in the city of Miami. The resulting demographic concentrations brought forth by the Mariel Boatlift mobilized Hispanics and African Americans in Dade County to forge an inter-ethnic alliance and sue Dade County to obtain greater political representation according to demographic changes brought by the effects of immigration. The decision of the *Meek v. Metropolitan Dade County* lawsuit re-drew commission district boundaries, establishing a new political geography in metropolitan Miami based on the power of ethnic minorities, with the Cuban American community at the helm. Metropolitan planners were once again involved in this process by drawing the new commission districts.

In chapter four, I continue to analyze the repercussions of social change in Miami, by investigating how local Anglo and African American residents countered the empowerment of Cuban Americans and how metropolitan planning practitioners dealt with such mobilizations. I expand the concept of spatial politics to consider how it involves not only a change of leadership in municipal and county government, but also the parceling of new territories of political control through municipalities. I use archival data from the Dade County Planning Department and interviews with retired planning practitioners to argue that starting in 1991 a rebellion of municipal incorporations swept throughout unincorporated Dade County led by *communities of interest*: insurgent resident groups seeking secession from Dade County on the grounds of government incapacity and the unfair dispersal of tax funds for local services. These mobilizations were based on the desired control of zoning, fire and police protection and carried an undertone of ethnic bias against immigrant communities in unincorporated Dade County. The Cuban American community perceived the rebellion of municipal incorporations as a backlash to their newly acquired position of power based on ethnic prejudice and intolerance. In order to manage the wave of incorporations and resolve the disenfranchisement embedded in the two-tier system of governance, county leaders and metropolitan planners established Community Councils as local governance units focused on planning, zoning and budgetary provisions. Community Councils, however, became training grounds for new ethnic leadership across Dade County.

In chapter five, I consider how the context of spatial politics affects urban development, urbanism and place making in contemporary times. Building upon the “post-Cuban” cultural analysis of George Yúdice, I draw on interviews with community development specialists, participant observations of the artistic community of Wynwood and the Community Development Corporation of Opa-Locka to advance a comparative ethnography between two sites: The art district of Wynwood in the city of Miami and the municipality of Opa-Locka in northwest Dade County. Through these observations I analyze how cultural production enables local groups - white developers and African American community development specialists - to gentrify neighborhoods by deploying the value of culture as a place-making strategy. I argue that the deployment of culture as a value is carried out by the formation of a discourse of “absent urbanisms” framing poor, ethnic areas in Dade County as illegitimate examples of urbanism. It under-qualifies the culture of suburban and urban sites of immigrant settlement, and emphasizes the value of cultural production in new sites of urban development such as the art district of Wynwood and the municipality of Opa-Locka. Through this process cultural production is re-valued to enable place-making strategies carried out by artists, developers and community development specialists who are involved in real estate development and the global art market. In Wynwood this process is defined by discursive frames that engender a political community, authenticity and identity. In the municipality of Opa-Locka this process differs through the support of federal neighborhood revitalization funds in funding artistic and the deployment of discursive frames alluding to a pan-African multiculturalism.

I conclude this dissertation by considering how *spatial politics* is representative of an effervescent political arena comprised of contesting groups with competing interests, agendas and visions for Miami. I place this contribution within the study of the urban an planning history of Hispanics in US cities and the importance of cities as sites of new configurations of citizenship.

## Chapter 2: Measuring Democracy by the Width of the Sidewalk: The History of Metropolitan Planning (1958 – 1975)

### Measuring Democracy by the Width of the Sidewalk



**Figure 5** Stephen P. Clark Center. Source: <http://www.danlepore.com/case-studies/stone-construction/miami-dade-centerstephen-p-clark-government-center>

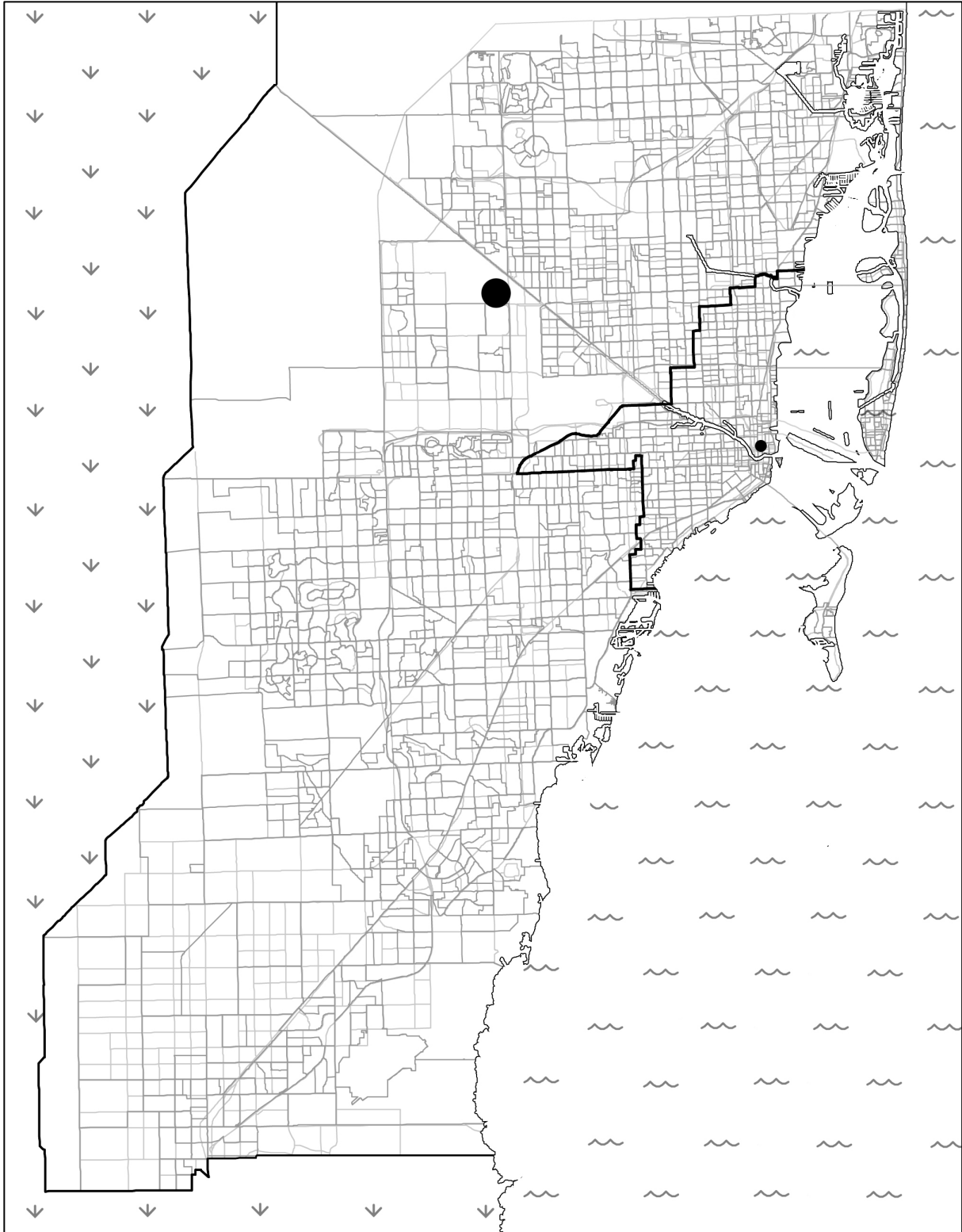
From its exterior, the sleek form and monolithic scale of the Stephen P. Clark building (Figure 5) frames a vertical landmark for pedestrians in downtown Miami and drivers speeding along I-95. Built in 1985, the tower once exemplified a unique engineering achievement in South Florida by echoing innovations first developed in the structural scheme of the World Trade Center Towers. Within the curtain wall envelope of stone panels and horizontal glazed windows designed to sustain the fierce winds that regularly target South Florida during hurricane season (Progressive Architecture, 1979), the headquarters of Dade County government can be found. The many offices of county commissioners, public records, planning & zoning, transportation, public works, and a number of other metropolitan agencies are housed throughout its many floors.<sup>16</sup>

While the political significance of the Stephen P. Clark tower as a hub for regional government cannot be ignored, its location in downtown Miami has historically represented a peculiar problem for residents and politicians alike. Residents in unincorporated and incorporated areas regularly come to the building to seek permits, attend public meetings and meet with their elected county representatives and their bureaucratic entourages. Yet the tower serves a legal jurisdiction that exists outside the boundaries of the municipality where it is located. Stephen P.

Clark is inside the city of Miami but miles away from most of the residents its many floors aim to represent (Figure 6). The issue of proximity to, and representation for, the people of unincorporated Dade County has historically plagued the work of Stephen P. Clark's civil servants, particularly the work of metropolitan planners. The building is seen as a distant beacon descriptive of unresponsive and detached county government.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> <http://miamidade.gov/wps/portal/Main/departments>

<sup>17</sup> This information is derived from an interview with Lucy Silverman. Lucy Silverman is a pseudonym I use to protect the identity of an informant. She is a retired metropolitan planner.



**Figure 6** The location of Stephen P. Clark center in the municipality of Miami (small circle in black outline) in relation to the Palmetto station in unincorporated Dade County (large circle). Source: Author.

I considered this perception as I arrived for another interview at the Dade County Planning and Zoning Department (DP&Z).<sup>18</sup> Located on the 13<sup>th</sup> floor of the building, the DP&Z is a compartmentalized maze of cubicle partitions, replete with cabinets, shelves and stored boxes. Eventually I found the community planning section, where I was met with an unexpected greeting: “I am sorry Mr. Burga but Mr. Clark is busy”.<sup>19</sup> Behind the receptionist, several DP&Z planners darted back and forth, appearing and disappearing between cubicles. Hands carried papers, binders, pens and engineering scales. Bruce Clark, my interviewee, held an oversized piece of paper that looked like base plan of some sort.<sup>20</sup>

I could immediately tell that I had come at a bad time, but felt fortunate nonetheless. In the short time of doing fieldwork, I had learned that sometimes the best interviews happen at the wrong time; when people act, do or say, as if one is not present or they don’t want you to be there. During this particular time, the DP&Z had become a stage for an event that was outside the authorized script of what I could see. I turned back to the receptionist, a young Cuban woman in her 20’s and immediately switched to Spanish “Entro y salgo, solamente quiero saludar a Bruce”.<sup>21</sup> She acquiesced.

As I got closer to the action, I noticed that several planners were congregating over a table inside a cubicle. They drew over a master base plan. Multiple hands armed with fine point markers drew frantic lines over a large piece of tracing paper on the plan. Bruce Clark, my contact, led the effort. He anchored the discussion and orchestrated the group’s collective efforts like a newscaster narrating a crucial game in the final series of a sports season. One planner worked on figuring out street widths, another openly debated the height of an imagined three-dimensional form and its set back, and a third calculated the slope of handicap ramp. There were disagreements over what to put on paper, and how to best represent graphic solutions, but the act of drawing didn’t stop under the guidance of Bruce’s commanding voice.

This scene was a small episode illustrating how Dade County’s DP&Z planners worked.<sup>22</sup> I felt exhilarated by the rare opportunity to witness them in action. Usually, their activities were hidden behind closed doors or stood out during public meetings regarding zoning ordinances and variances held at the county commission. This time I was witnessing the messiness of their process. Bruce noticed me standing watching the action. I waved and gave him a thumbs-up. Looking deliberate in the midst of the frantic moment he responded by giving me the thumbs up back and saying: “Democracy is measured by the width of the sidewalk”.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Dade County Planning and Zoning serves un-incorporated areas of metropolitan Miami.

<sup>19</sup> Bruce Clark is a pseudonym I use to protect the identity of a Dade County metropolitan planner. He is one of six planners I interviewed during my visits and observations at the DP&Z.

<sup>20</sup> In planning and architectural language a base plan corresponds to an original underlay drawing that is used in the production of new design overlays.

<sup>21</sup> Translation: “I’ll just go in an out, I just want to say hi to Bruce”.

<sup>22</sup> As alluded to in a previous footnote, Dade County’s DP&Z is charged with Dade’s County’s 200 square mile territory. Dade County planners are responsible for the 37 census-designated places, which correspond to unincorporated areas within this territory. They regularly coordinate their efforts with municipal planners belonging to the 35 municipalities in metropolitan Miami – incorporated areas. These coordinating activities include the cooperation in *charrettes* to develop areas studies, the coordination of the Dade County Open Space and Parks Masterplan, the coordination of variances affecting the comprehensive development master plan, and the evaluation of possible subdivision annexations to municipalities. For additional information see:

<http://www.miamidade.gov/planning/cdmp.asp>

<sup>23</sup> This statement resembles the rhetoric of Enrique Peñalosa who referring to Jane Jacobs focuses on the connection between civic attitudes, democracy and urban design. Bruce’s statement can also be understood as the co-option of

This apparently random statement struck me. Suddenly the lines over the tracing paper acquired a strange political dimension. Why and how did democracy become connected to the activity of planning a sidewalk for DP&Z planners at that moment?

I started to interact with the group by congratulating them on their effort and inquiring about the details of what they were doing. At stake was the alteration of an existing proposal originally led by the public works division: the introduction of a 5 by 30 foot strip of concrete sidewalk on the perimeter of the newly constructed Palmetto metro-rail station located close to the urban growth boundary in an unincorporated area between the municipalities of Medley and Doral.<sup>24</sup> Found on the extreme western corner of Dade County – about 10 miles from the Stephen P. Clark Center - the Palmetto station was the last stop of the Miami metro-rail system.<sup>25</sup>

Bruce and his team had obtained a copy of the station's proposal to include the sidewalk as a last minute change to the plans. Huddled together with time running out, the community planning section had assembled a quick reaction team to ensure the placement of this essential infrastructure - and thus its implementation - before the public works department submitted the plans to the presiding county commission for official review. If the sidewalk didn't make it into the plans, it would never be realized.

The actions and statements of Bruce and his team during this scene exemplify many of the dominant tropes that have been established in critiques of planning practice: the fetish of graphic representation, the homogenization of difference, and the imperative of physical determinism to include a few.<sup>26</sup> But the furtive spoken connection between democracy and Dade County Planning acquired importance to me because it provided a clue about a central political tension present in the ethos of metropolitan planning in Dade County. This ethos implicated the actions and utterances of planners and was embedded with historical dimensions that gave meaning to their work at that moment.

Their actions did not correspond to the deployment of a grandiose master-planned vision, instead it represented a rather discrete alteration rendering how planners were limited and sequestered. In their practice, the inclusion of the sidewalk symbolized an important aspect of how DP&Z planners carried out their mission in the name of the county's public interest. For Bruce and his team, planning was a tool for the public good on behalf of metropolitan governance.<sup>27</sup> They justified their actions by pointing to the need to provide basic infrastructural services that would enable "walkability"<sup>28</sup> for residents in a yet to be built development at the edge of Miami's urban growth boundary. With a reduced vision of planning and markers at hand, Bruce and his team gave meaning to their work, their roles and politics in the city where they lived.

With further analysis, I would find out that their professional focus arose from a reduced utopianism informed by a set of historical tensions that have shaped the history of metropolitan planning. These included a legacy of demographic growth that has historically defined social

---

this frame to legitimize his professional role in a social context heavily influenced by Hispanics. In essence he is projecting his position in relation to my presence.

<sup>24</sup> For information on Doral see: <http://www.cityofdoral.com>. For information on Medley see: <http://www.townofmedley.com/index.php>

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/rail\\_palmetto.asp](http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/rail_palmetto.asp)

<sup>26</sup> See Holston 1989, Scott 1998 and Berman 1988.

<sup>27</sup> As I will explain in this chapter this mission started with the introduction of the two-tier system of government in the early 1960's.

<sup>28</sup> Walkability remains an elusive concept to define. For Dade County planners it refers to capacity for pedestrians to inhabit planned spaces. For a full discussion see Hutabarat 2009.

change in Miami, as well as political frictions derived from the institutionalization of the two-tier system of government in the 1960's.

The scene I witnessed at DP&Z provided a microscopic window into the historical evolution of Dade County planning, but also metropolitan Miami as a new political system was deployed over its vast territory. Bruce Clark and his fellow planners were the latest actors in the development of a planning practice within this transformative context. The trajectory of their practice – its values, norms, challenges, crises and failures and successes – has infused a claim for legitimacy and self-awareness that define the ethos of metropolitan planners today. The history of how “democracy can be measured by the width of the sidewalk”, in essence the history of metropolitan planning in Miami is explored in this chapter.

### **The History of Metropolitan Planning in Miami**

In this chapter, I develop a history of metropolitan planning in Miami – the planning of Dade County - to expose the social and political tensions that have shaped planning techniques. Based on participant observations such as the one that I have described, archival data and interviews, I argue that metropolitan planning represents an innovation in Miami's urban development history that remains filled with unresolved questions about political representation and inclusion in governance and planning decisions.

The mission of metropolitan planning – the provision, allocation and management of physical resources to enable regional equity - stands in contrast with historical urban development patterns that have defined the incorporation of earlier municipalities. Metropolitan planning was introduced to South Florida in 1958 through the passage of the Home Rule charter and the establishment of the two-tier system government (Sofen 1961). This measure established metropolitan planning within county government and deployed new conceptions and visions for urban planning over an existing sprawling city and its growing diverse populace. The purpose of metropolitan planning and the government it represents was to manage the region's diverse resources and its communities through a federated system linking the newly formed governmental jurisdiction of Dade County with the existing jurisdictions of municipalities.

The introduction and development of metropolitan planning practice during the 1960's over a territory originally shaped by a history of city boosterism, speculative development, and segregated communities, made the institutionalization of planning techniques a process defined by continuous political conflicts and the absence of a top down approach that characterized modernistic planning techniques. Since the inception of the Two Tier System, metropolitan planners have confronted a central problem: the disenfranchisement of residents in unincorporated areas and their claims for political representation in planning and government decision-making.

To understand this condition, I develop a history of metropolitan planning in three sections.<sup>29</sup> In the first section I frame the contribution of writing a history of metropolitan planning by evaluating portions of Miami's historiography focused on the built environment. In this section I formulate a critique of the dominant tropes that claim normative status in Miami's planning history. In the second section I cover an 80-year trajectory focused on the tensions between municipal planning and metropolitan planning. While this is a long period to encompass, I focus on dominant themes that have defined metropolitan planning practice: exclusions,

---

<sup>29</sup> The goal of this chapter is not to provide an exhaustive history of metropolitan planning in Miami, but rather to elucidate the most relevant historical tensions that provide a backdrop to the period of social change and political empowerment in consider I Chapters Three and Four.



demographic change and the emergence of metropolitan government. To articulate this history, I center my analysis on a set of master plans developed from the early 1960's to 1975 that encapsulated the intentions and concerns of metropolitan planning practitioners. I conclude, in the third section, by assessing how the two-tier system of government led to an unresolved political tension between centralized county government and residents in unincorporated areas seeking political representation in government as well as planning decisions. These tensions would eventually have deep implications for metropolitan planning practitioners during the 1980's and the 1990's, when drastic changes in metropolitan Miami's demographic makeup led to the empowerment of Cuban Americans and the counter-mobilizations of *communities of interest*.

### **Methods: Fieldwork in the DP&Z**

Over the course of fieldwork, I became aware of the need to relate observations in the field with the study of history to make sense of utterances such as Bruce Clark's statements became normalized discourses. This approach was not constrained to the voices of metropolitan planners, it included the voices of residents living in a variety of locations, fitting different profiles and carrying out practices in the different spaces of the city. The included memories of conversations with Cuban American *Marielitos*, the speech of an African American community development specialist working in the municipality of Opa-locka, the voice of a Hispanic single mother living in a gated community in unincorporated Dade County, and the monologue of a young artist working in the art district of Wynwood among others. The imperative to decipher these intersecting voices by understanding how planning enabled – or disabled - democracy and how residents claimed that democracy, allowed me to question metropolitan planning practice and consider how different types of residents defined by racial, ethnic, economic and legalistic – citizenship - differences were excluded or claimed inclusion through the use of urban space.

My dissertation research started with a general search of physical traces, places and people that symbolized major social, political and economic tensions at play in Miami's urbanism and planning. As this process developed over months, the DP&Z became a key site of participant observation and data collection. I conducted interviews with six DP&Z planners from the community planning, metropolitan planning, planning research division and the urban design center (UDC). Their focus included demographic research, community planning, urban design and also the management of community councils. The oldest one had worked in metropolitan planning since at least 1973. The youngest among them belonged to a generation that made part of my cohort in the master's program at the University of Miami School of Architecture in the 1980's. Together this group of informants represented a diverse collection of opinions and positions that witnessed the tensions that urban planning underwent from the 1980's until contemporary times. In its premises, I could see how metropolitan planning functioned in a comprehensive fashion by observing not only how individuals worked and made sense of their work, but also how the political decisions of county commissioners influenced the development and implementation of planning documents.

Each sub-department at DP&Z is tasked with a particular facet of urban development at the metropolitan scale. Metropolitan planning considers “long range and short range planning activities”<sup>30</sup> including coordination with the comprehensive development master plan (CDMP)<sup>31</sup>,

---

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.miamidade.gov/planzone/planning\\_metro.asp](http://www.miamidade.gov/planzone/planning_metro.asp)

<sup>31</sup> The CDMP is Dade County's blue print for urban development: <http://www.miamidade.gov/planning/cdmp.asp>

countywide studies and concurrency with public facilities. The planning research division<sup>32</sup> carries out demographic, geographic and economic studies to inform adequate forecasts for future urban growth. This sub-section also provides data to the public and public officials including reports to county commissioners who make decisions on new infrastructures and funding. Community Planning<sup>33</sup> is in charge of specific “study” areas in the unincorporated county and the management of *charrettes*; the main participatory planning method for area studies.<sup>34</sup> And lastly, the urban design center<sup>35</sup> functions as a small unit within the DP&Z in charge of developing graphic reports, proposals for new communities and standards of land use categories and zoning recommendations for area studies.

During my sessions at the DP&Z, I observed how metropolitan planners dealt with social, political and economic obstacles in the realization of their practice. These challenges included lawsuits from community groups and Miami’s construction industry pushing for changes in CDMP’s land use system, campaigns by local developers to expand the urban growth boundary into the Everglades National Park, and the constant disregard of DP&Z recommendations by county commissioners.

While the work of metropolitan planning was deeply embedded in the function of metropolitan governance, metropolitan planners considered their work apolitical. They imagined their primary role as stalwarts of the integrity of regional governance. This role was achieved by producing planning policies that prevented the further spatial and ethnic fragmentation of Dade County, by developing regulations that kept the urban growth boundary (UGB) in check. Their actions were guided by a planning ideology packed with contemporary normative categories: community, walk-ability, sustainability, mixed-use, and public space to name a few. But they also operated in relation to statements such as: “measuring democracy...,” to legitimize a type of political capital in the specific context of Miami.<sup>36</sup>

Besides their roles as managers, regulators and visionaries of Dade County’s physical infrastructure, metropolitan planners perceived themselves in conflict with local communities whose interests trumped the imperative of comprehensive planning. Metropolitan planners spoke of the challenges they faced with residents lacking civic awareness. For them this meant that they didn’t behave or act like citizens concerned with the public interest of the region. Instead they chose to constantly elect political figures to the county commission based on ethnicity.<sup>37</sup> This particular claim stood out through recurrent statements made about the Latin Builders

---

<sup>32</sup> [http://www.miamidade.gov/planzone/planning\\_research.asp](http://www.miamidade.gov/planzone/planning_research.asp)

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.miamidade.gov/planzone/planning\\_comm.asp](http://www.miamidade.gov/planzone/planning_comm.asp)

<sup>34</sup> On two occasions I was able to observe *charrettes* in which metropolitan planners worked with local residents in order to produce visions of future urban development scenarios in unincorporated Dade County. The predominance of *charrettes* represent an interesting phenomenon in the DP&Z because they are directly related to the strong presence of professionals with New Urbanist credentials in upper level management positions in planning departments across Dade County. This is due in large part to the University of Miami’s School of Architecture influence in the metropolitan area as well as the presence of a high concentration of New Urbanist firms that produce a particular type of design professional.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.miamidade.gov/district09/urban-design.asp>

<sup>36</sup> I must note that while such statements were made in direct reference to the presence of Hispanics in Miami, particularly Cuban Americans, planners of Hispanic origin also expressed them.

<sup>37</sup> I present a specific example of how politics influenced the work of planners in the next chapter when I consider how county districts were redrawn by metropolitan planners following the decision of *Meek v. Metropolitan Dade County* according to Hispanic and African American ethnic constituencies. In Chapter Four, I further explore how these ethnic affiliations forged *communities of interest*, which countered the empowerment of Cuban Americans and influenced the work of metropolitan planners.

Association, a Cuban American construction guild which lobbied county commissioners with promises of campaign funding to influence land uses in the CDMP and challenge the limits of the city's UGB.<sup>38</sup> In this regard, metropolitan planners emphasized the need to maintain the integrity of the CDMP by developing master plans that prescribed density, mixed uses, and transportation nodes. These planning strategies would control future increases in population, recurrent waves of speculative development, and the influence of ethnic politics that disputed the decade-long established principles of the CDMP.

The set of tensions exemplified by the observations I carried out in the DP&Z permitted me to consider how urban politics predisposed the practice of metropolitan planning. In the next section I move into an analysis of Miami's historiography to evaluate how certain frames of historical analysis avoid a critical reading of the city to undermine the role of politics in defining metropolitan planning.

### **Developing a Planning Historiography**

With the exception of key figures,<sup>39</sup> Miami's historians ignore planning practice and the question of politics. Instead, much of what has been published regarding planning is derived from a historical scholarship of Miami's exemplary architectures and recounts history as determined outcomes where the role of politics and power are not questioned. The work of Shulman (Shulman & Lejeune 2001, Shulman 2009) and Culot and LeJeune (Culot et al. 1992) for example provides an excellent introduction on the modernization of Miami at the mid-century, but it considers this period through a set of building typologies and public infrastructures. This approach emphasizes the value of design over a more critical perspective. One must search for fragments of planning history within architectural/urban histories that emphasize built form and morphological analysis over the critical interpretations of social, political, and economic relations that produce and/or transform urban space.<sup>40</sup> This approach is so pervasive it frames a "built-form" oriented history that circulates throughout local academic discourses and professional best practices. Examples of this approach include the official historical preservation history of Dade County written in the early 1980's (Dade County Office of Economic and Community Development 1982). This way of making history influences a value judgment on "good planning" v. "bad planning" by providing a framework of knowledge with

---

<sup>38</sup> In Chapter Four I delve into more detail on the activities of the Latin Builders association and their economic contributions to urban politics in Metropolitan Miami.

<sup>39</sup> I am referring to the academic work of Raymond Muhl, Paul George and Melanie Shell-Weiss, which I will cover in this chapter.

<sup>40</sup> Miami's historiography needs to be interrogated through the search of unrecognized archives that have remained on the margins of dominant historical discourses that have monopolized Miami's urban and planning history. Archival work in Miami is challenging due to the accessibility of records. These data can be found in a number of selected archives dispersed throughout the city and represent a vast and fragmented inventory of catalogued and non-catalogued entries, reports, publications, promotional documents, political statements and journalistic stories. Entering and leaving their spaces requires foreground knowledge about how to find them and the privilege of mobility to get to them. To access them there were costs involved as well as limitations on viewing materials. The Miami Herald's archive is a prime example. Once authorization is provided, one can only access records that go back as far as 1982. In a similar fashion City of Miami documentation is stored in an off site facility which is inaccessible to the public making ordinances, planning minute meetings and other public records difficult to obtain. My focus on a distinctive period ranging from the incorporation of Miami in 1896 through the establishment of the two-tier system of government and the development of planning practice into the 1970's led me to different archives: The University of Miami School of Architecture, the University of Miami Richter Library, the Dade County Black Archives, the Dade County Central Library at Government Center, the Florida International University Library and the South Florida Historical Museum's Special Collections.

historical categories and references (Dade County Office of Economic and Community Development 1982). Furthermore, this approach frames the past into a series of stable historical vignettes based on dominant figures, styles and places that disregards a historical analysis interlacing Miami's social history politics and urban spaces.<sup>41</sup>

Important in its own right for its focus on buildings and structures, Miami's planning history is mostly based on architectural critique in the form of monographs (Culot & Lejeune 1992, Shulman 2000, Shulman 2009). Starting in the early 1980's, Miami's history becomes a field of political claims resulting from a series of events that point to the urgent need for historic preservation in Dade County (Dade County 1982). Miami's emerging importance as an international banking center (Patricios 1994), the destruction of historic structures brought upon by a turn of the decade construction boom, and the success of the Miami Beach historic preservation movement focus attention on Miami's built environment as a cause of pride and basis of identity. The entitlement of history becomes a vital endeavor because it mobilizes discursive platforms for political mobilizations in the context of urban development and changing demographic patterns.

Over the past 30 years, architects, promoters and developers have defined this history (Shulman 2000, 2009, Parks 2008, Culot & Lejeune 1992, Patricios 1994). These characters dominate the urban past by becoming central figures in a narrative without planners, activists, and residents who participate in the city's political life and contribute to its future. Miami's chosen urban figures stand for opportunity, the pioneering spirit, risk, and rugged individualism. These traits, which correspond to the defining traits of Miami's early pioneers (Parks 2008) find their echo today in the figure of contemporary architect, the developer and the builder; agents in Miami's ongoing physical transformation.

Lastly, a common characteristic in this literature is the attribution of positive place-making qualities to particular locations of the city (Behar & Culot 1997, Ceo & Lombard 2002, Dunlop & Schenzen 1996) Miami's history is conveyed from locations in incorporated municipalities such as Coral Gables, Miami Beach and the City of Miami, rather than unincorporated Dade County.<sup>42</sup> These locations have prominence in local municipal histories and hold a symbolic rank in the imagination of Miami's residents throughout the county. Such locations hold standing as representative examples of good urbanism that deserve to be emulated in contemporary urban development efforts. These locations of historical superiority are written in relation to neighborhoods that are marginalized, with unrecognized pasts and sites of recurrent under-development.

The selection of paradigmatic historical sites and the role that historians play in their appraisal opens interrogations about the politics of Miami's historiography and the methodologies used to write the city's history. Who is benefiting from this history? And how does it ignore questions of power arising from the past that shed light into normalized discourses by planners and residents today?<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> In this dissertation I break away from this approach by developing a series of vignettes that use architectural form as a point of departure to explore political tensions in Miami. The introductions of this chapter, as well as the introductions of Chapter Three and Chapter Five offer examples of this model.

<sup>42</sup> Shulman's recent Miami Modern metropolis extends the scope of design into the planning of public infrastructures. While his focus still remains framed by the value of design this history presents a recent turn towards planning issues.

<sup>43</sup> While conducting fieldwork I observed the paradox of DP&Z practitioners incorporating such normative histories into their own planning discourse. While these types of history disregarded the value of planning as a valid source of history, it served to rationalize the professional ethos that metropolitan planning was apolitical.

The locations that comprise the subject matter of Miami's history, and their illustration as exemplars, scaffold a perception of the political agency residents in specific areas of the city practice. Historiography is not only about the past; it sets in motion references for the city's future, gearing arguments and proposals that empower new visions for place-making interventions. For metropolitan planners, a place without history was a place without identity, defined by transience and a lack of civic awareness derived from the experience of immigration. Transience is also a becomes powerful category in the academic work of Jan Nijman, whose *Miami Mistress of the Americas* (Nijman 2011) proposes the claim that Miami is a model for the 21st century metropolis due to the high degree of migratory mobility its residents practice. In his work, Nijman reproduces the discourse of planning by arguing that mobility in Miami stands for a lack of civic awareness, which leads to corruption in urban politics. In sharp contrast to these claims, my analysis points to mobility as a source of political claims making, through collective and individual practices that transform political leadership in Miami through what I denominate "spatial politics".

This perception shields a multifaceted political reality demarcated by social change and resulting collective mobilizations for urban power. In the next section I develop an outline of metropolitan planning history to consider a set of key pressures - spatial exclusions/segregations and demographic change - that encompass the unidentified history of political claims against metropolitan planning practice that will be expanded upon in the upcoming chapters. I start by looking at the early incorporation of the city of Miami and a set of spatial segregations that defined the genesis of this municipality.

### **Early Metropolitan Miami: Incorporations and Exclusions**

To consider the history of metropolitan planning we must first explore its pre-history: a period epitomized by a surge of municipal incorporations heralded by the city of Miami. Metropolitan planning has operated only since the early 1960's by reproducing a set of historical urban exclusions based on previously existing segregation patterns that emerged during the frenzy of municipal incorporations in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This heritage of spatial exclusions can be traced to the city of Miami's early period of speculative development, when its incorporation drove urban growth into the wilderness, and laborer populations arrived to partake in a new economy spawned by the process of territorial expansion.

The incorporation of the city of Miami in 1896 resulted from the extension of the South Florida East Coast Railway and the ambitions of Henry Flagler, a renowned railroad magnate (Chandler 1986). Sensing opportunity for capital ventures, Flagler connected his railroad line from northern stations along the eastern Florida coast to the southern army post of Fort Dallas, located in today's downtown Miami. The new extension of the SFEC – South Florida East Coast - brought infrastructure, people, and resources, to the remote outpost, radically changing the homesteads surrounding the army quarters into a bustling frontier town.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Flagler's influence was evident not only in the town's novel infrastructure but also in its local politics. With the help of local businessmen and wealthy landowners he led the incorporation of Miami in 1896. The developer /incorporator model was ultimately copied by other developers in the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A number of newly incorporated cities followed under the same model: Miami Beach – 1914, Coral Gables – 1925, Hialeah -1925, and Opa-Locka 1926. Thirty years after the incorporation of the city of Miami, Dade County was experienced a "gold rush" of speculative development (Figure 7). Urban growth was dictated by the decisions of powerful developers who received tax breaks to

buy land from the state of Florida. Miami flourished from pioneer homesteads at the mouth of the Miami River westward towards the edge of the everglades and eastward into the shores of Biscayne Bay. Growth machines deployed master planned grids (Figure 8), dredged canals and constructed artificial islands, causeways and bridges deep into the wilderness (Figure 9).<sup>44</sup>

The region's growth attracted groups seeking access to labor opportunities. The city of Miami is a case in point. It was incorporated with the participation of African American men who provided the necessary number of signatures to form the new city. The first name in the City of Miami Charter is the name of a black man. Of the 367 male signatures necessary to incorporate the city of Miami 41.5% came from black men who were workers in Flagler's railroad company (Shell-Weiss 2009). Early on in Miami's history, developers and city boosters understood the need for a local labor force that would provide the raw muscle to equip urban growth and service burgeoning tourism enterprises - hotels, restaurants, construction companies, dredging companies. Urban settlements grew from the speculation of real state property packaged for the consumption of a white northeastern audience and the promotion of leisure tourism as a lucrative local industry.

To confront the housing needs of laborers, specially designated zones were created. While their political representation was crucial for the birth of Miami, their lives developed in segregated communities in secluded locations within the newly incorporated city. These residential zones were usually buffered from wealthier white suburbs by industrial zones, transportation corridors and/or unincorporated land. In conjunction with Jim Crow laws, police coercion and surveillance, many of Miami's original African American residents lived apart in parallel ghettos (Dunn 1997). These designated areas existed not only within new municipalities but also in unincorporated zones where basic infrastructural provisions were lacking and marginalization from local government became a way of life. In this way Dade County's early urban development was defined by the uneven distributions of resources and planning amenities between populations inhabiting communities and parallel lives in the same city: White property owners and leisure seekers and ethnic populations – mostly African American laborers who serviced them.<sup>45</sup>

The most recognizable example of this pattern is the case of “Colored Town”, today's neighborhood of Overtown near Downtown Miami (George 1978). “Colored Town” gave African-American laborers a place to live in close proximity to the main service centers. In 1911 a residential color line was voted upon to monitor traffic into and out the enclave by Miami's local police force (Figures 10 and 11) (George 1978 p: 441-442). While Overtown remained the primary center of African American social life in Miami during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the displacement of African American populations continued by housing them in locations far from the immediate suburbs near the downtown area. The dispersal of African American populations continued during the 1930's with public housing provisions (Figure 12) (Dunn 1987).<sup>46</sup> The final dislocation of Overtown's African American community came with the

---

<sup>44</sup> For additional urban histories covering a similar period of time in other American cities see Fogelson 1967 and Cronon 1991. These comprehensive volumes on Los Angeles and Chicago respectively provide an incisive account of the relationship between real estate development, transportation networks and urban politics.

<sup>45</sup> While in this chapter I provide a minimal sketch of housing segregation in Miami, I am inspired by the undertakings of authors who have researched this topic in other American cities. These include Self 2003, Sugrue 1996, and Hirsch 1983. To consider how spatial segregation functions in an international context see Caldeira 2000.

<sup>46</sup> A particular case of interest is the construction of Liberty Square, Florida's first public housing project in 1937. For a full account of this project, its design and its effects on Miami's African American population see Stuart & Stack 2008.

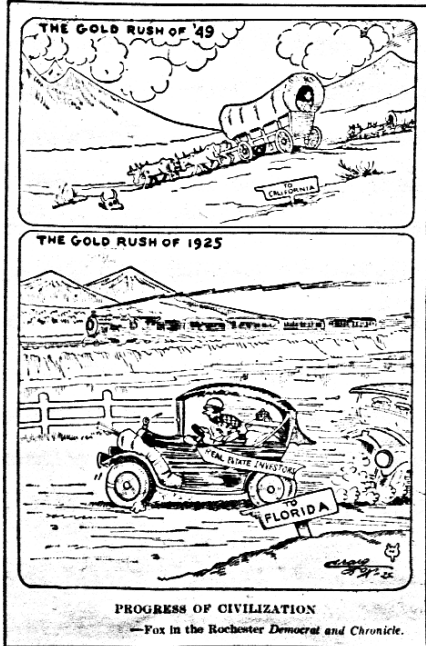
erection of the I-95 Express during the 1960's. Today many of Overtown's residents still suffer the consequences of this displacement. The construction of the 1-95 express in the late 1960's provoked the flight of African American residents from Overtown to the suburbs, particularly to the northwestern areas of metropolitan Miami. Since then, Miami's African American community has been fragmented politically and socially (Shell-Weiss 2009). The period spanning from the incorporation of the City of Miami in 1896 to the rapid incorporations of up to 26 municipalities into the late 1930's, was characterized by a dramatic demographic shift in the city's population. Miami emerged to become a national tourist destination and port of entry for immigrants arriving from the Caribbean. By 1935, the city's demographic increase was forecasted to reach up to one million residents (Fig 13). In the first 40 years of its life the city's social makeup was composed by northern transplants of Anglo and Jewish origin, African Americans migrating in search of work, descendants of Bahamian settlers, and Puerto Ricans who inhabited the city's most recognizable Hispanic ethnic enclaves (Shell-Weiss 2009).

Many of the inequalities and disenfranchisements that characterized the period of urban growth from 1896 to the early 1950's grew exponentially with the arrival of Hispanic –mostly Puerto Rican - and African American communities seeking labor opportunities (Shell-Weiss 2009). Before the institutionalization of metropolitan planning, planning existed as a practice grounded on the jurisdictions, and agendas of individual municipalities. Building from the legacy of segregation in the city of Miami, other municipalities emphasized lines of separation, surveillance and control.

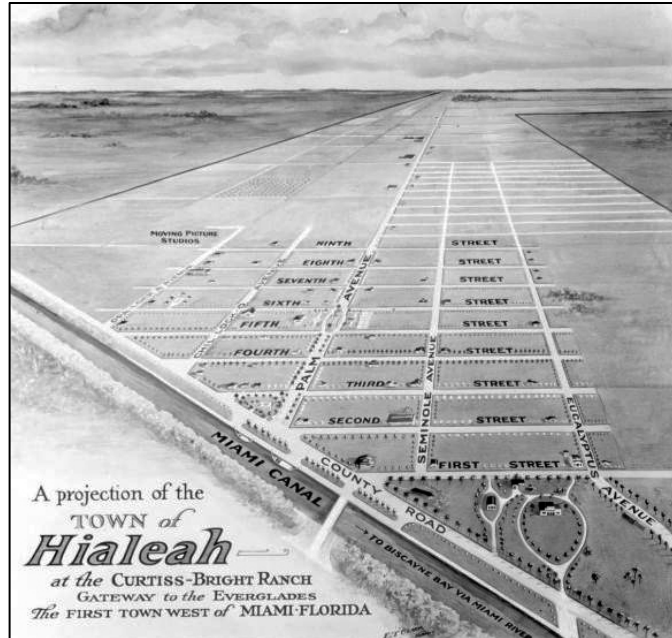
Most of Miami's urban growth took place during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With the inception of metropolitan planning in the late 1950's, infrastructural amenities for Miamians in unincorporated areas including Miami's African American population became a priority for the city's leadership. Far from providing rights of representation in planning decisions or government, for Hispanic and African American minorities, the introduction of urban policy derived from the imperative to enforce regional governance and assert the management of urban resources. As the metropolis grew in population and size, unincorporated areas presented a unique challenge for political leaders as these areas grew without control, jurisdiction or political representation.

### **Planning for Growth: The Two-Tier System and Metropolitan Planning**

By the 1950's Dade County had grown into a vast conglomeration of individual municipalities and unincorporated settlements in need of services. Local political leaders and the business elite recognized the need to modernize Miami's government and infrastructure to address the booming population over the growing territory (Serino 1958). In the late 1950's metropolitan Miami reached a population of one million (Dade County Development Department 1963). The city's proximity to the Caribbean and Latin American made it an important economic bridge to the south, promising further growth in the form of investment (Dade County Development Department 1963).



**Figure 7** The Florida gold rush of 1925.  
Source: South Florida Historical Museum



**Figure 8** The grid of Hialeah circa 1922.  
Source: South Florida Historical Museum



**Figure 9** View of a dredging canal next to the Miami River on what is today SW 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The Miami canal can be seen projecting into the wilderness at the edge of the municipality of Miami. S: South Florida Historical Museum.



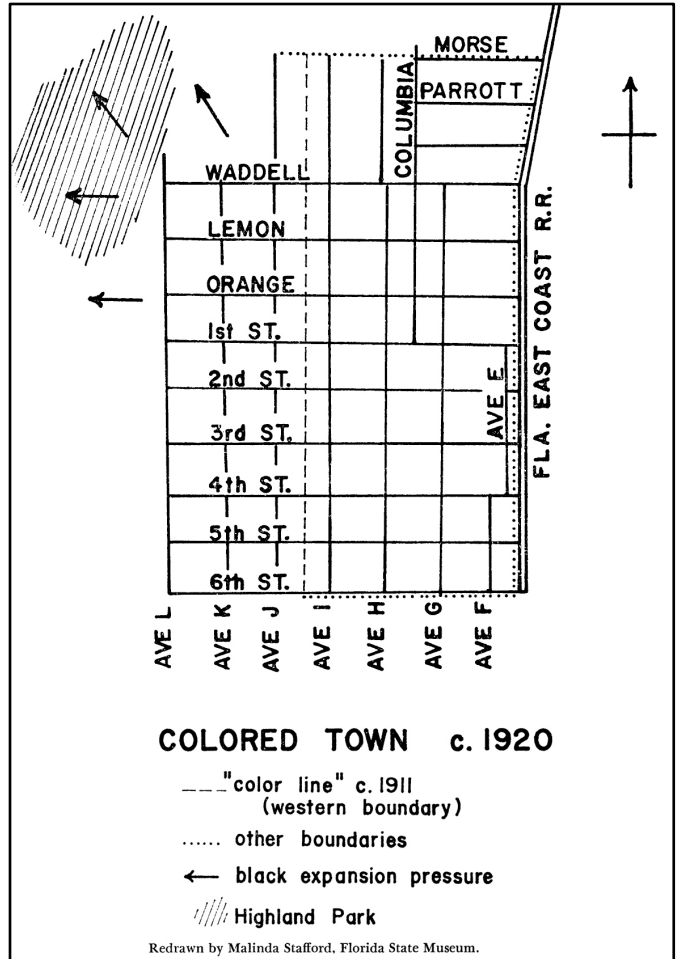


Figure 10 Miami's Colored line c. 1920. Source: Florida State Museum

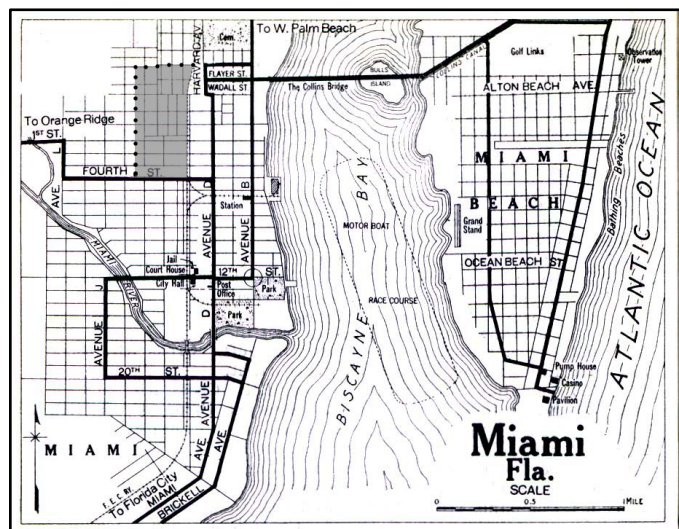


Figure 11 The Growth of Miami in 1925 with the location of colored town. Source: Composite from the South Florida Historical Museum & Author. The shaded area represents Colored Town. The outline of black dots represents the proposed color line.

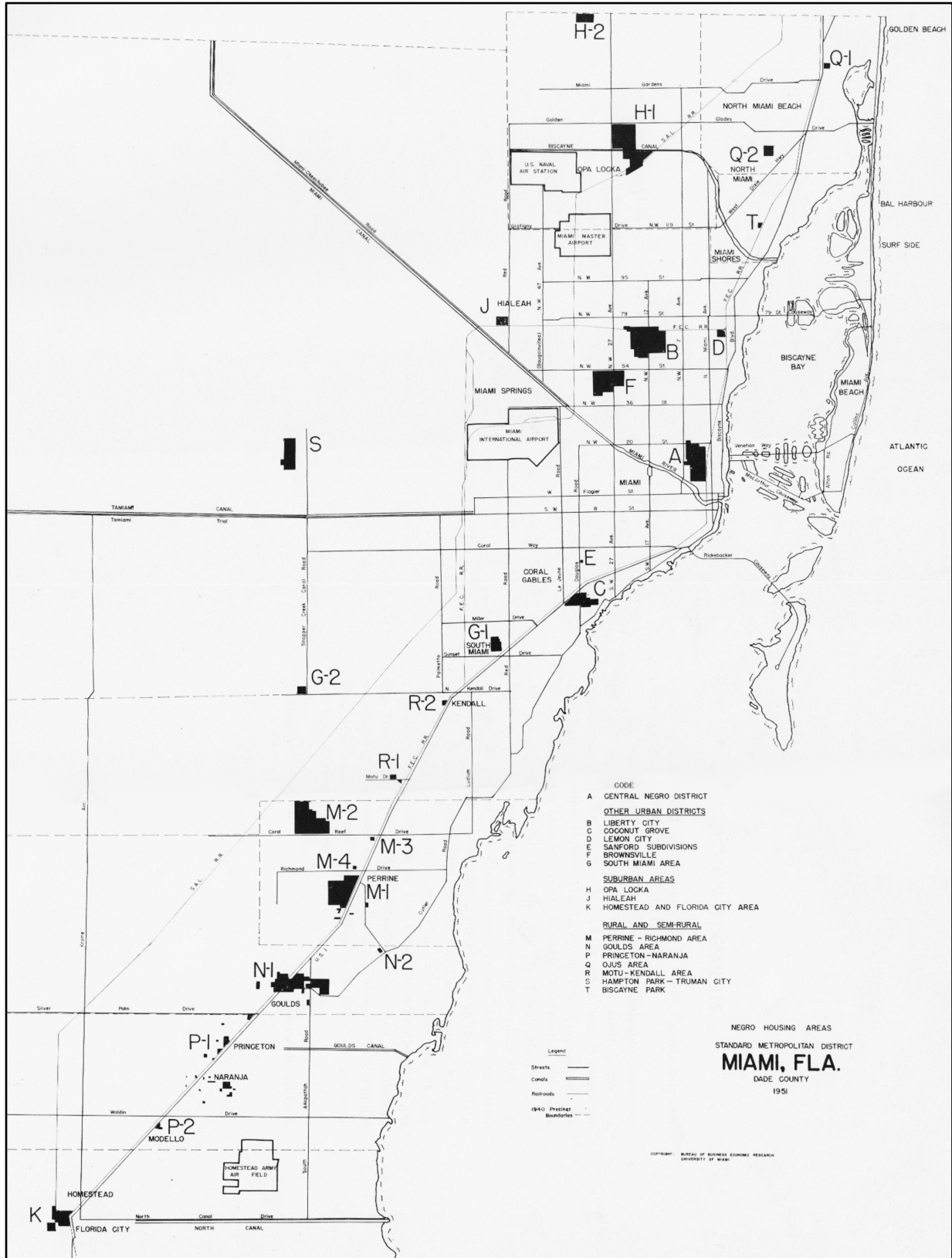
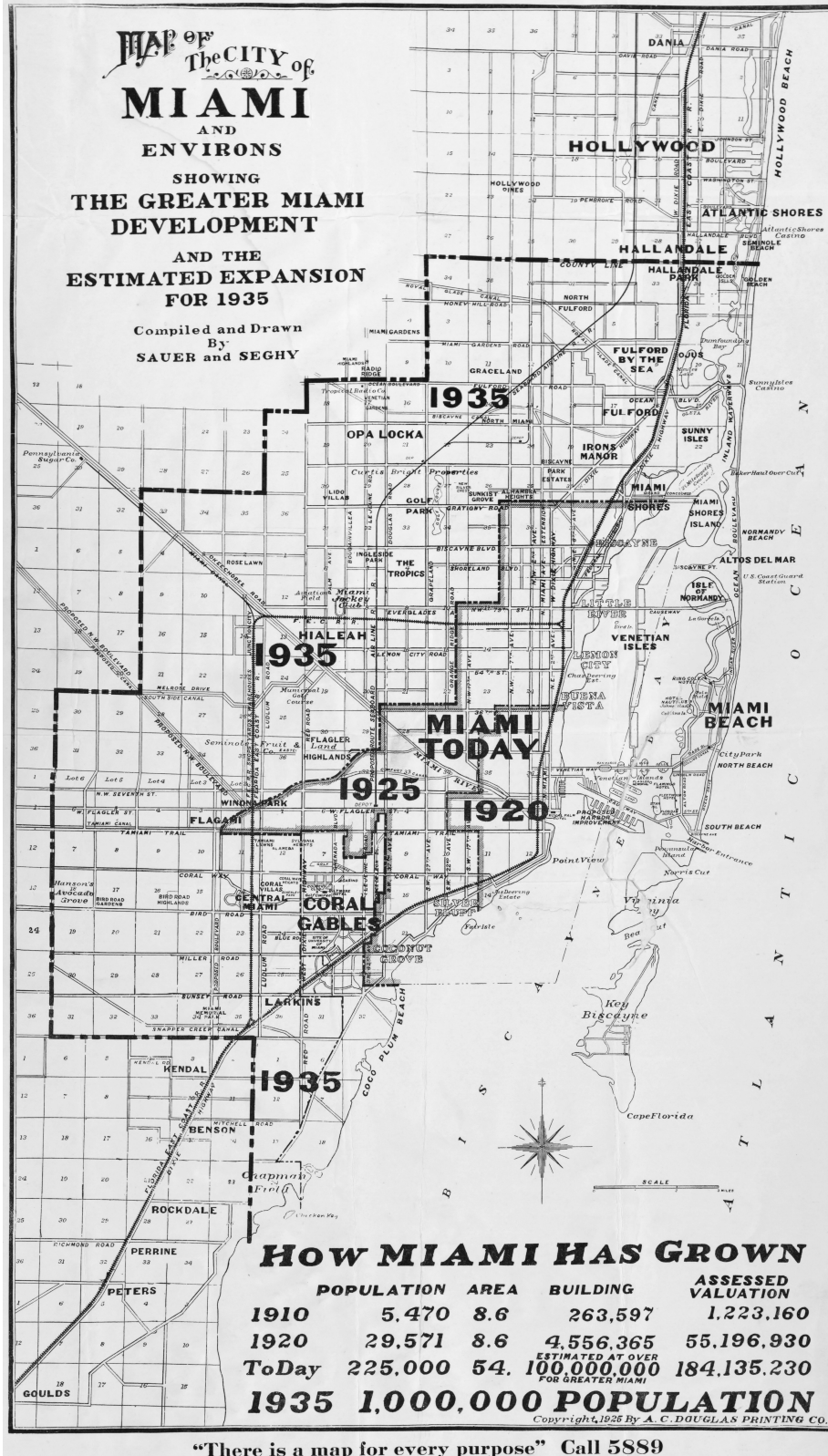


Figure 12 Negro Housing Areas 1951. Source: Wolff & Gillogly 1951. Folded Map in back cover.



"There is a map for every purpose" Call 5889

Figure 13 The metropolitan growth of Miami as seen in 1925 and estimated to 1935. Source: South Florida Historical Museum.

Miami's civic leaders organized to introduce the Dade County Home Rule Charter.<sup>47</sup> This measure was sweeping in its political goals and the scale of its execution. The charter aimed at establishing a metropolitan government that would confront the city's demographic growth and rampant urban development, but also implement a new form of government based on commission districts with the political power of a central government and the authority to grant the creation of new municipalities within Dade County. The innovative charter emphasized a Two-Tier governance structure that would energize government at the regional level and keep up with residents in unincorporated areas by providing institutional and operational support in the management, allocation and distribution of local infrastructure needs (Dade County Development Department 1963).

In a 1956 referendum, by a slim passage of 51 % "Yes" to 49 % "No", with only 25 % of the electorate voting, Dade County adopted the metropolitan charter to provide governmental services to the whole region.<sup>48</sup> The passage of the measure had two overall political effects. It coalesced the former commission system into a more efficient "commissioner-manager" form; it provided County commissioners the authority to pass local legislation and the vested power to carry out a centralized form of metropolitan government (Dade County Development Department 1963).<sup>49</sup> In terms of the physical management of the metropolis, the decision had two outcomes. It turned unincorporated areas into a mega-zone with municipal characteristics under the mandate of the newly re-formed Dade County commission, making Metro - metropolitan government - accountable to residents in the fast growth areas of un-incorporated Dade County. And secondly, it established an upper "County" tier concerned with regional issues and a lower "Municipal" tier focused on local needs of specific communities. The "municipal tier" was responsible for operation of local parks, public works, police, planning & zoning, public libraries and fire & rescue departments. The "County Tier" was charged with the airport, the seaport, environmental regulation, crime labs, regional parks department and a metropolitan planning department – the DP&Z.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> According to Sofen (1961: II-11) "Supporters of Metro in 1957 included the Dade delegation to the Florida legislature, the Dade County Research Foundation (a business-sponsored "good government" group), the Miami-Dade Chamber of Commerce, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, the League of Women Voters, the Miami Herald and the Miami News. Opposing Metro were most county and municipal officials and employees, the Dade League of municipalities, the beneficiaries of city contracts, most of the municipal chambers of commerce, a number of local newspapers, and some municipal citizen organizations."

<sup>48</sup> The first few years of the new charter were spent in fierce legal battles with local community groups representing municipal interests, as municipal leaders sought to maintain power and control over services they considered would be best managed and maintained under local supervision. The control of services provided a valuable source of taxation for municipal leaders who leveraged provisions in order to develop political influence over constituencies. The issue of taxation becomes more prevalent during the 1990's in the rebellion of municipal incorporations that I analyze in Chapter Four.

<sup>49</sup> The Dade County commission was to consist of five district commissioners elected at large, five district commissioners elected by district only, and a commissioner elected by each city with a population of 60,000 or more (Wolff 1960). Florida Constitution Home Rule Amendment, A.8, S.11 Adopted November 6 1956. In the next chapter I consider how the empowerment of Cuban Americans led to the transformation of the commission.

<sup>50</sup> The Dade County Home Rule Charter required the creation of a Department of Planning (sec. 4.07) and a Planning Advisory Board (Sec. 4.08). DP&Z was charged by law with the responsibility to: (1) Conduct studies of county population land use, facilities, resources and needs and other factors which influence the county's development, (2) Prepare for review by the Planning Advisory Board and for adoption by the Board of county Commissioners, zoning and subdivision reports. (3) Review municipal systems of planning, study municipal boundaries with a view to recommending their orderly adjustment, improvement, and establishment (Dade County Development Department 1963).

Miami's new federated system - comprised by a central government with individual autonomous units - had a dramatic impact on Dade County's urban expansion. Before the measure, municipal incorporations were governed by state law and represented the political fiefdoms of developers who lobbied politicians in Tallahassee. Inspired by the progressive urban reform movement of the 1940's and 1950's (Sofen 1961), the Home-Rule charter changed the political dynamics of urban growth by introducing an entity that balanced the interests of municipalities with the interests of the region.

Metropolitan planning arises at this crucial juncture – at the dusk of a local political culture and the dawn of a new political system. The future of mostly suburban territories far from the city of Miami and in-between already existing municipalities becomes the concern of elected politicians and planners. With the birth of county government we have the birth of metropolitan planning practice under the supervision of the county commission. The goal of Metro was to address the concerns and issues that represented residents' local needs – traffic, building permitting, taxation, infrastructural repair, leisure, and also the capacity to vote and be represented. Metro was also tasked with taking an “overall view, especially in regard to area-wide planning for the needs of a large urban concentration” (Dade County Development Department 1963 p.2). These tasks would fall under the charge of metropolitan planning and the development of mechanisms and techniques of land use policy aimed at determining the future of urban growth.

The first task carried out by metropolitan planners was the development of the Preliminary Land Use Plan in 1960 (Figure 14), which led to the Comprehensive Land Use Map of 1961 (Figure 15).<sup>51</sup> The first of their kind for the South Florida region, these plans were attempts at understanding the total physical built out area of Dade County. In doing so, they aimed to afford civic leaders, metropolitan planners and residents with the first over-arching diagnosis of Miami's physical growth.<sup>52</sup> In their large-scale visions of the existing city, metropolitan planners deployed broad land use categories to make sense of uneven patterns of urban development. Their birds-eye-views visualized the rapid pace of suburban growth and the characteristic leapfrog development pattern towards South-West Dade County; the city's new suburban frontier.<sup>53</sup> For metropolitan planners and civic leaders alike, this pattern of suburbanization signaled an un-coordinated territory for the fastest growing area in the region, rendering the provision of services a dire urgency.

The initial 1960's plans provided the impetus for the farsighted 1965 General Land Use Plan - GLUMP. This plan projected the city's footprint according to demographic growth up to 1985. The GLUMP represented a refinement of the previous plan. Its major features included the prognosis of urban growth into the Everglades and the proposal of an expressway system in

---

<sup>51</sup> The preliminary land use plan was approved by Dade County's board of commissioners in 1961 (Dade County Development Department 1963)

<sup>52</sup> According to DP&Z documents: “Considerable effort was made to initiate this Project in an air of area-wide cooperation and extensive staff liaison was maintained with every municipality in Dade County. A series of six staff reports were prepared to cover major aspects of the plan. The Planning Advisory Board and officials from the municipality reviewed these reports. Their comments and recommendations played a major role in formulating the final plan and the result was a detailed land use plan readily accepted by the municipalities. By this method, the metropolitan planning program received early confidence and respect of municipal leaders throughout the county” (Metropolitan Dade County 1961 p: 25).

<sup>53</sup> According to planning documents between 1900 and 1910 the area grew by 14%, between 1910 and 1920 by 258 percent, between 1920 and 1930 by 235%, between 1930 and 1940 80%, from 1940 to 1950 252% (Dade County Study Commission 1971 p: 12).











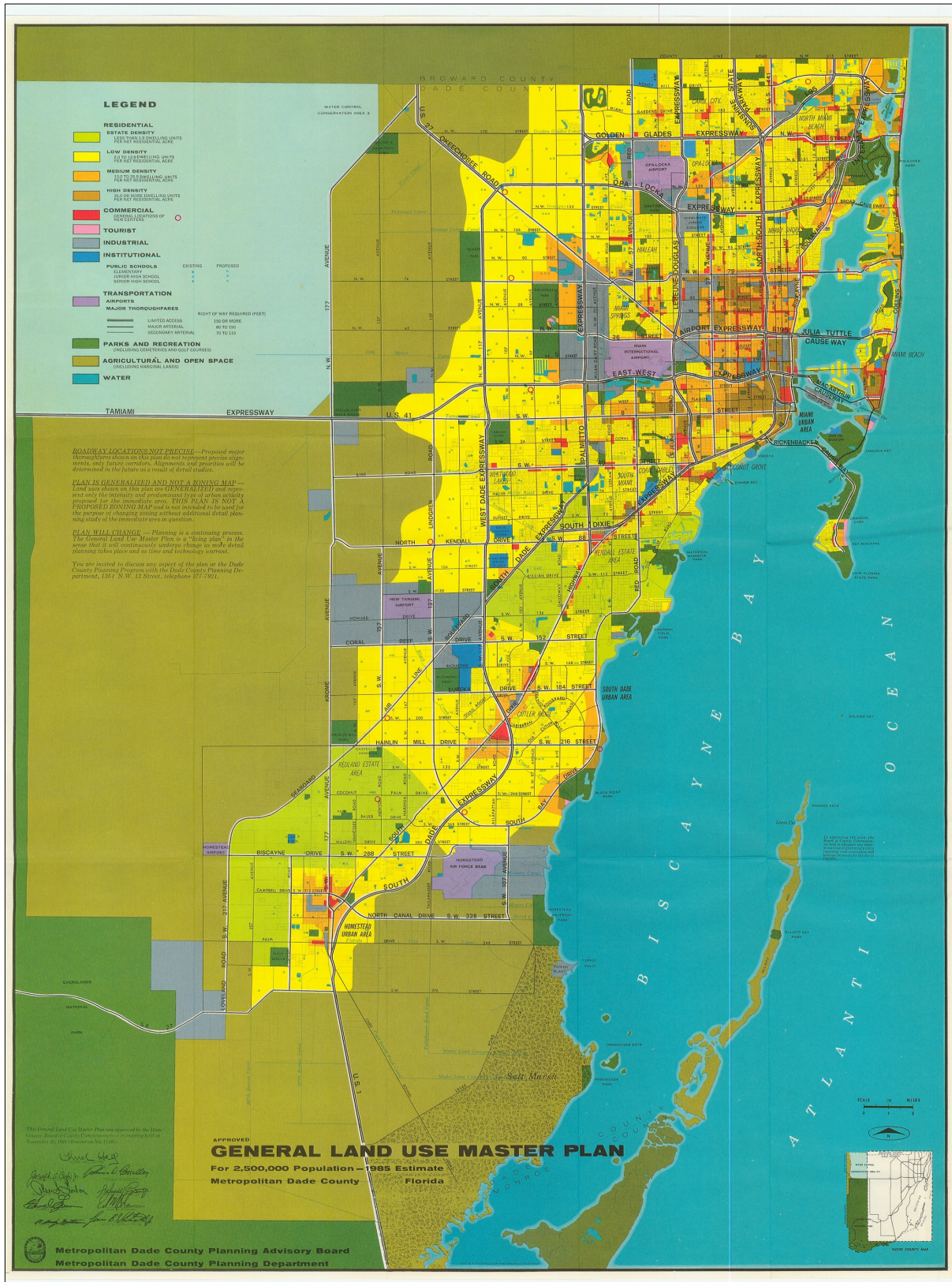


Figure 16 Dade County General Land Use Master Plan 1965. Source: DP&Z.



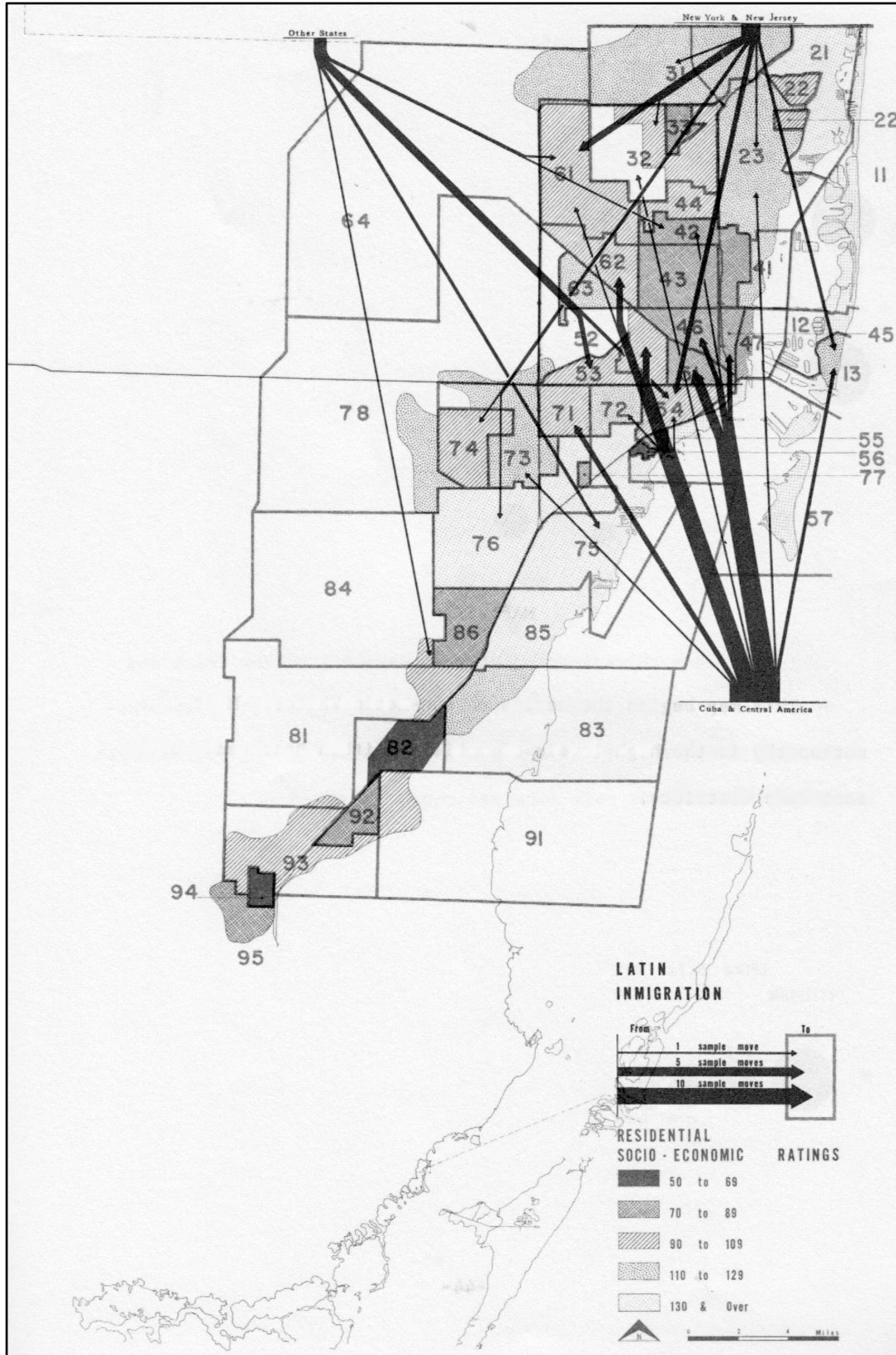


Figure 17 Latin Immigration to Dade County. Source: Rosen & Dade County Planning Department 1970.

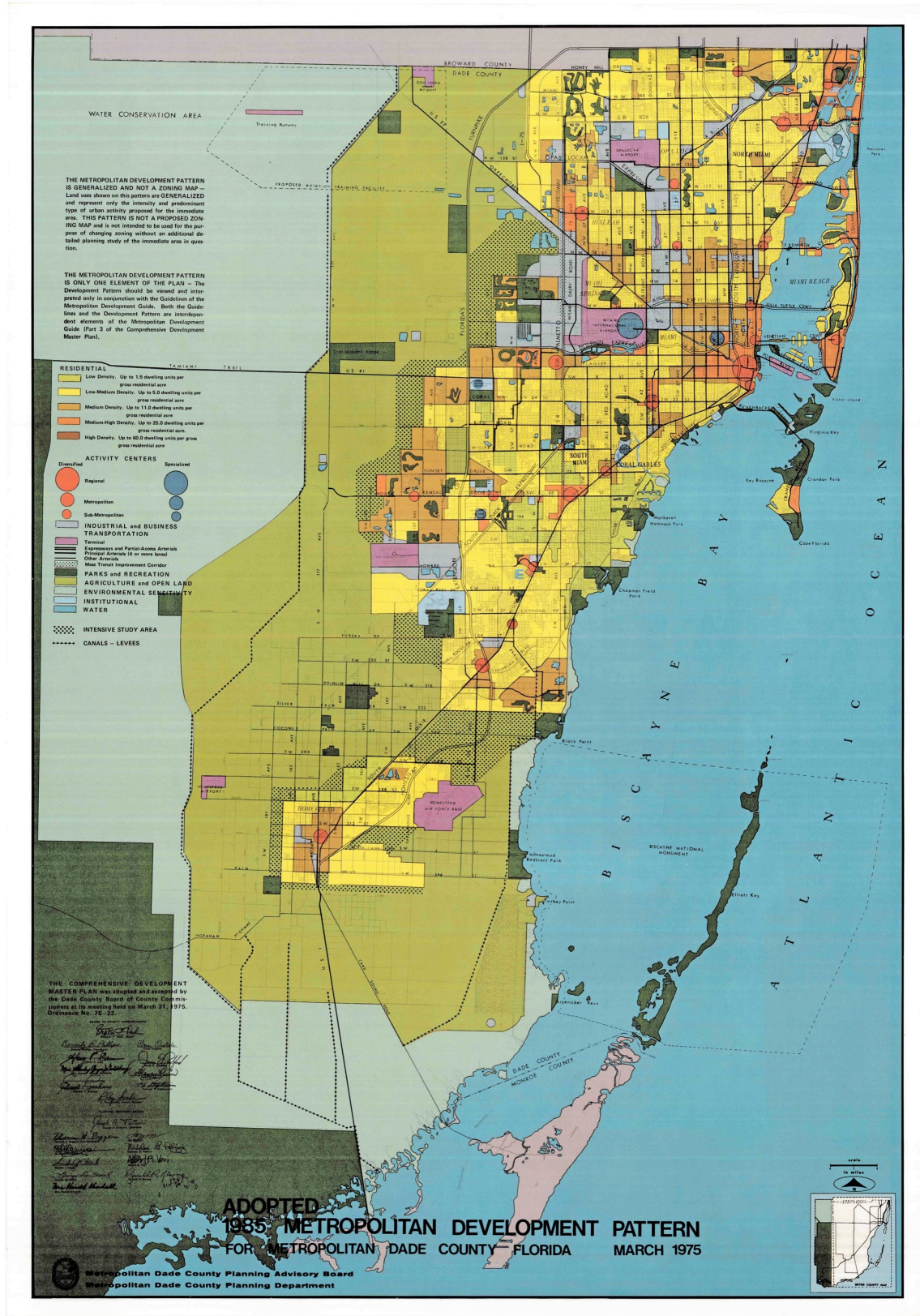


Figure 18 First Generation Comprehensive Development Masterplan 1975: Source DP&Z



Biscayne National Park. Through it, metropolitan Miami is illustrated as a suburban metropolis with densities of less than twelve dwelling units per acre for 80% of its territory.<sup>54</sup> The GLUMP established planning guidelines to deal with the challenges that were first considered in the preliminary 1960 land use map; the control of suburban growth, the imposition of an urban growth boundary and an emphasis on transportation planning. The plan, however, did not become an ordinance. County Commissioners passed it only by resolution, meaning that the county commission was not legally bound by it.

As metropolitan Miami's population continued to grow during the decade of the 1960's, some of the unstable growth patterns identified by planners in the 1960 land use map were ignored and continued to mature without control. At the same time a new social dynamic that would eventually come to dominate the work of planners started to take shape. With the onset of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 and the immigration of thousands of Cubans to Miami on a yearly basis, Miami's "Latin" population was slowly starting to increase.<sup>55</sup> While the presence of Hispanics as a major group dominating social life and politics would not become evident to metropolitan planners until the 1980's, a series of migratory patterns from the Caribbean and Latin American signaled a new dynamic (Figure 17). For metropolitan planners these patterns forecasted demographic change that would further lead to suburban sprawl in unincorporated areas as well as public housing needs in existing municipalities. The political meaning of these changes in demography would not come to play until the Mariel Boatlift of 1980.

While Cuban immigration continued to take place during the late 1960's and early 1970's, by the mid 1970's a series of events led to the call for a new comprehensive land use master plan. A sequence of infrastructural failures including fires in western Dade County, droughts throughout metropolitan Miami, traffic congestion, the outcry against the construction of an expressway in the inter-coastal region, and scandals involving the construction of an air field in the Everglades steered the recall of four commissioners and a new public awareness of planning issues.<sup>56</sup> In 1975, as efforts for alternative plans started to coalesce locally at the grassroots level, Florida's legislature furnished official legal powers to metropolitan planning by requiring the implementation of comprehensive planning for local communities across the state. The Local Government Comprehensive Planning Act called for every city and county in Florida to determine a blue print with specific provisions for the future.<sup>57</sup> Thrust forth by a popular swell of support and a new state law, the final hearing for the 1975 Comprehensive Development Master Plan - 1st Generation CDMP (Figure 18) - proved to be a highly contentious endeavor, pitting environmentalists, activists, lawyers and developers against each other. The CDMP ultimately passed the county commission by one vote under the threat of a one billion dollar loss in federal funds for construction of Dade County's rapid transit system (Ruvlin 1990 p: 14).

The 1975 first generation CDMP plan was thus adopted by ordinance, making it a functioning policy for Metro. Crafted with the support of several resident task forces appointed by county commissioners, it emphasized environmental protection. Signaling the growing

---

<sup>54</sup> Based on demographic data, most of these plans were envisioned to address a population of 2.5 million by 2010 (Dade County Development department p: 7).

<sup>55</sup> As note in Chapter One, the term Hispanic is introduced in 1977 with the Office of Management and Budget, Directive No. 15. Before this designation the term that was generally used to describe Spanish-speaking peoples of Caribbean and Latin American origin was "Latins".

<sup>56</sup> For a full account of these events see Carter 1974. Carter provides an extensive narrative explaining how water and land policy shaped metropolitan urban politics and suburban growth in South Florida.

<sup>57</sup> See: Metropolitan Dade County Planning Department Comprehensive Planning Act of 1975, ss. 163.3161-163.32211 F. S.

recognition of South Florida's natural ecology, and the recent adoption of two national parks – the Everglades National Park and Biscayne Bay National Park - the CDMP included a map demarcating environmentally sensitive areas in the county (Metropolitan Dade County Planning Department 1975). It also set forth strict policies ensuring that environmentally detrimental land uses would not be imposed over environmentally sensitive areas of the county. Considering changes in demographic growth, the CMDP provided a series of population distribution maps allowing metropolitan planners to plan facilities such as roadways and mass transit, water and sewer, according to forecasts of population densities.

In addition to policies dealing with the natural environment, the 1975 state planning law also stipulated that zoning be in conformity with the CDMP plan. This meant that developers would be required to get the zoning approved by the planning department before they could obtain permits to plan new communities or develop parcels. This measure slowed down the growth of urban sprawl. The CMDP marked the start of the neighborhood-planning program in Dade County, which would eventually become the community planning section where Bruce Clark measured democracy by the width of the sidewalk.

### **Unresolved Politics: Centralization v. Decentralization**

While the inception of the two-tier system led to the emergence of metropolitan planning, it also molded a key tension between centralized county government and the political decision-making capacity of residents seeking access to infrastructural services, and political representation in unincorporated Dade County. Internal metropolitan planning reports dating from 1971 state how the two-tier system created governmental fragmentation across the region.

The Home Rule Charter in 1956 can be seen in terms of the unstable relationships and continuing struggle between two levels of government – county and Municipality – for the allegiance and control of citizens to whom they are both responsible and over whom they both operate

Dade County Metropolitan Study Commission, June 1971

The original ideal of having area-wide services benefit under-served residents through the administration of an upper tier controlled by a central planning agency didn't develop as expected. Similarly the notion that different government tiers would share the economic burden of services was never realized. Ultimately the tension between county government and municipalities was a struggle between the centralization and decentralization of the management of physical resources and a struggle over allocation of the taxes to pay for the services of residents in incorporated areas.

As I shall explain in closer detail in Chapter Four, these pressures bred a political arena where residents in unincorporated Dade County felt disenfranchised and distant from county government on one side, while residents in municipalities felt overburdened as donor communities by the taxes paid to sustain services for poorer unincorporated communities. With time these tensions harnessed political dimensions in county commission and municipal elections as population growth shifted dramatically to unincorporated areas. The resulting imbalance placed a heavy encumbrance on Metro to manage services across a vast growing and uncontrolled territory. With the introduction of the Home Rule charter, Metro had become the local government for residents in unincorporated areas, but this vision didn't foresee the slow pace of institutionalization for its governmental branches – including metropolitan planning - and the demographic explosion that followed. As metropolitan Miami grew through the latter half of

the 20<sup>th</sup> century, different demands among Miami's constituencies, old and new, became sharper and more polarized. New immigrant communities from the Caribbean and Latin America settled beyond the ethnic enclaves into suburban unincorporated areas.<sup>58</sup> In this way, from the birth of Metro onwards, Dade County developed as a region where different service demands and political needs varied across locations according to an emergent patchwork of competing social groups, ethnic affiliations and local and non-local legacies.<sup>59</sup>

### **Conclusion: Setting the Stage for Cuban American Spatial Politics**

In this chapter I have introduced the history of metropolitan planning in Dade County. From the incorporation of the City of Miami through the subsequent birth of new cities, planning developed as a practice shaped by local factors: spatial exclusions, the forces of demographic growth, and the experiment of a federated system of government aiming to coordinate the needs of residents at a regional scale. During the later decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Miami's growth challenged the regional framework of metropolitan planning practice. Metropolitan planning was envisioned to represent residents in unincorporated Dade County, but the resulting demographic shifts led to the reproduction of exclusions based on the hyper growth of suburbia and the incapacity of county government to provide adequate mechanisms for local planning and political decision-making. This tension sets the stage for the next two chapters. In Chapter Three I take a closer look at the politics of demographic growth by considering the empowerment of the Cuban American community and how planners became participants in the political transformation of the city. In chapter four I return to the unresolved tension between the two tiers. This tension acquires renewed expediency when it becomes a source of mobilization for *communities of interest* to counter the empowerment of the Cuban Americans by seeking municipal incorporation as a means of local control.

---

<sup>58</sup> The presence of Hispanics in Miami's suburbs starting in the 1970's can be related to the recent concept of "Ethnoburbs" (Li 2009). While Li introduces new concepts for the study of race, place and urban processes, my focus is specifically geared at considering how demographic change leads to the political empowerment of a particular ethnic community.

<sup>59</sup> The relationship between immigration, ethnicity and urban political power will be explored in more detail in Chapter Three. Metropolitan planners in the DP&Z studied several options during the 1970's to deal with the problem of centralization and decentralization. These solutions included the annexation of unincorporated land to existing municipalities, the incorporation of new cities, the introduction of service districts and the actual consolidation of all unincorporated areas of Dade County into a mega-municipality. The main goal of these measures continued to be the provision of services for residents in unincorporated Dade County, but also included the means to access political representation through a local jurisdiction that would alleviate their local needs and concerns by stipulating a planning regulatory framework "close to home" and implementing "citizen's access points." With these new provisions residents could influence policy and "Provide leadership by moving closer to the ideas of metropolitan federalism" (Dade County Study Commission 1971).

## Chapter 3: Cuban American Spatial Politics in Metropolitan Miami: Crisis, Community Development and Empowerment (1980-1991)

We were given a Coca Cola and a red apple, I recall having them in my hands and looking at them asking my mom what is this? She looked at me and said we are free... we are free.

Ivonne Cuesta Reflections of a Marielita<sup>60</sup>

### **The *Municipios de Cuba en El Extranjero* in El City of Miami Archives**

From early 2000 to the summer of 2001, I worked on a research project focused on developing an architectural guide for metropolitan Miami.<sup>61</sup> My task consisted of driving to all of Miami's then 34 municipalities and visiting each of their building departments to collect plans, building permits, and certificates of occupancy. These data were used to certify a list of structures to be included in the guide. Their selection had been carefully debated and decided upon by some of Miami's most recognized architects, historians and community development specialists to develop a collection of exemplary buildings representative of the city's urban heritage.

One of my main sites of data collection was the City of Miami Building Department. For months, I visited the fourth floor of "El City of Miami," as the building is colloquially known by Miami's Spanish speaking residents, who regularly visit its premises for permits, queries and other business. There, I spent hours in the microfilm office with Lidia and Francisco, two Cuban American archivists assigned to assist patrons.<sup>62</sup> Over dozens of visits we became friendly and I found out about their personal histories. Both were *Marielitos*, and had experienced a momentous period in Miami's history during the Mariel Boatlift of 1980. In the twenty years since, they had settled, bought homes, and become proud American citizens.

During my visits, I also witnessed Lidia and Francisco carrying out a parallel "archiving" activity. Between patron searches, emergency requests from planning and building officials, rush requests from developers, and my own never ending idiosyncratic search for plans, they organized the weekly activities of the *Municipios de Cuba en El Extranjero*, a civic organization composed of Cuban expatriates.<sup>63</sup> Circumnavigating their daily routines and interruptions, they carefully compiled lists of members and the locations of meetings. They arranged schedules, made and answered phone calls, always logging the information in a notebook that never left the microfilm office of El City of Miami. Unhindered by the workload brought by the pace of frenetic urban development – permits, reviews, submissions and complaints – Lidia and Francisco discreetly carried out their alternative archive. They were an essential node in a vast social network of Cuban Exiliados, who lived throughout Miami, practiced their Cuban heritage,

---

<sup>60</sup> From: <http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/aSGuest46840-405254-katie-mariel-boatlift-bo-Entertainment-ppt-powerpoint/>

<sup>61</sup> Miami currently has two architectural guides which were published in 2010: Nepomechie's *Building Paradise: An Architectural Guide to the Magic City* (Nepomechie 2010), and Shulman's *Miami Architecture: A Guide featuring Downtown, the Beaches, and Coconut Grove* (Shulman 2010). I conducted my research for the guide by Shulman.

<sup>62</sup> Lidia and Francisco are pseudonyms.

<sup>63</sup> "*Municipios de Cuba en el Extranjero*," meaning "Foreign Cuban Municipalities" is a grassroots organization bringing together a diverse set of Cuban American opposition groups in Miami. Their activities range from public demonstrations in Miami's public space to pageants and fairs celebrating Cuban heritage and history. Their contact information is listed in the section of "Neighborhood Resources" for the Flagami section in the city of Miami: <http://www.miamigov.com/nets/pages/Flagami/Your%20community.asp>. For more information see: <http://www.municipiosdecuba.com/>.

and combined nostalgia with an undeterred political fervor.<sup>64</sup> Lidia and Francisco were key actors in the organization of public demonstrations for the US embargo against Cuba and get-out-the-vote campaigns for Cuban American candidates during hotly contested municipal and county elections.

Lidia and Francisco allowed me to see a facet of Miami's urbanism that did not exist on a designated list of architectural exemplars produced by experts or found in the El City of Miami archives. The "municipalities" they planned were not on the map of Dade County; they were comprised of social spaces found in the residencies, businesses, cafés and sidewalks dispersed along Miami's ethnic enclave of Little Havana and the Calle Ocho Corridor. The social network they recorded reached into the suburbs of Dade County. Most importantly, their story and the political meaning of the alternate archive could not be understood by modes of architectural selection, research and detection. The parallel planning of the *Municipios de Cuba* was a form of political agency associated with the use of urban space, which is absent in the way most scholars understand Miami and its and planning history.

### **Cuban American Spatial Politics in Metropolitan Miami**

My goal in this chapter is to elucidate an unchartered planning history based on the Cuban immigrant experience of people like Lidia and Francisco during a crucial period of Miami's history – from 1980 to 1992 – when the Cuban American community claimed political power in the face of crisis, adversity and political turmoil. The record of Miami's metropolitan planning history is a story detached from both the people who inhabit its metropolitan spaces and the practices of residents who actively transform the city's politics and social life. However, I contend that the incorporation of Miami's Cuban American community needs to be understood in relation to the production, management and political contestation of urban space. Scholars need to recognize the role played by immigrants engaged in spatial politics in its record of planning history.

I define *spatial politics* as the practices and tactics engaged by social groups in urban space to achieve empowerment – in this case immigrants. *Spatial politics* takes place at multiple scales: neighborhood, municipal, and metropolitan level, and is comprised of four interlinked practices –planning-oriented, discursive, electoral, and allied – that reconfigure the political status quo. *Planning-oriented* practices use urban planning methods and knowledge to facilitate a political agenda. *Discursive* practices are used to develop frames that envision and promote an alternative political order. *Electoral* practices mobilize voters according to residential concentration. *Allied* practices are used to form political alliances to reconfigure urban territory. Rather than being temporally determined by an evolutionist model of political action, these practices represent tactics take place in different configurations and timelines.<sup>65</sup>

In the first part of this chapter I summarize my data collection methods and review the urban history and urban studies literature on Miami to situate my contribution. In the second part, I delineate the history of spatial politics involving Cuban Americans in Miami. There are three

---

<sup>64</sup> "El Exilio" refers to the Cuban Exile Community. This term particularly refers to the exodus of political refugees after Fidel Castro's Revolution in 1959. The largest concentration of Cuban exiles can be found in Metropolitan Miami. For an authoritative account on the Cuban Exodus and the Cuban Exiled Community see Grenier and Stepick 1992.

<sup>65</sup> In order to represent an argument in this chapter based on the vast and complicated history of Cuban American empowerment during the 1980's in Miami, I have framed *spatial politics* in three phases: crisis, community development and empowerment. This arrangement does not correspond to a determined model; rather it is aimed at providing structural cohesiveness to this chapter.

stages to this history: *crisis, community development* and empowerment. In the first stage, crisis, I analyze how the refugee influx of the Mariel Boatlift led to the humanitarian actions of Cuban American residents in retention camps located in Miami's most urban spaces. By confronting the presence of *Marielitos*, Cuban Americans and Cuban refugees forged a common bond based on ethnic solidarity and communal stigmatization. In the second stage, community development, I consider the establishment of a Cuban American community development system in Miami, which deployed demographic data produced by metropolitan planners to facilitate economic, educational and housing provisions. These provisions were concentrated in the ethnic enclave of little Havana and enabled the mobilization of voting blocs for Cuban American political candidates. In the last stage, empowerment, I consider how a "successful immigration" discourse forged around the economic and cultural contributions of Cuban Americans was used to energize political action in Miami's 1985 municipal elections and the *Meek v. Metropolitan Dade County* lawsuit. The lawsuit was set in motion by an ethnic coalition of Hispanics and African American plaintiffs who sought the reconfiguration of Miami's county commission districts into new territories of control. Its outcome provided the political context needed to attain a majority of minority elected officials in 1992.

During a 12-year period of intense social change – 1980 to 1992 – Miami's Cuban American community transformed itself from an ethnic minority into a grassroots social movement that elected Cuban American municipal and county leaders and reconfigured Miami's political status quo. Throughout this period, urban planners considered their work neutral, devoid of political consequences and legitimized by the pursuit of the "public good." Yet their activities – the collection, recording and interpretation of demographic data – were used to justify the social service needs of Cuban Americans, which in turn fueled a shift in Cuban American political representation. The account of this un-recorded history demonstrates that the Mariel Boatlift provided the catalyst for the empowerment of Cuban Americans in Miami through the exercise of spatial politics.

### **Methods: Searching for Spatial Politics**

My analysis of *spatial politics* requires a combination of methods combining qualitative interviews, archival research, GIS mapping, and visual representation. A key characteristic in writing this history is the tension between my memory of Lidia and Francisco, and the professional narrative that emerged from my interviews with the former head of the Dade DP&Z Research Division, Peter O'Donnell and Walter Thomas an African American community development specialist working in the municipality of Opa-Locka. Both informants were active during the period of Cuban American empowerment in the 1980's and played different roles through the process I describe.

These interviews were part of several interviews I carried out starting in the Summer 2008 through the Spring 2011 at the DP&Z. I was able to access the DP&Z with easiness because several of the metropolitan planners who currently work there went to my Alma matter in Miami, the University of Miami school of Architecture. I interviewed six metropolitan planners, two of which were retired; Peter O'Donnell was one of them. The remaining four began working for the DP&Z in the early 1990's therefore had very little knowledge of the events that took place during the 1980's and only knew of them through second hand information. During this period I conducted a total of 11 interviews ranging from 45 minutes to two hours. Three of these interviews were with Peter O'Donnell. They consisted on open ended questions which led to more refined questions focused on the Mariel Boatlift and the reconfiguration of County



Districts in the aftermath of the Meek Decision. These interviews took place at the DP&Z, at the residence of Peter O'Donnell and at a Café in the city of Coral Gables.

My interviews with Walter Thomas took place after the first round of interviews I developed with DP&Z planners. I met Thomas through a series of *charrette* processes that I will describe in chapter five in more detail. Walter Thomas is currently a community development specialist who was involved in the Meek v. Metropolitan Dade County Lawsuit. Thomas became central to my argument of *spatial political* because he provided a key internal voice describing the details of the alliance between Cuban Americans and African Americans in the late 1980's aimed at obtaining power according to a demographic majority. During my interviews, metropolitan planners had described the outcomes of the Meek decision, but Thomas provided insight into the political strategy and expediency of the process.

The data from these interviews was supplemented with archival information that I was able to gather from different sources. The reports, memos and briefs that deal with metropolitan planning and the Mariel Boatlift were obtained directly from the DP&Z. The DP&Z has a number of storage cabinets in its premises that store an array of information describing the work of metropolitan planners over the past 40 years. This information is not catalogued. Instead it is simply stored pending permission for access. I spent long hours at the DP&Z finding key sources of information such as demographic reports from the early 1980's and primary sources regarding communications between Dade County and the department of state.

The information from the CNC and CODEC - pamphlets, reports, and conference summaries from the Cuban National Council and its affiliated nonprofits during the 1980's and 1990's - is based on a combination of archival data from the articles from the Miami Herald describing these organization's activities during the 1980's and the 1990's as well as primary sources found through inter-library loan, at the Dade County Public Library, and at the University of Miami. A missing link in my research is that I wasn't able to actually obtain access to Cuban American informants who were active during the time. My attempts to reach the Cuban American leadership of the CNC and CODEC were received with indifference. The successful access to these sources will comprise the work of future research.

The information relation to Additional information regarding the specific events, locations and actions of individuals during the Mariel Crisis came from journalistic reports published in the Miami Herald, refugee commission reports, and academic articles. A similar approach was carried out in relation to the visual material in this chapter. The photographs that comprise this chapter were obtained from the Miami Herald online visual archive and the University of Miami Richter Library visual archives, and the South Florida Historical Museum research unit.

The demographic data that enabled the mappings that I produce in this chapter, derived from the DP&Z. The DP&Z has an extensive collection of GIS data that can be accessed upon request or payment. These data was used to trace population increases from 1960 to 2010 and to mark the relationship between Hispanic populations in Dade County from 1980 through 1990 and the location of refugee camps and housing provisions. The location of refugee encampments was derived from the visual analysis of historical photographs found at the University of Miami Visual Archives and the South Florida Historical Museum. The location of housing provisions in little Havana was derived by developing an inventory of CODEC properties from Miami Herald articles. Their addresses were identified and verified through Google earth as well as in person. This information was used to create a map that was juxtaposed over the GIS layers. This part of the development of maps was carried out with the aid of Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator.

## Literature Review: A-spatial Miami

As described in Chapter 1, the writing of Miami's planning history represents a fairly recent endeavor. Starting in the early 1980's, planning history became an important field for both planners and architects due to the need for historic preservation of the built environment (Dade County 1982). Miami's emergent importance as an international banking city in the late 70's brought a construction boom to the city and, consequently, the demolition of historic structures. During the same time, the national success of the Miami Beach historic preservation movement made the preservation of the built environment a central topic in architecture, urban development and planning. With the exception of urban historian Raymond Mohl (2003) and Marvin Dunn (1997), whose extensive works document the history of African Americans in Miami, these histories of Miami focus on buildings and infrastructure, comprising an architectural critique in the form of monographs (Culot and Lejeune 1992, Shulman & LeJeune 2001, Shulman 2010, Stuart and Stack 2008). They do not address the intersection of race, ethnicity and urban space, nor the spatial consequences of Cuban immigration, incorporation and empowerment in Miami.

During the early 1990's, a decade after the Mariel Boatlift, a small academic canon focusing on the study of Cuban American incorporation emerged. In books like *City on the Edge* (Portes and Stepick 1993) and *Miami Now* (Grenier and Stepick 1992) the Cuban "success story" of cultural adaptation and political and economic empowerment was explored and the notion of "acculturation in reverse" was developed (Portes & Stepick 1993: 8). Miami is presented as a laboratory of bi-cultural, bilingual living; a place where native-born residents assimilate to newly arrived immigrants by adopting Hispanic customs and the Spanish language (Portes & Stepick 1993: 8). In these books, Miami's Cubans challenge normative theories of cultural assimilation with an immigrant business elite and alternate social structures, hierarchies, civic institutions and cultural life that erode the Anglo mainstream. In Miami, parallel social systems – Hispanic and Anglo – co-exist in the same urban space (Portes and Stepick 1993). Acculturation in reverse is further considered at a micro-political scale in Stepick et al.'s (2003) *This Land is Our Land: Immigrants and Power in Miami*. This study considers everyday inter-personal encounters at the work place, service industry and schools, where the process of trans-culturation and segmented assimilation carried out by immigrants is permeated with cultural tension, negotiation and lack of closure. While these books aim to illustrate how Cuban immigrants and the Cuban American community obtained political power after the Mariel Boatlift, they do not explain how "acculturation in reverse," "bi-culturalism" or "trans-culturation" were practiced in the urban spaces of Miami to gain political control. Instead, Miami remains a-spatial as political mobilizations; conflicts over infrastructure, and competition for community development assets during a crucial period in the city's history remain unexamined.

The study of Miami's race and ethnic relations offers an example of scholarship in which urban space has started to matter. In Sheila Croucher's (1997) *Imagining Miami: Ethnic Politics in a Postmodern World* competing narratives of power along ethnic lines – Whites, Hispanics and Blacks – are examined to discern the ethnic discourses that shape public perceptions among Miami's diverse communities. Croucher offers an in-depth discourse analysis of the frames, statements and perceptions that form individual opinions and provoke collective action. Nevertheless, Miami's the manner in which ethnic communities compete for resources is not treated beyond the analysis of discursive statements. Croucher's analysis challenges limited conceptions of race and ethnic affiliation, but her analysis originates from statements drawn from in-depth interviews and claims that appear in the periodical and popular literature on Miami

without a true consideration of how urban space is produced and contested (Croucher 1997: 201). An exploration of ethnic competition in the city is explored in Jan Nijman's (2007) *Local Exiles and Cosmopolitans: A Theoretical Argument about Race in Miami*. Nijman, an urban geographer, abandons the classic ethnic triad of "White, Hispanic and Black" and proposed instead the triad of "Locals, Exiles and Cosmopolitans." While the element of trans-national mobility is injected into Nijman's conceptualization of Miami's ethnic mix, Nijman disregards the mechanisms that enable or foreclose the capacity to practice that mobility – community development, urban planning, and real estate markets. Nijman's scholarship addresses Miami's urban space through the forces of economic capital that make Miami a node in the network of global cities (Nijman 1997) in order to carve out a model of paradigmatic urbanism (Nijman 2000). While his writings describe Miami as a site where trans-national influences and increased mobility have produced a new type of urban identity based on transience, his verdict on Miami's civic sphere is dire. For Nijman, transience results in an under-valued civil society where social capital is fragmented and political culture disregards the social contract (Nijman 2011). Building from this position, my historical analysis aims to show that the experience of immigration provides the grounds for political claims making through the process of spatial politics.

A turn towards a deeper understanding about how immigrants shape Miami's urbanism is brought forth in George Yúdice's *The Expediency of Culture* (2003) and *Images of Latino-polis* (2005). Yúdice, a scholar of cultural industries, focuses on cultural production and urban identity. He addresses the relationship between race and urban development by borrowing a concept from Latin America racial history: "racial democracy." He continues by unpacking Miami's "global city" claim (Portes & Sassen 1993) to consider how ethnic conflicts play out through urban development mechanisms. For Yúdice, the city's cultural industries (print, media, music and film) render a collective identity in the city's public spaces and gentrified districts. The consumption of cultural commodities – music, Hispanic language entertainment and television – make Miami a *Latinopolis*: a simulacrum of racial democracy, whereby the Creole becomes the dominant figure, albeit one whose agency is measured by degrees of white miscegenation, excluding populations of African descent (both African and Haitian-Americans). Yúdice then addresses how collective identity based on the notion of a racial democracy deploys visions of urban revitalization that gentrify African American neighborhoods. While he does not delve deeply into the urban development processes that produce urban spaces – planning, real estate speculation and community development – he touches upon the branding mechanisms that drive urban revitalization. Culture becomes a factor in the displacement, increased poverty and lack of adequate infrastructure for Miami's residents (Yúdice 2003, 2005).<sup>66</sup>

While the analysis of Cuban American incorporation, the discourses of race and ethnicity, the forces of transience and mobility, and the investigation of cultural production have predominated in urban analyses of Miami, the link between demographic change, urban planning, community development and Cuban American empowerment has remained absent. In the following section, I uncover these links through a history of Cuban American spatial politics based on three phases: crisis, community development and empowerment.

### **Crisis: The Mariel Boatlift**

1980 marked a pivotal moment in Miami's planning history, when the city was transformed from a playground tourist destination and home to an entrepreneurial Cuban

---

<sup>66</sup> In chapter five I return to Yúdice's cultural analysis to investigate the use of culture as a place-making strategy in the art district of Wynwood and the Municipality of Opa-locka.

American community to a “Paradise Lost” (Kelly 1981). Over the span of a single year, Miamians experienced a violent drug trafficking crime wave, the arrival of 125,000 Cuban and 40,000 Haitian refugees, and subsequent urban riots resulting from the acquittal of white police officers in the shooting death of Arthur McDuffie.<sup>67</sup>

The humanitarian crisis of the Mariel Boatlift, in particular, established the public perception of an urban crisis resulting from the overwhelming arrival of Cuban refugees. Following a break-in and a massive take over of the Peruvian embassy in March of 1980, Fidel Castro ordered the opening of El Mariel, a port near Havana, to allow Cuban citizens to leave by using the port as a staging ground. Over a period of 4 months, vessels from south Florida and Cuba transported thousands of people across the Florida straits into the US mainland. Miami’s local Cuban American leadership faced the stark choice of standing next to their fellow compatriots or remaining inactive (Portes and Stepick 1993). Characteristically different from the urban riots sparked by local police brutality, and drug violence due to drug trafficking, the boatlift began as an international crisis that brought an influx of political refugees requiring safety, shelter and support. This factor provided the backdrop for the first component of Cuban American spatial politics: individual actions of Cuban American residents in behalf of Cuban refugees. Such performances of individual humanitarian action took place across Miami’s urban spaces and forged collective claims based on ethnic affiliation, solidarity, and communal stigmatization. At the same time, the growing presence of refugees on the streets of Miami surprised local leaders and placed great pressure on the allocation of county resources and the distribution of public services. The influx of refugees also made irrelevant the demographic statistics metropolitan planners had gathered for the 1980 Census.

While the number of Cuban refugees caught the city’s political leaders and residents by surprise, their influx was not without precedent. Since the onset of the 1959 Cuban Revolution, a continued refugee flow had persisted unabated for two decades.<sup>68</sup> Traditionally, the treatment of Cuban immigrants had been characterized by a federal policy providing special entry visas based on their political status as citizens fleeing a communist nation. In Dade County, these measures had been complemented by policy measures aimed at integrating the new arrivals into the American mainstream. During the 1960’s some of these measures were trailblazing. Once such case, the 1963 bilingual education program at Coral Gables Elementary School, was the first program of its kind to be instituted in an American public school system. In the 1970’s, language provisions continued to be institutionalized at the county level with the 1973 Dade County Bilingual Ordinance, recognizing Spanish and English as official languages of Dade County (Logan 1967, Portes and Schaufli 1994). These types of provisions provided an economic benefit to Cubans and other Hispanics by facilitating job acquisition, training and retention, and by establishing an atmosphere of multicultural awareness in the city. Beyond the provision of language, welfare support and a fast-track path to American citizenship were also given to Cuban refugees.

The Mariel crisis, however, represented an unprecedented break from the established model of immigration. When it began, the boatlift was dominated by scenes of Cuban American

---

<sup>67</sup> According to Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick (1993) the Mariel Boatlift, the Haitian exodus to Miami contributed and the racial tensions provoked by the McDuffie beating created the perception that Miami had become a “Third World” city. The McDuffie beating led to Miami’s most “violent racial spasm in the history of the city” (Dunn 1997: 267). For more of the McDuffie riots and the history of African Americans in Miami see Dunn (1997).

<sup>68</sup> During the decades of the 1960’s and 70’ this process had been exemplified by the Pedro Pan airlifts, as well as the continued re-settlement of refugees in Miami’s growing Cuban American ethnic enclaves and other hosting urban destinations throughout the US. For more information see Shell-Weiss (2009).

residents launching and chartering boats from Miami and Key West to pick up relatives and fleeing Cubans at the port of Mariel. This portrait of cross-border solidarity based on common nationality and ethnic ties transformed the scenes of refugees arriving to South Florida into a stage of humanitarian action. In the second phase of the crisis, the lack of coordination among municipal and county leaders grew without a solution for over four months, as the Carter Administration contradicted itself over how to handle the crisis and Fidel Castro took advantage of the confusion to challenge the US government and score a domestic political victory. From May to September 1980, a geopolitical conflict between the US and Cuba played out on Miami's streets as Miami's leaders, the Cuban American community and the US government became involved in the largest humanitarian immigrant crisis to hit a major US metropolitan area.

*Marielitos*, as the Cuban refugees came to be known, placed massive burdens on the city's social services, public infrastructure, municipal budgets and security. From April 1980 to October 1980 the population of Dade County increased 15% (Shell-Weiss 2009). As their numbers grew over the span of the six-month crisis, social differences between the members of Miami's Cuban American community and the newly arrived refugees became apparent. Cuban Americans had settled in Miami for twenty years, built businesses and established the Cuban American "moral community" (Portes and Stepick 1993).<sup>69</sup> *Marielitos* presented a starkly different portrait from the elite and middle class Cuban residents who had migrated to Miami since the Cuban revolution in 1959. In contrast to an exemplary immigrant community in Miami representative of successful assimilation, *Marielitos* were impoverished Cuban citizens who did not have higher education degrees, did not come from urban centers and also represented a racial mix (Skop 2001).<sup>70</sup>

When the Mariel Boatlift occurred, Cuban Americans had also started to enjoy political gains. The city of Miami had elected the first Puerto Rican mayor with the support of Cuban Americans and the first city commissioner of Cuban descent.<sup>71</sup>

In an interview published by the *El Nuevo Herald* with then Assistant City Manager Cesar Odio, Odio recalls how at the onset of the boatlift, INS federal officials contacted him seeking assistance in dealing with the influx of refugees. A Cuban immigrant who arrived to Miami in the 1960's himself, Odio circumnavigated the official protocols of city administration to set up several informal arrival centers in the heart of Miami's Little Havana. These sites became locations where Cuban American family members could meet or inquire about refugees who could potentially be family members or friends. While Odio's strategy took care of the initial waves of refugees, the number of arrivals rapidly overwhelmed the community centers within weeks, driving Odio and other city staff to improvise additional locations in the midst of municipal, county, and federal paralysis. During this period, the immediate reaction from Odio and individuals of Cuban descent enabled the first response to the crisis.

---

<sup>69</sup> Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick describe Miami's "moral community" in relation to the right-wing ideology that has come to dominate anti-Castro sentiments in the minds and actions of Miami's Cuban exiles. According to him: "Little Havana is no mere immigrant neighborhood, not even a lively business hub, but a moral community with its own distinct outlook of the World. To be a Miami Cuban, it does not suffice to have escaped from the island; one must also espouse points of view repeated ceaselessly by editorialists in Miami's Spanish radio and press – the same voices that take care of denouncing any member of the community who strays too far from the fold" (Portes and Stepick 1993 p: 139).

<sup>70</sup> For a complete analysis of the racial and class characteristics of *Marielitos* see Skop (2001).

<sup>71</sup> Maurice Ferre became Miami's first elected Hispanic Mayor in 1973. Ferre was the first Puerto Rican Mayor in the US.

The actions of Odio and other Cuban American staff in County government set the groundwork for the City of Miami and Dade County to form a countywide crisis committee in charge of coordinating encampment efforts (Chardy 2010). As locations in Little Havana proved unable to manage the influx of refugees, the committee set up processing sites along Calle Ocho, Miami's historic east west corridor (Figure 19). *Marielitos* started their new lives at the Key West Naval Air Station (Figure 20), where their names were registered and essential provisions such as immediate food and shelter were administered. Afterwards, they were placed in buses and driven up I-95 to be distributed across metropolitan Dade County. During the height of the crisis tent cities were set up in some of Miami's most recognizable spaces: underneath the I-95 expressway (Figure 21), the Orange Bowl (Figure 22), Tamiami Park (Figure 23), and the Opa-Locka Air Force Base. These sites continued to function as release centers, but started to include the volunteer participation of up to 1,500 Cuban Americans who volunteered as translators, INS fingerprint assistants, record keepers and interviewers.<sup>72</sup> At one point, the processing center at Tamiami Park processed over 1,500 refugees in 18 days. Housed in these locations, *Marielitos* were either released to family members or transferred to encampments in other states.<sup>73</sup>

### **Metropolitan Planning and the Crisis of Demographic Data**

The experience of metropolitan planners during the Mariel Boatlift represents an untold story of Miami's planning history. While Cuban Americans improvised a response to the crisis, the planning practitioners proved to be equally affected. In my interviews with metropolitan planners active during this period, the sudden population increase meant that the data gathered in the 1980 census – collected until April 1980, a month before the crisis – became obsolete. Peter O'Donnell<sup>74</sup>, Chief of the Research Planning Division DP&Z at the time of the boatlift, explains:

Two weeks after census data of 1980 came out it all became theoretical because suddenly we had 125,000 Cubans in the city. The first attempt to accurately count minority populations was completely thrown into disarray. Nobody had any hard numbers; we had to obtain them from federal documents. We needed raw data to report on their numbers... where they were in different communities in the city. We needed these figures for welfare agencies and for the demographic unit's annual estimates. We needed to know their backgrounds, occasions and age, flesh out what was happening.

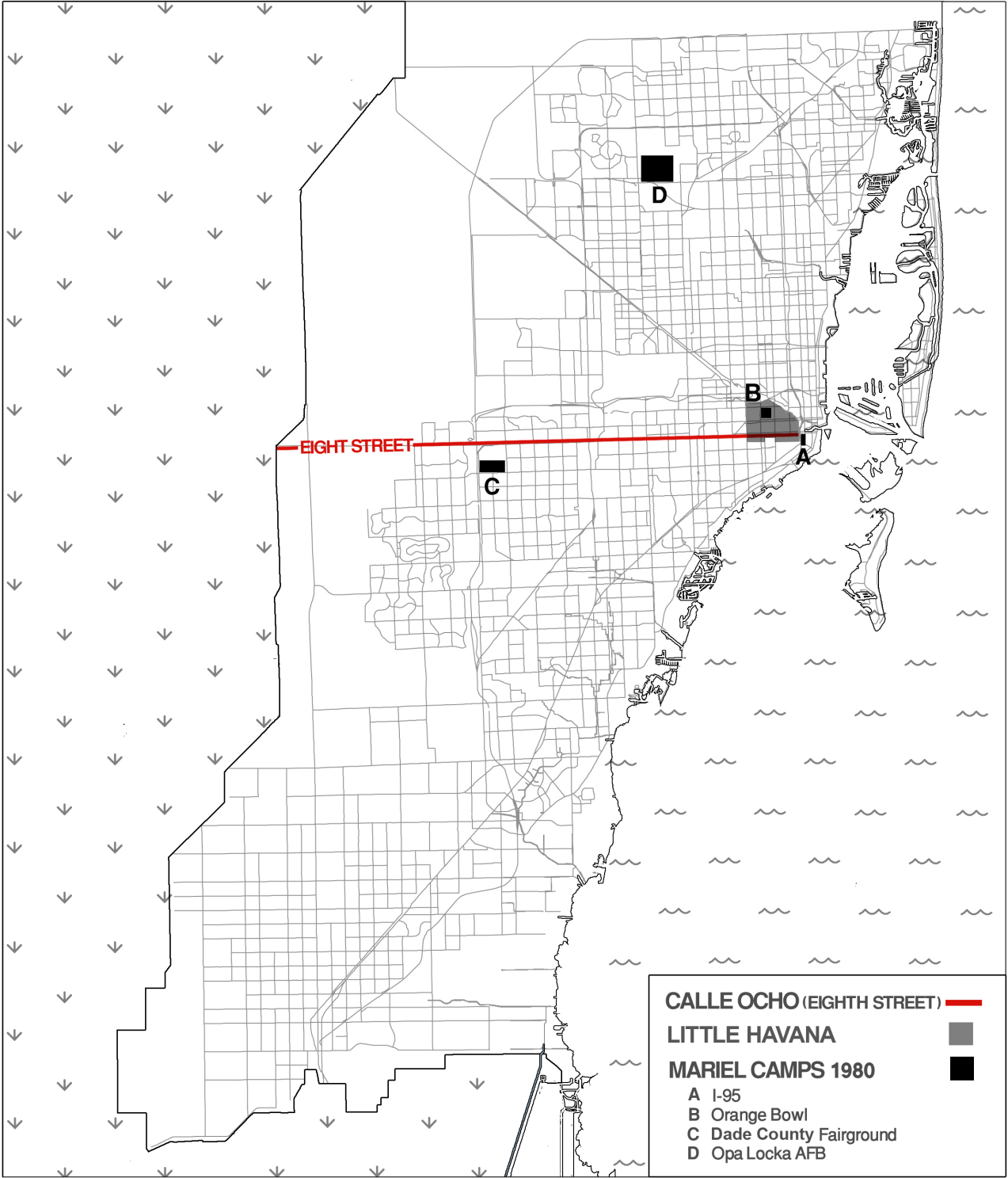
Metropolitan planners were responsible for providing accurate population data to community development corporations as well as municipal planning departments seeking community development funding. Population estimates were used to validated poverty rates,

---

<sup>72</sup> According to Dade County official documents, "The Orange Bowl was opened by the City of Miami in the second week of June. Those staying in the Orange Bowl were certified for food stamp assistance by the HRS food stamp division. But because the stadium was the home of the Miami Dolphins, the City of Miami decided to establish the temporary facility below I-95. Up to 800 Cubans were housed in the I-95 tent city at one time, and more than 4,000 lived there during the two months it was open. The tent city underneath I-95 remained open until September 30, 1980 (Unzueta 1981). See: [http://cuban-exile.com/doc\\_026-050/doc0033.html](http://cuban-exile.com/doc_026-050/doc0033.html)

<sup>73</sup> Additional camps were opened in Eglin Air Force Base in northwest Florida, at Indian Town Gap in Pennsylvania, at Fort McCoy in Wisconsin, and at Fort Chaffe in Arkansas (Unzueta 1981).

<sup>74</sup> Peter O'Donnell is a pseudonym for an informant.



**Figure 19** Mariel Refugee Encampments in Metropolitan Miami. The Area in gray represents the ethnic enclave of Little Havana. Source: Author.





**Figure 20** INS Processing center in Key West. Source: South Florida Historical Museum.



**Figure 21** Tent City underneath I-95. Source: South Florida Historical Museum.





**Figure 22** Tent City in Miami's Orange Bowl. Source: South Florida Historical Museum.



**Figure 23** Cuban Americans waiting for refugees outside the Dade County Fairgrounds. Source: University of Miami Digital Archives.

employment rates, housing shortages, as well as the future allocation of Community Development Block Grants, HUD Grants and other funding sources. The distribution of these funds was carried out through a geographic calculus based on the boundaries and demographic composition of census precinct data across Dade County. An unanticipated influx of Cubans dramatically increased the number of Hispanics in the metropolitan region, preventing a complete picture needed to inform the allocation of public funding.

Planners were aware that *Marielitos* were having a strong impact on the city's provisions of basic services. Early counts and interviews at the processing sites suggested that more than 50% of all Cuban resettlements were placed in families in the Miami Area, instead of resettlement camps (Dade County DP&Z Research Division 1980 p: 3). During the first weeks of the boatlift, 62,235 Cuban refugees were released directly to their relatives living in Miami (Skop 2001 p: 55). A year after the crisis Miami's social security, driver license and food stamp offices were overwhelmed by people requesting services (Unzueta 1981).<sup>75</sup>

To confront the inadequacy of demographic data, metropolitan planners collaborated with the National Census Bureau. An executive order issued by President Carter in December 1980 mandated the collaboration between the National Census Bureau and "affected states, counties, or local units of general purpose government" which had been subject to the immigration flows of Cuban and Haitian refugees.<sup>76</sup> Under this measure, planners started to obtain fresh data in early 1981 by tracking the habitat trajectories, living patterns and transitory flows of *Marielitos*. These data came from different sources. Initially data was derived from the records of the Cuban/Haitian Task Force, with additional data sets collected from the Immigration and Naturalization Service.<sup>77</sup> These data were combined with local food stamp records in different precincts across the county and intra-county school enrollment data to determine the movement and settlement patterns of refugees.<sup>78</sup> The picture that emerged provided compelling evidence about the social service repercussions of the Mariel crisis.

Up to 100,000 Cuban refugees were estimated to have settled in the Miami area by early 1983, 75% of which comprised family groups as opposed to unrelated individuals (DP&Z Research Division 1983 p:6). One important factor that stood out for planners was that up to 50% of the families that arrived were headed by women, a statistic that indicated future economic challenges for this portion of the population (DP&Z Research Division 1983 p:7). An analysis of elementary school enrollment of refugee children also provided clues to the locations of immigrant settlement. These concentrations were largely located in unincorporated Dade County (40%), followed by the municipality of Miami (32%), the municipality of Hialeah (26%), and the City of Miami Beach (3%).<sup>79</sup> Housing shortages for Hispanics also became evident after the crisis. According to County documents, Dade County's rental housing market had less than 0.5% vacancy before the arrival of refugees. Following the Mariel Boatlift, overcrowding indexes in Hispanic communities increased, pushing rental prices up and diminishing housing opportunities for new arrivals. The demographic impact of the boatlift was also felt in the Dade

---

<sup>75</sup> [http://cuban-exile.com/doc\\_026-050/doc0033.html](http://cuban-exile.com/doc_026-050/doc0033.html)

<sup>76</sup> White House Executive Order Census Statistics on Legal Immigrants, December 16, 1980.

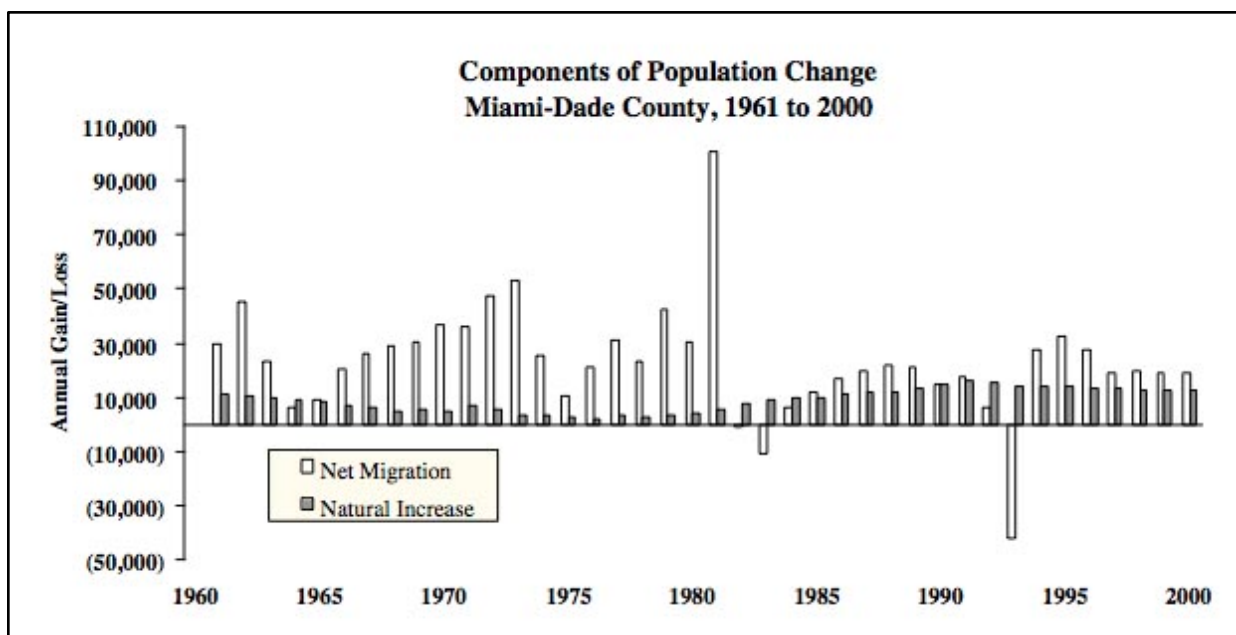
<sup>77</sup> The Cuban/Haitian Task Force (CHTF) was set up on July 15 1980, two months after the beginning of the crisis to assist Miami's local government officials. Originally comprised of several federal agencies under the leadership of FEMA, the CHTF reported to President Carter. For more on the CHTF see Bolton (1994).

<sup>78</sup> According to Dade County official planning documents, in the aftermath of the Boatlift a total of 36,500 food stamp units (each equivalent to one household) were being administered to Cuban refugees. This number contrasts with 6,500 units administered to Haitian refugees during the same time (DP&Z Research Division 1983:4).

<sup>79</sup> DP&Z Research Division 1983 p: 9

County public school system. Planners were able to determine that up to 13,800 new children registered to attend classes in grades K-12 in the year after Mariel.<sup>80</sup>

The data collected throughout the 1980's also emphasized the importance of the demographic category of "Hispanic" in Dade County. Historically, Cuban immigration coincided with institutionalization of metropolitan planning in the early 1960's. Metropolitan planners from this era were aware of immigration to South Florida and factored this into their urban growth projections. However, they never anticipated an immigrant influx of such magnitude over a short period of time (Figure 24). The presence of "non-white" residents of Latin American descent had been evident in Miami since the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; nevertheless it was not until the 1960's that the number of "non-whites" of Latin American decent started to become a visible minority.<sup>81</sup> The Mariel Boatlift contributed to transforming the category "Hispanic" into the symbol of a political community, which would in turn be used to mobilize political power.



**Figure 24** Population Increase in Miami-Dade County, 1961-2000. Grey bars represent the “natural” increase in the resident population. White bars represent the increase in population as a result of migration. The downward bars in 1983 and 1993 represents population flight from Dade County following the Mariel Boatlift and Hurricane Andrew. (Planning Research Section, Department of Planning and Zoning, p. 4, 2003).

### Cuban American Community Development: The CNC and CODEC

The second stage of Cuban American spatial politics concerns the ways in which data collected by metropolitan planners, along with planning mechanisms and knowledge, were used to promote a Cuban American political agenda. Specifically, planning data, mechanisms and knowledge were used to create a Cuban American community development system that offered

<sup>80</sup> [http://cuban-exile.com/doc\\_026-050/doc0033.html](http://cuban-exile.com/doc_026-050/doc0033.html)

<sup>81</sup> According to a 2003 report on the demographic profile of Dade County from 1960 to 2000, “In 1960, only about 5 percent of the population was Hispanic and 80 percent was non-Hispanic White. By 1970 Hispanics were still less than a quarter of the population, but in 1980 they were more than a third” (Demographic Profile, Miami Dade County FL, 1960 – 2000, p. 9, [http://www.miamidade.gov/planzone/Library/Census/demographic\\_profile.pdf](http://www.miamidade.gov/planzone/Library/Census/demographic_profile.pdf)).

social services provisions, programs, and urban development projects. The provision of these services encouraged the residential concentration of Cuban Americans, creating a powerful Cuban American voting bloc.

The demographic data produced by metropolitan planners in the aftermath of the Mariel Boatlift re-enforced the need for services and programs to assist in the care and integration of Miami's new arrivals. This challenge was met by a not-for-profit system established through the Cuban National Council (CNC) and its local community development subsidiary the Corporacion de Desarrollo Comunitario (CODEC). Both institutions became part of the burgeoning sphere of Miami's Cuban American civil society in the decade of the 1980's. During this period, Cuban American residents emerged in the wake of the Mariel Boatlift to take care of their own. They mobilized on behalf of Cuban American interests and formulated a cohesive discourse based on the positive ethnic contributions Cuban Americans make to Miami. This community development system was made up of Cuban American leaders who pursued a comprehensive effort to engage public policy debates locally, nationally, and internationally, provide economic aid, and embark upon an urban development agenda based on affordable housing for Hispanics (Verdecia 1988b).<sup>82</sup> Both organizations targeted all Hispanics in Dade County. The network established by the CNC and CODEC, included Cuban American political leaders, entrepreneurs, public servants and academics that specialized in immigration and Cuban American issues.

### **CNC: Public Policy and Discourse**

The Cuban National Council (CNC) began as a small non-profit organization in 1972 in Washington, DC, called the Cuban National Planning Council (CNPC).<sup>83</sup> Originally established to promote the understanding of the Cuban American community through research, education and leadership, the CNPC was instrumental in laying the seeds for policy proposals and debates focused on the assimilation of Cuban immigrants during the 1970's. This mission was localized in Miami in 1981, when the organization shifted its operations to Dade County and changed its name to the Cuban National Council. While the original mission of the CNPC remained the same, the CNC developed an intense focus on the basic needs of *Marielitos* in addition to poor populations within Miami's existing Cuban American community – mainly the young and the elderly (Diaz 1981, 1990, 1992a, Gutierrez 1984). This mission is evident in the inventory of service programs offered by the CNC since the early part of the 1980's, including drop-out prevention workshops, job training, and education programs.<sup>84</sup> The CNC has been highly successful in pursuing its agenda, and received federal, state and local funding for its efforts during the 1980's and early 1990's (Goldfarb 1989, Verdecia 1988a, 1988b, Tananarive 1991).

The CNC was also instrumental in developing policy documents, reports and events aimed at underlining the contributions of Cuban Americans in Miami (Del Campillo 1986, 1987, 1988b). This work was carried out through public workshops that framed the need for tolerance and diversity, and through conferences covering issues such as bilingualism, the Hispanic job market, and immigration rights (Verdecia 1988a). Alliances with local African American,

---

<sup>82</sup> "Help Hispanics Adapt" The Miami Herald, Final Edition, Editorial, 31 January 1988, 2F. For information on the urban development work of the CNC see: <http://www.cnc.org/elderly.php>

<sup>83</sup> For more information on the legacy of the CNC, see: <http://www.cnc.org/>.

<sup>84</sup> "Cuban Council's Classes Target High School Dropouts" The Miami Herald, Neighbors Section, Final Edition, 31 August, 1989.

Jewish and Haitian American civic groups were sought to involve a diverse coalition in these events. Participants also included academic experts from the University Miami, Florida International University, the Miami Chamber of Commerce, and other local government and private institutions of prominence. The CNC also sponsored conferences on the need for freedom of speech, posing such questions as: “Should a communist be allowed to come to Miami to speak in favor of Fidel Castro?” (Del Campillo 1986, 1987, Santiago 1986). These events brought together Cuban American community leaders and the public to discuss how freedom of speech controversies were portrayed in Miami Herald news coverage and to educate the audience about the historic and legal perspectives of freedom of speech debates.

On the national stage, members of the CNC joined representatives of Mexican American organizations such as La Raza on conference panels. Together they participated in national Hispanic committees set up by President Reagan to pursue a common agenda of citizenship rights for Hispanic non-citizens. Similarly, the CNC also became involved in US policy toward Cuba by attempting to influence policy debates on democratization in Latin America. This work included briefs and reports prepared for the first summit of the Americas, which was held in Miami in 1994, underscoring Miami’s strategic importance in the Western hemisphere as a bridge between North and South America and as a key destination for Hispanic businesses (Stack 1994a, Stack 1994b).

The policy discourse engineered by the CNC was part of a larger agenda developed by Cuban American businesses and interest groups to promote a positive message of Cuban assimilation (Del Campillo 1988b, Strategy Research Corporation 1988, Boswell 1985). The CNC produced reports disclaiming the notion that Miami was politically divided or fragmented due to the presence of Cuban Americans. Instead these reports framed Cuban American political mobilizations, economic activities and cultural life as positive signs of assimilation (Diaz 1991, 1992b). This discourse sought to address the perception of Cuban Americans as an ideologically driven “moral community” by re-framing their positions as more moderate.<sup>85</sup>

### **CODEC: Economic and Urban Development**

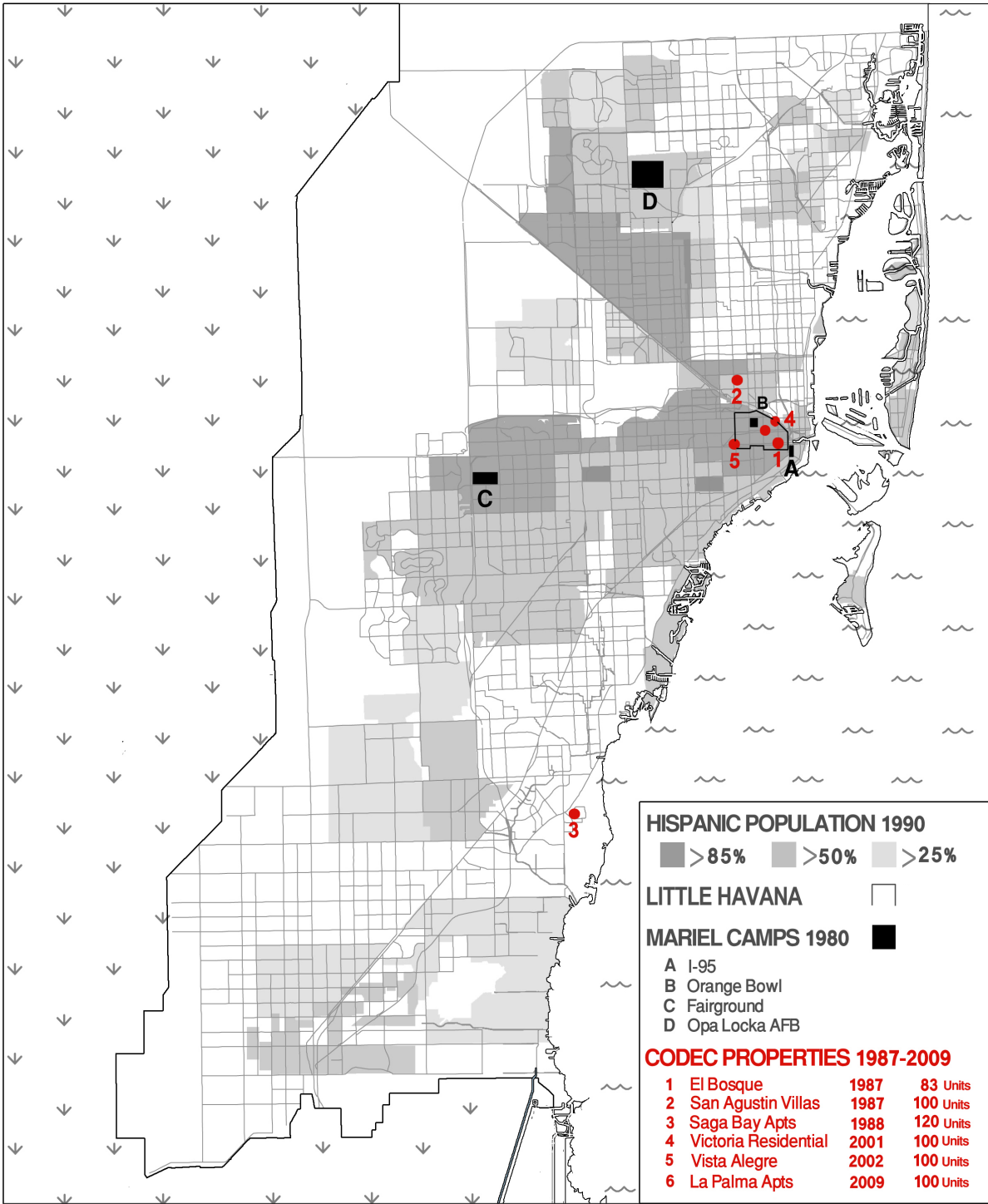
Prior to the 1980’s, Miami did not have an institution dedicated to the housing needs of Hispanics (Boyd 1986). In 1981, the CNC initiated CODEC, a non-profit aimed at securing low-income housing for Hispanics. During the first half of the 1980’s, CODEC bought and developed prime real estate to build an inventory of low rental and affordable apartment units in Miami’s little Havana. The funds for public housing came from Dade County taxpayers and were channeled into construction projects and the provision of mortgage subsidies for low-income Hispanic residents.<sup>86</sup> In 1985, CODEC established two for-profit agencies that assisted with housing acquisition and loan management for poor Hispanics. Miami Business Development Corporation Inc. was charged with administering HUD programs and providing mortgage aid to poor Hispanic clients (Barkin 1985). In a similar fashion, Peninsula Housing Development functioned as the construction company in charge of the design, construction management, and building administration of new CODEC properties.<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> The term “moral community” is used by Portes & Stepick to describe the intolerance that Miami’s Cuban American exile community has traditionally portrayed in its ultra-conservative positions concerning issues related to Cuba (1993 p: 137).

<sup>86</sup> “What The Surtax Does,” The Miami Herald, Final Edition, Local Section, 21 October, 1987, p. 1B.

<sup>87</sup> “Florida Growth Surges,” The Miami Herald, Final Edition, Home and Design, 11 October, 1987, 2H.



**Figure 25** Concentrations of CODEC Properties, 1987-2009. Source DP&Z & Author.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>88</sup> This map was created by juxtaposing GIS layers of demographic data from the 1990 census with CODEC properties. The addresses were determined through archival research of the Miami Herald under the key word “CODEC” from 1987 to 2009 and housing data from the City of Miami community development office: <http://www.ci.miami.fl.us/communitydevelopment/Docs/Housing/Multifamily%20Rental%20Housing%20List.pdf>

According to the CNC website, over the span of 30 years CODEC has built a total of 1,900 housing units, including 150 condominiums for working families in Florida and across the US.<sup>89</sup> The units in Miami were built in Little Havana, the epicenter of Miami's Cuban American community (Figure 25), where a need for public housing was necessary given the concentration of poor Hispanic residents (Figueroa 1987). The location of CODEC's projects emphasizes the spatial relationship between housing built by the Cuban American community development system and the settlement patterns of Cuban immigrants in Little Havana. This co-location would not have been possible without the demographic data that was developed by metropolitan planners during the 1980's.

### **Metropolitan Planning and Bloc Voting: Ethnic Interests v. the Public Good**

The work of Dade County metropolitan planners contributed to the incorporation of Cuban Americans through the production, calibration and sharing of demographic data with Cuban American organizations. During the 1980's and 1990's this data was used to support the arguments of CNC pamphlets, reports and policy briefs I have described (Boswell 1995, Del Campillo 1987, 1988a, 1988b, Diaz, 1991, 1990, 1991, 1992a, 1992b), calling for an array of provisions ranging from housing to education, but also showcasing the economic contributions of Cuban Americans to Miami. Similarly demographic data became a key factor in the accumulation of not-for-profit capital (Macari 1983, Miami Herald 1982).

As the demographic effects of the Mariel Boatlift continued to be studied by metropolitan planners throughout the 1980's to evaluate the presence, age, and origin of Hispanics in Dade County, these assessments were shared with the CNC who used them to generate further policy recommendations and validate the construction of public housing (Diaz 1992). Planners' projections of Miami's Hispanic population provided the evidence required to determine housing needs according to census tracts, thus influencing the allocation of community development block grants and other funding sources.

Metropolitan planners facilitated data in order to fulfill the "public good" imperative that guided their work; however, there was also a political consequence that followed. Dade County planners envisioned their data would be used as the basis for the equitable allocation of public funds. While the Cuban American community development system deployed this data to care for Miami's most needy Hispanic residents, these service provisions also allowed Cuban Americans to develop housing and provisions in the locations of existing an existing political base at the neighborhood scale that could be mobilized into political action. The location of CODEC - sponsored housing contributed to the settlement patterns and residential concentration of Cuban Americans. This in turn may have contributed to the creation a powerful voting bloc that could be tapped by local politicians during the 1980's.<sup>90</sup>

### **Empowerment: Municipal Elections and County Re-districting**

The last stage of Cuban American spatial politics involves the mobilization of voters, the formation of a discourse that envisioned an alternative political order in Miami, and the

---

<sup>89</sup> <http://www.cnc.org/elderly.php>

<sup>90</sup> The question of how much metropolitan planners and community developments specialists in Miami contributed to the formation of political voting blocs remains as a hypothesis for future research. For now the archival evidenced I have collected demonstrate together with the GIS analysis I have carried out demonstrate a co-location between the provision of housing and concentrations of ethnic voting blocs.



composition of urban alliances that effectively reconfigured the distribution of political power in Dade County. As with the other stages of Cuban American spatial politics, metropolitan planners became involved in a process that had the transformation of the political status quo as its ultimate goal.

As explained above, the Cuban American community development system was instrumental not only in developing a policy and urban development agenda, but also in producing documents, organizing conferences and forming coalitions throughout the 1980's that placed the contributions of Cuban Americans in a moderate and positive light. These measures were part of a discursive frame that originated in the context of a political backlash against Cuban Americans after the Mariel Crisis.

In December 1980, only a few months after the end of the Mariel Boatlift, a wave of xenophobia swept through metropolitan Miami. The presence of *Marielitos* on the city's streets mobilized a public repudiation against refugees and Cuban Americans in the form of an English-only referendum that abolished the 1973 Dade County bilingual ordinance. The effort was pushed by English speaking Anglo groups that came together under the name of Citizens for Dade County United. The measure also sought to prevent the use of public funds to "promote a culture other than the culture of the United States" (Portes and Schauffler 1994: 645). The effort challenged the use of public funds for the education, placement, and job training of newly arrived *Marielitos* and members of the Cuban American community. The referendum passed and Cuban American residents found themselves caught up in the stigmatization originating from the Mariel crisis.

In response, Cuban Americans organized a counter mobilization over the following years that led to the consolidation of their political power in the city of Miami. According to Portes and Stepick, the combined outcome of the Mariel Boatlift and the English-only referendum "transformed Cubans into a self-conscious ethnic group that organized effectively for local political competition" (Portes and Stepick 1993: 37). The first signs of Cuban American political empowerment came in 1985 when Xavier Suarez became Miami's first Cuban American mayor. Suarez obtained 56.3% of the vote in the City of Miami by "luring enough black voters to accompany his dominance in the Hispanic community" (Sewell 1985). By 1985, the Cuban American voting bloc comprised 40% of registered voters in the city of Miami with Blacks at 29.8% and whites at 30.1%. Cuban Americans had not only claimed the political leadership of the city but had also done so by reaching across ethnic lines (Sewell 1985).

The rise of the Cuban American community would be transformative for ethnic politics in Dade County. Following Suarez's victory, Cuban American leaders galvanized around a discourse of successful assimilation stating that Miami had become an important hub of tourism, business and finance as a result of Cuban American economic and cultural contributions (Portes and Stepick 1993) (Figure 26). This discourse emerged from efforts organized by CNC through its programs and policy reports.

Suarez's rise to power marked the beginning of a wave of electoral victories that brought more Hispanics to power in Miami. Grenier writes, "At the dawn of the 1980's only four Hispanics held elective office in the Miami area. In 1990 over forty Hispanics held elective office, including seven mayoralities as well as majorities on the city commissions of Miami, Hialeah, West Miami and Sweetwater" (Grenier and Stepick 1992 p:177). As Miami entered the decade of the 1990's, electoral power was concentrated in the hands of Hispanics. Beyond municipal leadership, Cuban-American political empowerment led to a parallel political battle that played out in county government.



# City of Miami, Florida



XAVIER L. SUAREZ  
MAYOR

P O BOX 330708  
MIAMI, FLORIDA 33233-0708  
305-579-6010

October 7, 1988

Dear Readers:

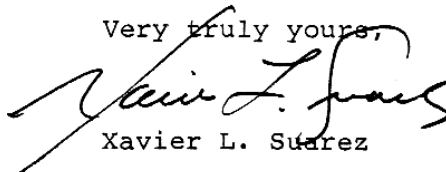
The City of Miami has been enriched socially, economically, and politically by the Hispanic Community.

We are becoming an international capital for business, tourism, and cultural arts.

Many people tend to forget that this is still a young community, characterized by renewal, vitality and diversity. There is a large, rapidly growing young Hispanic-American segment, which is bilingual, dual-cultural, and well-educated. They not only speak the language of the State and Nation, but are the best spokespersons for South Florida's Hispanic community. They bring their ideas to business and give their culture to this place, making it a fascinating City to live, work, visit and admire.

The 1989 South Florida Latin Market Study will provide much information about this dynamic community. It illustrates for us the past contributions of our Hispanic communities, and its potential for the future. I would like to thank Strategy Research Corporation and the Sponsors of this event, for making this study possible.

Very truly yours,



Xavier L. Suarez

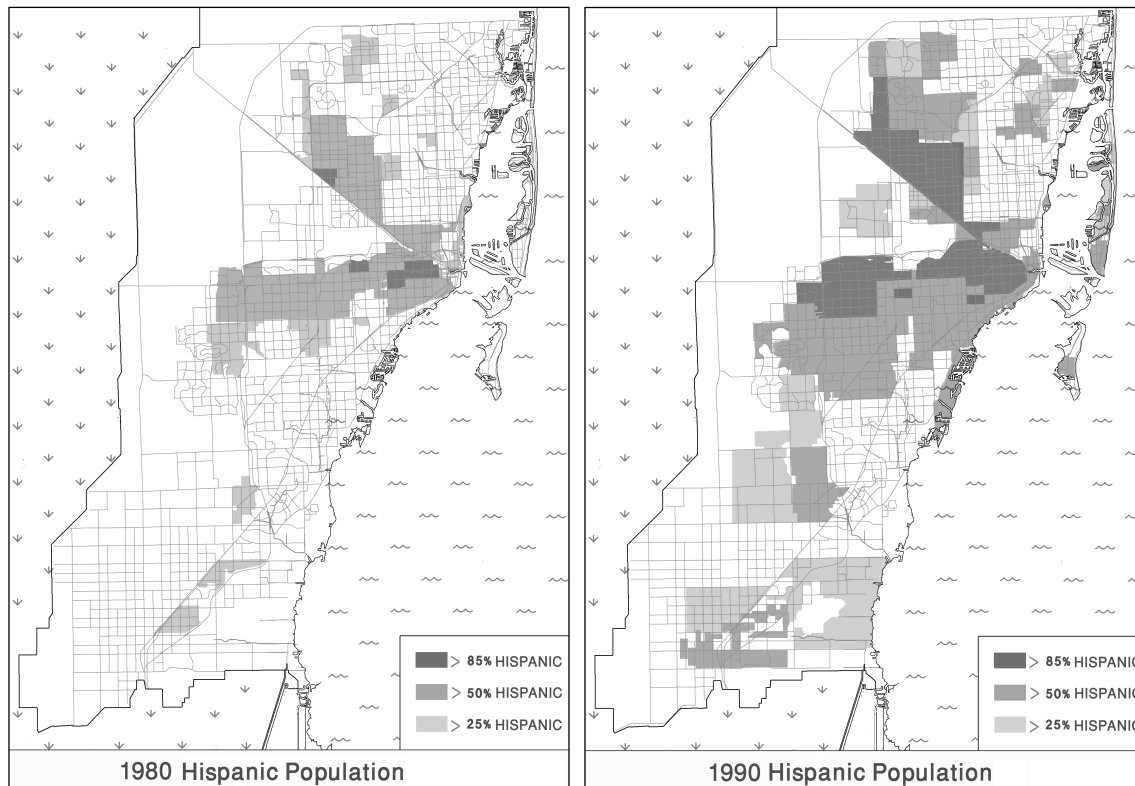
XLS/lew

Figure 26 Mayor Xavier Suarez's letter endorsing the 1989 South Florida Latin Market study.

### Metropolitan Planning and Redistricting: Ethnic Territorialization and Alliances

In 1986, the *Meek v. Metropolitan Dade County*<sup>91</sup> lawsuit set in motion a series of verdicts and appeals that eventually established electoral power for minority Black and Hispanic residents in Dade County by redrawing district lines from nine all around seats to 13 district specific seats. Once again ethnic minorities coalesced their interests in order to challenge the status quo. This time however, the challenge would occur at the metropolitan scale through Dade County governance.

Historically, Miami's county commission districts had not functioned in favor of ethnic minorities. The pre-Meek nine-district arrangement called for a countywide selection process that diluted the concentrated vote of Hispanic and African American blocs in specific areas of the city. The plaintiffs, who included recently elected mayor Xavier Suarez, ex-mayor Maurice Ferre and a coalition of African Americans and Hispanic activists, claimed that the system was in violation of Section 2 of the Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965. The newly formed ethnic coalition argued for political representation given the new demographic composition of Dade County. Hispanics had increased their population size and location dramatically throughout the metropolitan area from 1980 to 1990 (Figures 27 & 28). By 1992 Hispanics and Blacks made up 70% of the county population, yet they had inadequate representation in county governance. A change in the number of commission districts, as well as a new reconfiguration based on ethnic concentrations and numbers was need.



**Figure 27** Hispanic Population in Miami and Dade County, 1980.

**Figure 28** Hispanic Population in Miami and Dade County, 1990. (Source DP&Z & Author.)

<sup>91</sup> *Meek v. Metropolitan Dade County*, No. 89-5146 [<http://openjurist.org/908/f2d/1540>].

In 1991 the plaintiffs prevailed, and in the subsequent County Commission election in 1992 the number and composition of Dade County commission districts was transformed from a white majority to an ethnic majority composed of Black and Hispanic leaders. The result was a dramatically altered re-distribution of power in the city based on strategic political alliances between Hispanic and African American ethnic groups seeking to end white domination.

The effects of demographic change and the new political alliances formed in the aftermath of Suarez's mayoral victory thrust planners into a political process that remade the political geography of the county in response to shifting racial and ethnic lines. According to my interviews with the DP&Z Research Division head at the time, the Meek decision set in motion an intense period of territorial claims-making where political power at the county level became a matter of block-by-block vote allocation in the new political district maps that planners helped to draw. Metropolitan planners were called to develop preliminary maps demonstrating alternatives for the new configurations of county districts. Since metropolitan planners were knowledgeable of demographic data and understood the breakdown of ethnic composition in census designated areas to the level of city blocks, they became important resources for the victorious teams of lawyers and plaintiffs in the aftermath of the Meek decision. Their expertise would be used to ensure the greatest number of potential votes according to the design of newly delineated political territories.

In an interview I conducted with Walter Thomas,<sup>92</sup> a community development specialist who was active during the time of the lawsuit, he provided a closer view into the interests and expediencies that led to the formation of the Hispanic/Black coalition. According to Thomas, the coalition was based on a mutual interest in changing the balance of urban power countywide.<sup>93</sup> This time, however, coalition building did not happen at the ballot, as it did during the City of Miami municipal elections; it occurred behind closed doors and in front of a judge. While dispersed through different locations in Miami, both Black and Hispanic leaders understood that by joining forces they would be able to change the nature of power in the region by carving out new territories of control. Walter Thomas explains:

This was a joint suit on paper. You had Hispanics joining the lawsuit, but that wasn't because we needed to file together. We had self-interest in creating these single member districts where you could run and win. It was convenient for them [Cuban Americans] since they did not have representation, so they had to join. On paper it is coalition building, you have two groups that changed the make-up of the political landscape, local and state. They had the numbers but they did not have the evidence of how the vote was diluted. We had actual case studies from elections that demonstrated that was the case. You had two minority groups that essentially were facing the same types of hurdles if the system did not change and recognized that they will benefit from them. But they joined the suit out of self-interest.

Thomas suggests that the coalition between Blacks and Hispanics did not necessarily reflect close ties of mutual support. Rather, behind it lay the expediency of achieving goals of political empowerment that were particular to each respective ethnic community. This pragmatic coalition continued to signal an emerging political dynamic in Miami – strategic alliances between ethnic groups arising out of a context of immigration.

---

<sup>92</sup> Walter Thomas is a pseudonym for an informant.

<sup>93</sup> As noted in a previous section, a similar approach of Hispanic/Black coalitions had taken place before for the election of Xavier Suarez, who won with the support of the city of Miami's black electorate

The coalition emerged in part from a dispute over planning practice in metropolitan Miami. The interests that drove African Americans to collaborate with Hispanics not only arose from a context of political and economic disenfranchisement, which was endemic to the African American experience in Miami. It was also sparked by what African American leaders saw then as a failure of metropolitan planning and centralized county government. One such case, the construction of Joe Robbie Stadium in 1993 prevented the birth of Destiny, the first ever African American municipality in Dade County. Wayne Huizenga, former owner of the Miami Dolphins, funded a campaign to prevent the incorporation, due to concerns that the newly formed municipality would tax the stadium. Metropolitan planners joined the effort by producing planning reports against the pro-incorporation position of local African American community leaders, arguing that residents comprised “recipient communities” who obtained services without paying sufficient taxes (Husock 1998).

Following the Meek decision, the redrawing of district borders took place before the actual onset of county commission elections scheduled for 1992. Once the verdict was established, the Dade County elections department contacted the metropolitan planning department to begin translating the legal decision into the creation of new districts. The elections department required the new map because they were in charge of drawing the voting precincts. To establish the new lines, the elections department had to coordinate their work with the planning research division to assess the potential repercussions of shifting boundaries according to demographic data.<sup>94</sup>

Into this process of combining politics and territory entered the interested parties of the lawsuit. While the Dade County elections department and the planning department provided the information needed to translate Meek’s legal implications into a political reality, it was politicians running for county office who literally (re) created their constituencies by re-drawing Dade County’s electoral map. An ad-hoc subcommittee comprised of the plaintiffs and local community leaders who were involved in the lawsuit led the process of re-districting.<sup>95</sup> Together they formed a working group that consulted with metropolitan planners to decide on the configuration of new districts based on fresh demographic data and recommendations supplied by planners (Figure 29). Throughout this process metropolitan planners sought to provide accurate information for scenarios where ethnic concentrations would be balanced in different zones to prevent divisions in class and race that would further fragment the electoral vote. Planners already perceived Dade County to be a socially fragmented metropolis where different ethnic populations not only lived in seclusion along municipal lines, but also in ethnic enclaves that spanned from the urban core to suburbia. Nevertheless their recommendations were many times set aside to the expediencies of ensuring ethnic political power. Peter O’Donnell explains:

The working group would touch bases with us [metropolitan planners]: What about this alignment? What about that alignment? What would it mean in terms of the shift of population percentages, etc. The committee would send us a draft alignment. We would give them the recommendation. Our work was turned into “if’s”: What if I did this X percent more Hispanic in that neighborhood? What if that group was not included in the Black commissioners’ new district? But the decisions were made by them and by the judge. It was like a school desegregation issue. In many cases it was an ad hoc decision

---

<sup>94</sup> 2011 Interview with Peter O’Donnell 2011. Peter O’Donnell is a retired planner from the DP&Z who headed the research division during 1980’s and 1990’s.

<sup>95</sup> 2011 Interview with Peter O’Donnell 2011.

of the players who were involved from those areas, their municipalities, their representatives and their consultants.

The redistricting imperative resulting from the *Meek v. Metropolitan Dade County* lawsuit thrust planners into a situation that challenged the neutrality of their profession. Once again, metropolitan planners saw their role as neutral – they were to promote the public interest of all in Dade County.<sup>96</sup> Nevertheless, the winners of the legal suit – including potential future commissioners – sought a political advantage. According to O’Donnell, these parties were strategic in drawing the district lines since they were already politically active in zones where their names and activities carried recognition and were part of neighborhood politics.

Decisions over boundaries would not only be based on a block-by-block case depending on ethnic composition and numbers, they would also be based on concentrating the numbers of Hispanics and Blacks to ensure proper political representation and the best possible voting outcome for minorities. O’Donnell states:

We weren’t real happy with the federal judge, there wasn’t much of any consultation. We had a good reputation for giving facts, and folks [planners] were not very partisan at all. We made a decision within the department that this would be a political nightmare because there would be pressure from other groups, and our work of doing good planning would be compromised. It was a political game that they were playing so it would not be too productive.

While metropolitan planners were involved in the process, they did not consider the redistricting decision favorably and sought to minimize the involvement of the Department of Planning and Zoning. For them, the decision presented a highly contested political issue with potentially conflictive consequences that would tarnish the neutrality of their work. However, during this period in Miami’s planning history, the neutral façade of metropolitan planning was trumped by Cuban American spatial politics.

In 1992, Dade County government elected a new set of leaders of Hispanic and African American origin. The majority of white commissioners that had traditionally characterized county government officially ended, and the political status quo of Miami was transformed into a new reality defined by ethnic power. One of the first symbolic measures carried out by the new board of commissioners was the rebuttal of the “English only” ordinance. Although symbolic, this act crystallized the empowerment of Miami’s Cuban American community (San Martin 1993).

---

<sup>96</sup> Interview with Peter O’Donnell 2011.

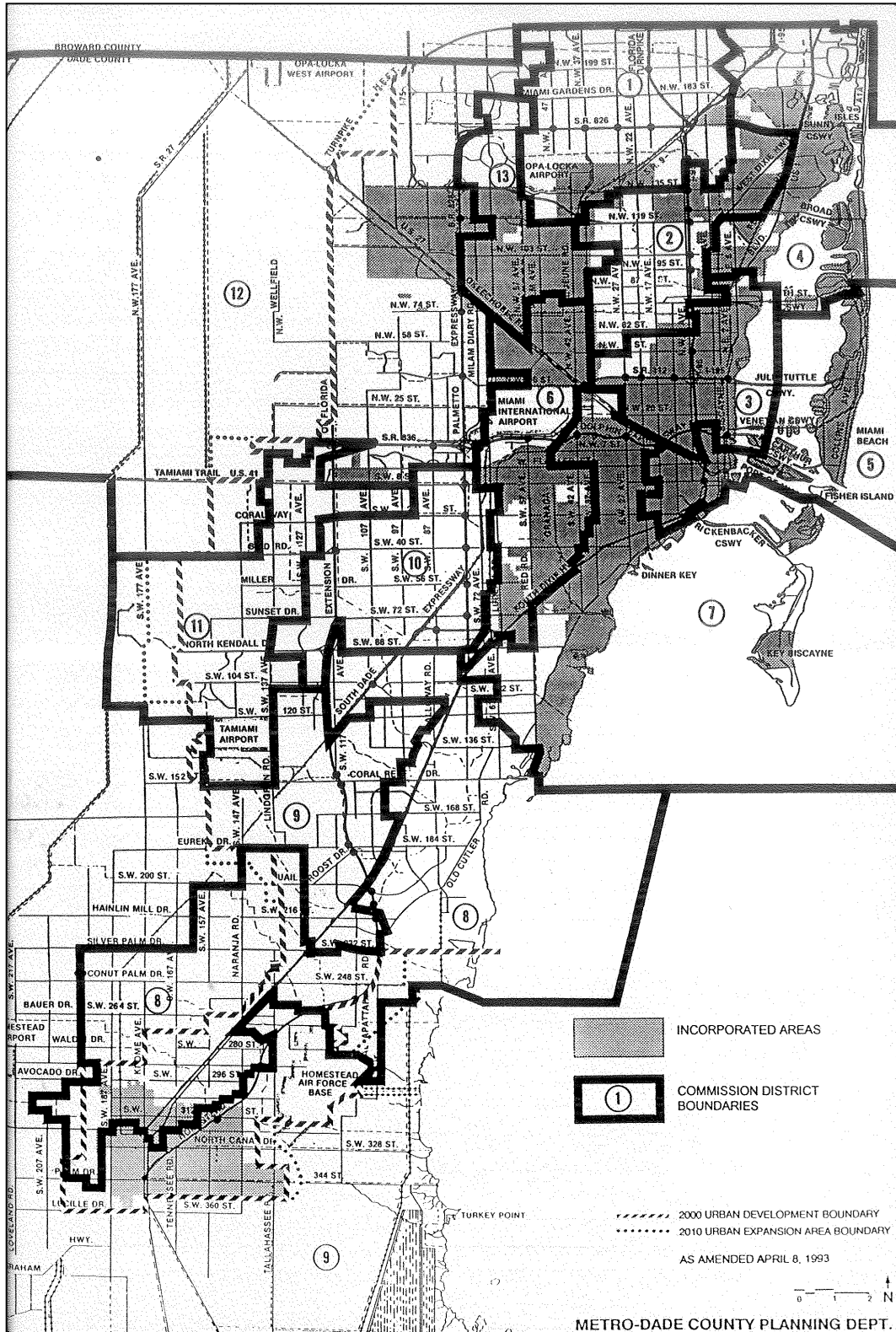


Figure 29 The Political Reconfiguration of Dade County. Source: Research Division MDC 1994.

## **Conclusion: Laying the foundations for Spatial Politics Redux**

According to my interviews the decade of the 1980's was a challenging period for metropolitan planners as they faced the political effects of new demographic conditions brought forth by the empowerment of the Cuban American Community and their alliances with African Americans. These testimonies suggest that metropolitan planners dealt with the management of a refugee crisis, the formation of a community development system addressing ethnic needs, the rise of new ethnic leadership in municipalities, and the realignment of Dade County's political map.

Arguably, Miami offers a case where metropolitan planners faced a series of events exemplified by crisis, community development, and empowerment that challenged their assumptions in front a new socio-political reality. The statements of the three metropolitan planners I interviews and the archival data I have gathered show that Metropolitan planners deployed their data gathering, evaluation and assessment techniques to assist with securing community development funding, infrastructure investments, and resource allocation for immigrant populations. This funding provided the co-location housing in existing locations of powerful ethnic voting blocs organized by people like Lidia and Francisco.

And while my analysis is absent of the voices of Cuban American counter-planners who planned next to conventional planning, their memory offers me a powerful symbol of the process of political empowerment that led to dramatic changes in the political status quo throughout metropolitan Miami. Inspired by their memory, their actions and the experiences I had with them, I have crafted the concept of *spatial politics* to consider how planning can be used as political tool by immigrants for political recognition and representation.

I have argued that *spatial politics* advances our understanding of the processes of urban political change and the role played by people, planning, and urban space in bringing about this change in three ways. First, *spatial politics* considers not only how urban space is transformed by politics, but also how space is used to transform politics through events actions and decisions in which immigrants are the protagonists. Second, *spatial politics* do not function in a determined or linear manner. Instead, there are multiple trajectories and actions that overlap over a long period of time. Third, *spatial politics* helps me recognize that political transformation has scalar qualities that require attention. In this chapter I have concentrated on the metropolitan and municipal scales and focused on mandates in legal documents and official representations that define a neighborhood, rule a municipality, and govern a metropolitan territory.

In the next chapter I turn to a period that started during the period of Cuban American Spatial Politics and eventually acquired importance during the following decade of the 1990's: The Rebellion of Municipal incorporations. Through their analysis, I continue my exploration of *spatial politics* to consider how political power is organized in reaction to the Cuban American empowerment, at the scale of the street to challenge the scale of the county.

## Chapter 4: Spatial Politics Redux: The Rebellions of Municipal Incorporation in Metropolitan Miami (1991 – 2005)

“Centralized control of street signs for a million people scattered over 2109 square miles is an idea Karl Marx would have loved”

Joanna Wragg<sup>97</sup>

### The Rise of the *Communities of interest*

In chapter three I considered how the Cuban American community engaged in *spatial politics* to claim control of government at the mayoral and county level. In this chapter, I examine how municipal incorporations were used by some communities to counter the political gains made by ethnic minorities in the 1980s – particularly gains made by Cuban Americans.

During the 1990s and early 2000s, Dade County’s metropolitan government – Metro – confronted a growing perception of inefficiency and unresponsiveness in the eyes of Miami’s residents. This perception resulted from a number of intersecting tensions. It was shaped by the emerging power of the Cuban American community, and the resulting diminishing influence of White communities that had maintained influence over Dade County politics.

Within this context, Metro faced a dynamic urban context where its mandate was challenged by the secessionist agendas of rising *communities of interest*.<sup>98</sup> Racially and economically homogenous groups and mostly affluent and white, (2) who mobilized against Metro’s failure to establish services in unincorporated areas, (3) articulated their agendas by deploying a discourse emphasizing the need for police protection, government accountability, access to local government and zoning control.<sup>99</sup> These groups launched a series of counter-mobilizations that challenged Metro’s political control and expanded the theater of spatial politics into the realm of secessionism, which called for separation from Dade County’s two-tier system of government. Throughout the 1990’s and into the early 2000’s *Communities of interest* sought municipal incorporation – the political control of local neighborhoods achieved by forming autonomous political territories.

The rebellion of municipal incorporations eroded Metro’s government and influence, but it also symbolized an important period of counter-mobilization against Cuban American empowerment. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, during this time electoral ballots and grassroots activities became hallmarks of local political mobilizations. The numerous municipal incorporation movements that became active throughout metropolitan Dade County during the 1990’s were carried out by a diverse set of *communities of interest*. At the core of their concerns lay the dire need for political representation in a metropolis where demographic change signaled the reconfiguration of urban power. The hyper-local constituencies composed of neighbors, activists, and rising political figures organized petitions, mobilized demonstrations and guided the work of Dade County officials to obtain control of local decision-making processes for infrastructure, police protection and zoning issues. Their concerns, actions, failures and

---

<sup>97</sup> See: Wragg 1991

<sup>98</sup> The term *communities of interest* is first used by metropolitan planners to describe areas in unincorporated Dade County with organized groups which held the perception that the County commission was unresponsive (Citizen’s Advisory Committee on Incorporation 1992 p: 4).

<sup>99</sup> According to a countywide survey with 949 responses entitled: Community Concerns Expressed in Incorporation Feasibility Studies conducted by the Dade County Department of Planning and Zoning in 1994. The top three needs were: police services (67%), government responsiveness (66%) access to local government office (56%), government accountability all functions (56%) and government accountability in zoning and land use (54%). (Olmedillo 1994).



successes presented political puzzles for Dade County commissioners and institutional challenges to metropolitan planners.

Metropolitan planning once again became a symbolic battleground where the tensions of urban transformation would be exhibited, as the labor, expertise and knowledge of planners became entangled in conflicts over the reconfiguration of urban space. To deal with these incorporation movements, metropolitan planners brought forth policy innovations that upheld the centrality of Metro and attempted to limit the urban “balkanization” (Fiedler 1992) of Dade County. They adopted official protocols to manage and evaluate requests for new municipalities. Metropolitan planners developed feasibility studies to analyze the demographic composition, boundaries, tax bases of proposed municipalities with the goal of determining the financial solvency of new cities.

Metropolitan planners also played a key role in the development of community councils in the mid 1990’s. Managed by planners throughout different areas in unincorporated Dade County, the councils were established to provide a viable alternative to municipal incorporation. These local boards served as neighborhood forums where elected representatives controlled zoning, land use, and budgets. While their implementation sought to halt secession, their practice backfired and led to the germination of municipal rebellions and the schooling of political leaders in public administration posts. These leaders would eventually seek political office in the upper echelons of county government and the Florida state legislature.

To demonstrate how the rebellions developed, I examine the voices of metropolitan planners who were active during the times of the rebellion beginning in 1985 and ending in 2005. Their testimonies provide a lens into how the practice of metropolitan planning shaped, and was shaped by the rebellions.<sup>100</sup> These testimonies are based on interviews with three metropolitan planners – two men and one woman – who were active during the time of municipal incorporations. The interviews were carried out independently from each other. During their professional life at the DP&Z they held different positions; from junior planners who were starting their careers to research division planners who had seen the development of metropolitan planning practice during the 1980s. Together, they planners carried out different types of professional activities, from dealing with community members who organized in order to seek incorporation, to the preparation of feasibility studies that were presented to the Dade County Commission during the 1990s. The metropolitan planners Interviewed developed and managed the data that justified decisions that were made during the three waves I will describe, and also participated in envisioning and managing community councils in the late 1990’s.

I begin with an explanation of the methods I carried out to develop this chapter including a detailed description of the sources for archival data and the interviews that I carried out. I follow with examination of the institutional and demographic tensions that provoked the rise of *communities of interest*. I follow with an analysis of planners’ concerns regarding incorporation and the institutional innovations carried out by Metro to confront their development. I continue by tracing the history of the rebellions in three phases. In the first wave I take a detailed look at the origins of the rebellions in three communities across Dade County: Key Biscayne, Coconut Grove and Kendall. In the second wave, I investigate the rush towards incorporations through Aventura, Sunny Isles, and Destiny. I follow by taking into account the implementation of community councils and a moratorium on municipal incorporations aimed at slowing down the rebellions. Then, I consider the third wave when Miami Lakes, Palmetto Bay, Doral, Miami

---

<sup>100</sup> Interviews with Lucy Silverman, Peter O’Donnell and Metropolitan Planner 1.

Gardens and Cutler Bay incorporated. I conclude by providing my observations to further evaluate the concept of *spatial politics*.

### **Methods: Mapping the Rebellion of Municipal Incorporations**

The information for this chapter derives from three key sources: Archival information from the Miami Herald based on articles from the late 1980's to the mid 2000's, Interviews with retired and currently practicing DP&Z metropolitan planners - Lucy Silverman, Peter O'Donnell and DP&Z Planner 1, and official planning documents from the DP&Z from the early 1970's to the late 1990's.

To understand the complex history of municipal incorporations in Dade County I first turned to the Miami Herald archives to gather a comprehensive record of past events. In my preliminary interviews with DP&Z planners, this information remained fuzzy and required exact dates. The archival information from the Miami Herald was crucial in providing a timeline for the waves of municipal incorporations that I describe in this chapter. The information that is presented here is based on the review of dozens of articles from the Miami Herald ranging from the late 1980's to the mid 2000's. Through this review, I was able to detect the formative phases as well surge of municipal incorporations during the 1990's. This review also helped me locate the sites from which the drive for municipal incorporations originated, the composition of the grassroots actors involved, the result of ballot measures calling for incorporation, the success and failure of incorporation movements, and the tensions embedded within the history of Metro's two-tier, Donor and recipient Communities, and the political reconfiguration of Dade County commission following the Meek decision. In essence the review of the articles provided a series of overlapping timelines that allowed me to understand the complex history of municipal incorporations, their scales and locations actors and multiple dimensions.

The map of municipal incorporations in this chapter is also based on the review of Miami Herald articles as well the correlation with some planning reports from the DP&Z. To develop this map I looked at dates of incorporation. In some cases I wasn't able to obtain the actual reports on incorporation for all municipalities involved because they were not found in the archives I visited for the production of this chapter – the DP&Z and the Dade County Public Library and the University of Miami Library. However, the review of the Miami herald articles allowed me to identify key dates of incorporation for different municipalities. In this way I developed a sequence that was mapped. Their order was not always clear and evident in my interviews with the metropolitan planners I interviewed.

The planners I interviewed were instrumental in narrating their opinions and views during this particular period in the history of metropolitan planning. Much like vignette of *measuring democracy by the width of the sidewalk* in Chapter One, the interviews I carried out with Lucy Silverman, Peter O'Donnell and DP&Z planner 1, allowed me to see how metropolitan planners made sense of their world during this challenging period for their practice. Through my conversations with them I was able to understand what was important for them – preventing the fragmentation of Dade county into poor and ethnic communities – as well as how they operated to deal with the political challenges presented by *communities of interest*.

These interviews were carried out in the DP&Z, in cafes in Downtown Miami and the lobby of the Intercontinental Hotel in Downtown Miami. My main source of information for this period was Lucy Silverman, who headed the DP&Z research division after the retirement of Peter O'Donnell. Lucy and I became very well acquainted. Lucy has a PhD in sociology and understood the questions I posed. She also helped me work through them through the narration

of her experience. My interviews with Lucy took place for several hours at a time and were complemented by interviews I had with Peter O'Donnell and DP&Z planner 1. DP&Z planner 1 in particular was active during the period of the development of community councils and provided valuable information on the management of this planning tool aimed at alleviate the need for incorporation in unincorporated Dade County. His work extended into the early 2000's through the last phase of municipal incorporations, which included Doral, Miami Gardens and Palmetto Bay.

The planning documents that are part of this chapter derive from the personal records of Lucy Silverman, archives from the DP&Z, the University of Miami library and the Dade County Public Library. I was fortunate enough to obtain an extensive number of documents from Lucy that represented the work she carried out during the 1990's as head of the DP&Z research division. Much of the primary data that is present in this chapter is based on those archives – planning reports starting from the early 1970's as well as feasibility studies into the 1990's. Additional information regarding incorporation was facilitated through research in the University of Miami public library, where I found missing parts of the archive that Lucy provide as well as valuable photographic material illustrating the grassroots mobilizations during the period. This information was supplemented with archival data from the Dade County library, where official documents from the DP&Z are also stored and the data from interviews could be corroborated.

### **Metro in Context: The Second Tier and Demographic Change**

The rise of communities of interest was not arbitrary. Their emergence in the early 1990's exposed the culmination of two tensions that intersected in Miami during this decade. The first tension arose from Dade County's institutional failure to establish a 2<sup>nd</sup> tier system of local government in unincorporated areas. The second tension was an emergent issue that was not anticipated by Metro's early leaders and planners: demographic change and the resulting empowerment of Miami's ethnic communities – mainly Cuban Americans.

In 1957 Metro was established to carry out a system of metropolitan governance composed of two tiers: an upper tier for regional services and a lower tier for local services. Over the decades, Metro's bureaucracy grew in scope and manpower to successfully carry out the goals of the upper tier. These included management of the infrastructure necessary for Dade County's urban economy, such as the Miami international airport and the port of Miami. Other actions included provisions that upheld the public interest at a regional scale. These included the protection of the Everglades National Park, Biscayne Bay National Park, the coordination of disaster management and metropolitan planning.

As the first tier acquired precedence, unincorporated areas – roughly half of Dade County's urban geography – remained under-serviced and under-represented. Basic services such as fire and police protection, waste disposal, and land use and zoning control were limited, inefficient and irregular (Dade County Metropolitan Study Commission 1971, Touche Ross and Company 1978, Dade County Charter Review Commission 1982, Hertz, 1984, Citizens Charter Review 1986).<sup>101</sup> Unincorporated areas also did not elect local government representatives who could represent their needs in Dade County government. This circumstance originated from a set of assumptions that defined the formation of Dade County's government structure and politics.

---

<sup>101</sup> The indicators for this assessment were based on previous studies that addressed the demographic growth of unincorporated Dade County, carried out surveys with local residents, held community meetings to obtain feedback, evaluated Dade County budgets, and addressed the organizational structure of Dade County government starting in the early 1970's.

When the County charter was established in 1957, County leaders and metropolitan planners envisioned the absorption of unincorporated land into municipalities through three alternatives: municipal annexations, the incorporation of a single mega-municipality composed of unincorporated territories, or the provision of “municipal service units” for unincorporated areas (Miami Herald 1990). This blueprint was established when Metro’s government was planned but with the exception of annexations, its forecast remained largely unfulfilled. From the late 1960’s into the early 1980’s, the decades following the establishment of Dade County, the need to provide services and political representation for unincorporated areas was regularly identified as an outstanding issue in county studies calling for a charter reform (Dade County Metropolitan Study Commission 1971, Touche Ross and Company 1978, Dade County Charter Review Commission 1982, Hertz, 1984, Citizens Charter Review 1986).

But a political block stood against reform: the manner in which county commissioners were elected. The at-large commission voting system, which had become Metro’s hallmark at its inception, conspired against unincorporated areas. The two tier system dictated that county commission seat elections be held countywide in order to prevent the concentration of political influence in particular communities. Commissioners would govern not only incorporated municipalities but also the vast unincorporated territory. This arrangement led to the political under-representation of residents in unincorporated areas. While residents who lived in municipalities had the right to elect their local representatives, residents in unincorporated areas didn’t have a local decision making body, instead they depended on county commissioners for political representation. This particular trend was also present in the appointment of unincorporated related boards, such as the zoning appeals boards, where county commissioners appointed individuals who did not reside in unincorporated areas. This condition remained prevalent since the beginning of Metro under the leadership of and mostly white Anglo commissioners who had come to represent the dominant political power.

The result was a condition of “taxation without representation”, where residents from unincorporated areas didn’t have direct contact with their elected leaders and elected commissioners did not know their constituents. In addition, political expediency accentuates this condition of disenfranchisement. In order to get elected, commissioners had to master the technique of courting voters from privileged unincorporated areas – mostly wealthy and white – who would then actively mobilize and place their financial and political support behind them during elections.

The consequences of demographic change following the Mariel Boatlift would dramatically alter this context. When Metro’s two-tier system was envisioned in the mid 1950’s, unincorporated areas had 109,860 inhabitants - 22% of the total population of Dade County. By 1990 the population of the unincorporated areas had grown to 1,037,000 inhabitants - 54% of the total population of Dade county.<sup>102</sup> Between 1980 and 1990 alone, 76% of Dade County’s population growth occurred in the unincorporated areas bringing new people, new problems, and most importantly new ethnic votes to unincorporated Dade County (Citizen’s Advisory Committee on Countywide Incorporation 1992).

The election of Cuban American leadership in the municipality of Miami - Dade’s largest municipality – as well as in other positions of power in the county, signaled the growing power of the Cuban-American community. Similarly, the outcome of the Meek v. Metropolitan Dade county lawsuit - redrawing district lines from nine all around seats composed of mostly white

---

<sup>102</sup> By 1990 the population of Dade County had reached 1, 937,000 inhabitants (Dade County Citizen’s Advisory committee on County wide incorporation p. 6).

commissioners to 13 district specific seats composed of Cuban American and African American commissioners - intensified the perception by that county leadership had fallen into the hands of Cuban American and African American minorities. Lucy Silverman, a planner at the time, describes the context in the following manner:

There was a racial ethnic component to it, white affluent areas pulling out. There was a perceived loss of power and clout, historically and politically in Miami.

The change from countywide to single-district elections in meant that residents in unincorporated areas could only elect two officials to the county commission: one commissioner and the mayor (Chasko 1993). The privileged status that affluent *communities of interest* in unincorporated Dade County held for competing commissioners prior to the Meek decision would dramatically change with the new number and composition of the county commission. Lucy Silverman continues:

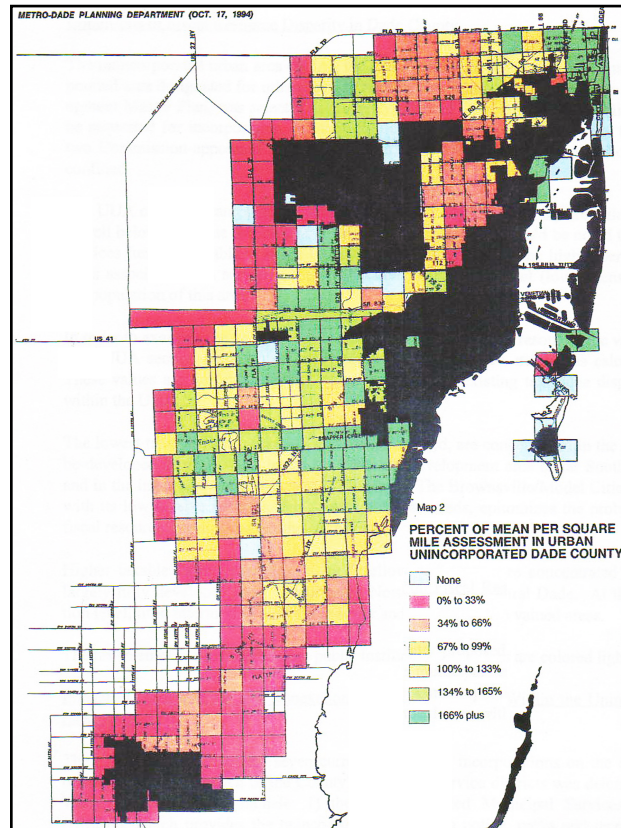
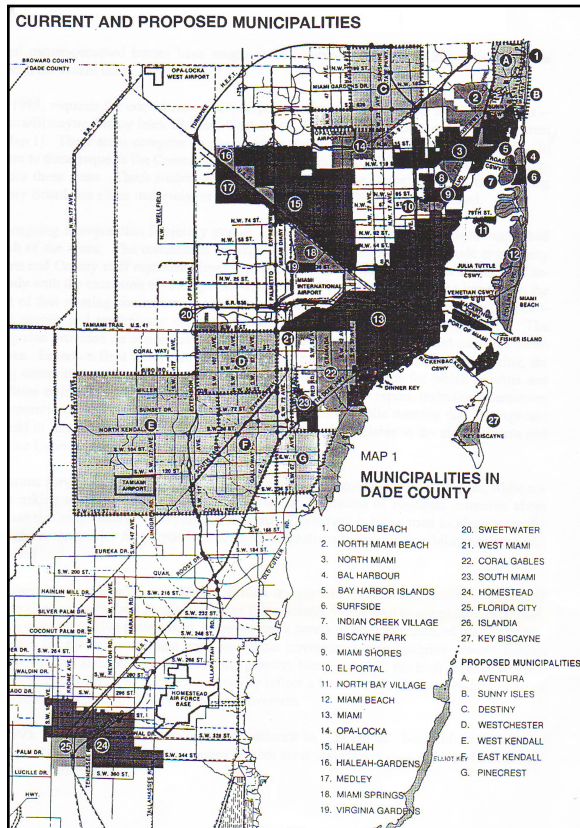
In 1992 the commission's geography changed. And basically power doesn't want to give itself up. There was the good government argument that if you go into the commission you go in with the view of upholding the interests of all of the county, but the reality had changed: everybody was looking out for themselves. There was an enormous nostalgia for at large districts.

The collision of these tensions - one institutional and the other demographic – combined to provoke the political discontent of *communities of interest* in unincorporated areas. These groups mobilized not only because Metro didn't provide them services and didn't represent them, but also because their voting power had been diluted as a result of the reconfiguration of the political map brought forth by the outcomes of *Meek v. Metropolitan Dade County*. Under these circumstances municipal incorporation became a continuation of the process of *spatial politics* that had transformed Dade County's political status quo during the 1980's. Its battle lines would form new political territories across Dade County as well as encompass the voting booth, County hall and metropolitan planning.

### **Metropolitan Planners Confront Incorporation: Donor v. Recipient Communities**

Metropolitan Planners spent the 1990's and the early 2000's diverging from the goals of comprehensive planning to deal with the rebellions of municipal incorporation. As discussed in chapter three, one of their primary tasks consisted of gathering and interpreting demographic data to address Dade County's urban growth. The impact of incorporation represented a major concern for metropolitan planners who worried about the fiscal disparity between *donor* and *recipient* communities in unincorporated areas, urban fragmentation and the specter of political instability (Olmedillo 1994).

The problem of fiscal disparity placed *donor* communities – areas generating revenues greater than their service expenditures - against *recipient* communities – areas with lesser revenues than their service expenditures (Figures 30 & 31). To ensure services throughout Dade County, Metro subsidized *recipient* communities with the surplus of *donor* communities. Since the establishment of Metro, this balance had remained tenuous and had contributed to the discontent of affluent *communities of interest* that self-identified as *donor* communities.



**Figure 30** Municipal rebellions in 1994 (Source DP&Z). **Figure 31** Tax Base per census tract 1994 (Source DP&Z).

Metropolitan planners considered the formation of large municipalities a threat to the delicate fiscal balance that kept metro services operating. The flight of capital in the form of secession would underfund receiver area services. Furthermore, the formation of small municipalities would also bring problems such as “the duplication and increase unit cost associated with multiple, smaller sized operations”.<sup>103</sup>

According to my interviews with metropolitan planners who were active during this period, another fear they faced was the social and physical fragmentation of Dade County.<sup>104</sup> From their perspective, the division of unincorporated territories would make ethnically diverse populations turn inwards and accentuate ethnic and racial divisions in the urban population. The birth of new cities would only exacerbate a process of urban balkanization that had started with socio-demographic and political changes during the 1980’s. New boundaries carved along ethnic or economic lines would also lead to conflicts in the management of urban services. Area-wide facilities in unincorporated areas had the potential of ending inside municipalities if communities seceded. Their control, maintenance and budgeting would require coordination with the insular agendas of smaller municipal planning departments. Similarly, the division of Dade County into smaller municipalities could also create enclaves and/or municipalities with unsuitable physical

<sup>103</sup> Olmedillo 1994 p. 4

<sup>104</sup> Interviews with Lucy Silverman, Peter O’Donnell and Metropolitan Planner 1.

sizes, shapes or configurations. This eccentric geography, filled with social and spatial tensions, would leave leftover unincorporated areas orphaned from Metro's service provision.<sup>105</sup>

Compounding the fear of economic inequity and fragmentation of unincorporated areas was the threat of political instability. With the experience of ethnic strife in the early 1980's and an urban riot in 1989 fresh in their minds, planners feared that the political outcome of the Meek decision - in which they participated by helping redraw the Miami's commission seats - would further divide ethnic groups and lead to civil unrest.<sup>106</sup>

The manner in which *communities of interest* countered Cuban American empowerment through secession would lead to a series of responses from planners, as they aimed to uphold the fiscal security of Dade County and prevent the county's fragmentation. In the next section I consider the first set of innovations brought forth by Dade County Leaders and planners to deal with incorporation.

### **Metro Confronts Incorporation: The Citizen's Advisory Committee**

On February 5<sup>th</sup> 1991, the Dade County commission voted to pass resolution No. 105-91, establishing the Citizen's Advisory Committee on Countywide Incorporation. The goal of the committee was to "Fully analyze all issues relating to the possible incorporation of various areas of the county".<sup>107</sup> The advisory committee's final report was submitted for review to the Dade County commission on February 1, 1992. The work of the committee recapitulated previous studies on incorporation and placed its recommendations in the trajectory of studies assessing the unfulfilled promises of the two-tier system.<sup>108</sup> Their report also identified a number of key recommendations that would later determine the future of Metro's incorporation policies and the procedures that would guide the work of metropolitan planners.

The report did not question incorporation. It assumed the path of incorporation as a *fait accompli* while it recapitulated the Dade County charter by re-affirming the power of the County commission to decide upon the future of new cities. This point was driven home by its main policy recommendation: the incorporation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier of government through annexations by neighboring municipalities and the creation of new municipalities through the mandate of county commissioners.<sup>109</sup>

A number of institutional innovations and charter amendments were proposed to enable this key stipulation. First, the Citizen's Advisory Committee's report called for the establishment

---

<sup>105</sup> The enclave in Dade County presented a big problem for planners. A 1987 study by the county identified 14 enclave areas, unincorporated areas, surrounded by three sides by municipalities.

<sup>106</sup> Interviews with Lucy Silverman, Peter O'Donnell and Metropolitan Planner 1. For a description of the 1989 race riots see Sarita et al. 1989.

<sup>107</sup> Dade County Commission Resolution No. 105-91 pg. 1

<sup>108</sup> For previous studies see: Final Report and Recommendation Dade County Metropolitan Study Commission 1982, Report on a Review of Two tier Government in Miami Dade County by Touche Ross and Co 1978, Dade County Charter Review Commission by DP&Z 1982, Governing Dade County: a Study of Alternative Structure by David Bendel Hertz 1982, and Citizens Charter Review Committee on Dade County by DP&Z 1986.

<sup>109</sup> The committee conducted nine public hearings, which brought together a total of 60 citizens. The initial public hearings were complemented by 27 internal meetings from which the report was drafted. The commission's members were supposed to represent all of Dade County, but were mostly white community of stakeholders. Many of its members were leaders of incorporation movements in their respective unincorporated communities. These included the chair of the commission, David Samson, who became mayor of Sunny Isles Beach in 1997, Brian Pariser an incorporation activist in West-Kendall and Pinecrest, Patricia Rogers-Libert, who helped organize the incorporation of Aventura, Aileen Lotz who pushed Key Biscayne's incorporation, Pan Courtelis who led the Coconut Groves' secession efforts and ex Miami Mayor Maurice Ferre (Citizen's Advisory Committee 1993 p: 3).



of a citizen's subcommittee called the *Boundaries Commission*. The *Boundaries Commission* would be charged with developing a formal plan for annexations and the creation of new municipalities. They devised a step-by-step process requiring county commissioners to hear recommendations of a planning advisory board, conduct public hearings on incorporation, and allow the popular vote of new municipalities.

These Citizen's Advisory Committee recommendations were voted upon by county commissioners and adopted as an amendment to the Dade County charter. While Metro's commissioners would carry out the final decision on incorporation, the establishment of a public body such as the *Boundaries Commission* represented an institutional innovation aimed at placing the power to determine the formation of new municipalities into the hands of organized residents. Prior to the adoption of this particular recommendation, Metro did not have extensive procedures for how to respond to incorporation requests. Instead incorporation had historically relied upon requests arising from within the county commission and concentrated on the vote of county commissioners.<sup>110</sup>

Additional recommendations proposed by the Citizen's Advisory Committee called for a clear differentiation between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> tiers of Metro government. This aim would be accomplished by separating practical aspects of Metro's daily operations, such as public budget hearings and agendas between issues that were countywide, and issues pertinent to unincorporated areas. Issues such as zoning changes, requests for funds to address infrastructures improvements and budgets to pay county staff working in different areas were delineated between county and unincorporated areas. The division would also strategically extend to taxation. The Citizen's Advisory Committee also recommended that county commissioners adopt an ordinance placing revenue from Metro sales taxes gathered from unincorporated areas into the unincorporated area budget.

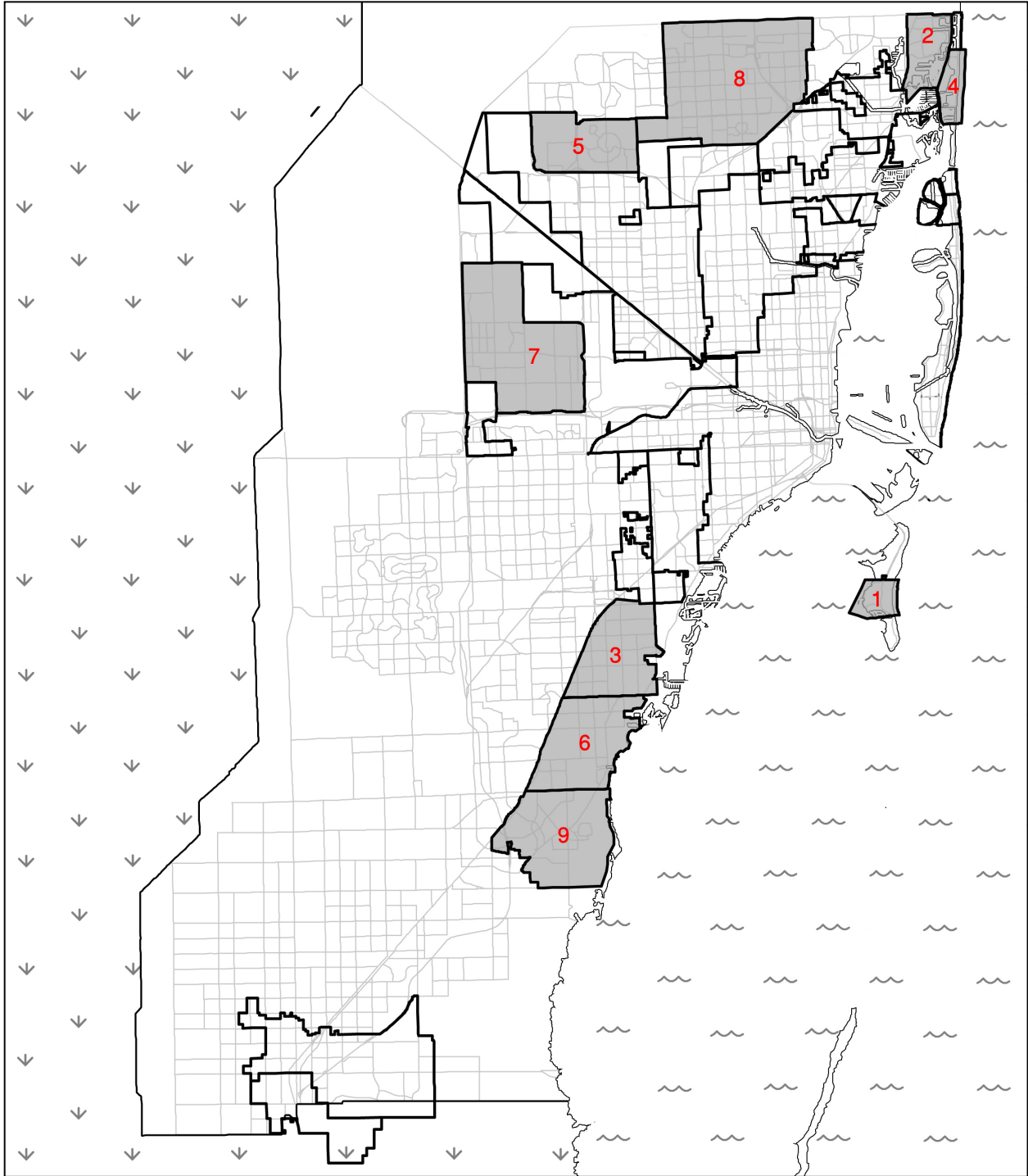
The Citizen's Advisory Committee report also called for the creation of a new institutional body within Metro: Municipal Advisory Councils. These councils would serve as governmental units in unincorporated areas to guide decisions regarding zoning matters to deal with land use appeals. This recommendation recapitulated the pending need for municipal service units that had originally been part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier plan over the past decades and recognized the discontent of residents in unincorporated areas in behalf of rampant growth and zoning code violations. The councils were also meant to provide a political stage where residents could engage in political action and elect local leadership.<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>110</sup> The formal incorporation process was envisioned to have the following steps/requisites: (1) The creation of a new municipality may be initiated by the board of county commissioners with a petition from 10% of residents – 5,000 of 50,000. (2) The county commission should require a full analysis of the incorporation proposal and its impact on residents as well as the unincorporated area to be completed within 180 days. (3) The county commission must then provide two public hearings. (4) The county commission must then conduct an election based on criteria outlined by the county. (5) After the results of the election, the county shall authorize the creation of the new municipality. (6) Upon approval of the city's vote for a charter, the board of county commissioners shall then appoint the charter commission consisting of five electors who will draft the charter and decide on the proposed boundaries then the new municipality is born. (Dade County Citizen's Advisory Committee on County Wide Incorporation 1992)

<sup>111</sup> This particular measure became important after the first wave of municipal incorporations in 1996. I go into a deeper analysis of community councils in later in this chapter.





**Figure 32** The Rebellion of Municipal Incorporations in chronological order: (1) Village of Key Biscayne 1991, (2) City of Aventura 1995, (3) Village of Pinecrest 1996, (4) City of Sunny Isles Beach 1997, (5) Town of Miami Lakes 2000, (6) Village of Palmetto Bay 2002, (7) Miami Gardens: 2003, (8) City of Doral: 2003, (9) Town of Cutler Bay: 2005. (Source: Author).

The establishment of *Boundaries Commission* and the adoptions of other recommendations from the Citizen's Advisory Committee represented a watershed moment in Dade County's politics and planning. While the committee's composition, mission and outcomes were framed by the policy concerns and needs of Metro, its recommendations provided the essential elements for a roadmap that would eventually be used by Dade County leaders, metropolitan planners and residents to consider in moving forward with incorporation. The establishment of the Citizen's Advisory Committee was the first attempt to bridge the immense political distances that separated the interests of residents in unincorporated areas with those of the county commission. As the discussions below will show, their concepts, recommendations and approaches dominated debates on incorporation from 1995 - 2005.

### **The Three Waves of Municipal Incorporations**

From 1991 to 2005, nine new municipalities were formed in Dade County (Figure 32). The rebellions that resulted in these municipalities took place in three waves.<sup>112</sup> The first wave took place from 1985 to 1994. It took place as a number of trailblazing communities in unincorporated Dade County, from the inter-coastal to the everglades, maneuvered against Dade County to acquire self-representation. Only one community, Key Biscayne, was successful in its effort.

During the second wave - from 1995 to 1997 - *donor* communities in Dade County revolted against Metro, while metropolitan planners improvised policy recommendations and county leaders voted on ordinances aimed at slowing their pace. During this period three communities of interest incorporated: Aventura, Pinecrest, and Sunny Isles, while one, Destiny, failed in a referendum.

A period of three years passed between the second wave and third wave of municipal incorporations. The rapid series of secessions threatened the fiscal base of Dade County as rich *donor* communities took expensive property tax inventories with them into the newly incorporated territories. This condition led Metro to implement *community councils* in 1996. The original one-year period to evaluate their performance turned into a three-year period as County commissioners and metropolitan planners explored different alternatives to secure prevent loss of unincorporated territory. To do so Metro introduced a moratorium on incorporations.

The third phase of the rebellion took place from 2000 to 2005 after the moratorium on incorporations was lifted due to lawsuits and the rising discontent of communities seeking incorporation. During this period, Metro allowed *communities of interest* to incorporate if they accepted new budgetary requirements aimed at solving the problem of fiscal disparity.

### **The First Wave (1991 – 1994): Key Biscayne Incorporates, Coconut Grove and Kendall Ally for Independence**

Much like Miami's urban expansion, Dade County's rebellion of municipal incorporations began in the inter-coastal communities and moved westward through unincorporated areas of the metropolitan Miami. The origins of the rebellion did not have substantial precedents; rather, they represented a radical break from the decades-long period of

---

<sup>112</sup> I call the efforts of incorporation in Dade County during these three waves "rebellions" because they represented open resistances and actions against the established political status quo of Dade County government. While Planners recommended the incorporations they were brought into to this process following a period of local mobilizations heralded by *communities of interest*.

political stability that defined the government of Dade County. Since its inception in 1957, Dade County commissioners had received only one request for municipal incorporation,<sup>113</sup> the island city of *Islandia*, a remote chain of barrier islands - keys - located in the southern part of Biscayne Bay (Figure 1). *Islandia* became a municipality in 1961 in large part due to the political dealings of influential developers who sought to benefit from the islands' future development as resort destinations.

The city, however, never constituted a functioning municipality and remained a ghost town until it was abolished in 2012 (Alvarez 2012). *Islandia's* incorporation attempt was the only formal challenge Metro confronted in its 30-year existence. This would change in the mid 1980's, when a series of unprecedented events on the island of Key Biscayne catalyzed its residents into political action against Metro.

### **Key Biscayne Incorporates**

Key Biscayne is an idyllic island community located amidst the inter-coastal waters of Biscayne Bay. The island's past is characterized by a rich history preceding Miami's foundation and reaching into the civil war and colonial eras. After Miami's incorporation in 1896, Key Biscayne developed as a secluded island-suburb for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Shulman 2009). Its geographic location - a few miles from downtown Miami, yet easily accessible to the mainland by car - made it a coveted residential area for Miami's well-off residents. In the 1970's its exclusive location brought President Nixon and his entourage to a home that became the presidential retreat.

For much of its history, Key Biscayners identified as residents of a small town island community where familiarity was commonplace. In 1985, however, ripples of modernization reverberated through the island with the opening of the Rickenbacker Causeway Bridge (Tomb 1985). The Rickenbacker Bridge allowed increased traffic and people from mainland Miami into the island's paradisiacal beaches and lush parks. The new degree of accessibility raised the concerns of Key Biscayners who recognized impending changes to their insular way of life.

In 1985 an activist group composed of homeowners by the name of *Key Biscayners for Responsive Government* - KBRG - charged a county consultant with conducting an analysis of the costs and benefits of seceding from Metro. The study included the option of forming a village council and becoming a "contract" city which would involve obtaining self-representation but paying the county or private providers for municipal services (Colon 1985, Meyer 1985, Hernandez 1985, Hamm 1985). The need for the study arose from three overarching circumstances that had become evident to Key Biscayners in the aftermath of the bridge opening and the influx of people to the island: (1) the need for improved municipal services, (2) local control over zoning, and (3) the conservation of the island's natural environment. Reactions to the study from the island's residents included the call to mobilize for secession by forming a local council that would disregard the recommendations due to the cost of incorporating. Over the next two years reactions to the study were staged publicly and privately between conflicting factions for and against secession. No over-arching compromise between the island's groups could be achieved. At the core of their disagreement lay the issue of financing the formation and maintenance of local government (Kleinman 1986).

---

<sup>113</sup> Dade County is a home rule county. In Florida, as in most states, the creation of a new city is decided upon by the state legislature. The home rule charter of 1957, however, gave this power to county commissioners. This means that county commissioners had the power to vote up or down to uphold the creation of a new city.

During this time, Key Biscayners were also becoming politicized regarding self-representation due to a legal battle with Dade County over public space. Key Biscayners became aware of the need for their political representation in the decision-making of local land use decisions as well as the inclusion of their voices regarding public infrastructure management, budgeting and service provision. For example, in 1986, a number of island residents sued Metro over access to and control of Crandon Park, a large parcel of tropical mangrove land, which had been donated to the county by the island's original pioneer families – the Mathesons. The donation had taken place with a simple deed restriction stating that the land would be used “for public park purposes only”.<sup>114</sup> The group of residents, which included descendants of the pioneer family, claimed that Dade County had violated the deed by building and enclosing the area for the Lipton International Tennis tournament (Figure 33) and obtaining revenue by charging for the event.<sup>115</sup>

In late 1987 the pro-secessionist KBRG acquired the upper hand when the proposal to establish an advisory “village” council gained popular support among the island's residents. KBRG's newfound power resulted from a single key crisis: the destruction of 1,400 feet of natural hammock forest to build an underpass for the new Lipton Tennis Center (Figure 34). The project had been in preparation with Dade county public works for months before the assigned date, but its execution was carried out without the public consultation of the island's residents (Crook 1987a, Crook 1987b). Metro's act of environmental degradation shocked Key Biscayners, who drove by the site in Crandon Park Boulevard on a daily basis.

With Metro as their designated environmental and legal nemesis, the community came together catalyzed in behalf of the need for self-representation (Tomb 1987, McGarrahan 1987a, Hiaasen 1987). For decades, since the institutionalization of the two-tier system of government Key Biscayne had officially been designated as a community in unincorporated Dade County. This meant that its representatives at the County were not local, but rather countywide. With the newfound support behind them, KBRG members asked the Dade County elections department to aid them in organizing the election for a village council. However, county officials refused to facilitate the process because Key Biscayne was not a municipality and thus could not hold an official election (Bethel 1987). If elected the council would have constituted a rogue entity within Dade County.

In spite of this, KBRG members proceeded by funding and holding an unofficial election. Voters were to elect nine village council members and to consider whether a council was needed in the first place (McGarrahan 1987b). The election resulted in a rebel council without assigned formal powers that met for two years. Without official recognition from Dade County the council continued to meet in order to organize residents and harness local political support. The specter of uncontrolled urban development eventually re-energized their quest for self-representation. In 1989, the Dade County commission decided against implementing an area-wide impact study for the construction of an 800-room occupancy hotel on the island (Biddulph 1989). The study had been championed by members of council but was ignored by Metro representatives due to the unofficial status of the council. Metro's disregard to the council's proposal and the impending construction of the hotel, caused the village council to organize and hold another unofficial election. This time they placed incorporation as the primary issue on the ballot (Ycaza 1989). The measure was accepted by a large number of Key Biscayners and County

---

<sup>114</sup> WHITE v. METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY 563 So. 2d 117 (Fla. App. 1990) Florida Court Appeals 3rd Dst.

<sup>115</sup> After several years of appeals the final decision was in favor of Key Biscayne's residents. The tournament's organizers and Dade County Managers had to negotiate the outcome of the lawsuit with the plaintiffs (Sarni 1990).

commissioners were suddenly faced with an unofficial election that had democratically chosen secession as the way forward for one of its most affluent communities.<sup>116</sup>

The vote in Key Biscayne signaled a dramatic shift in how residents related to Metro. County commissioners confronted the first action in a wave of citizen dissatisfaction targeting Metro's bureaucracy, lack of control over urban development. These matters were accentuated by an emergent perception that Metro was distant and/or corrupt. Commissioners began to worry that the anti-Metro atmosphere would impact their chances for re-election. At the end of the 1980's, voter disapproval was already evident in the replacement of two white commissioners with minority candidates – Cuban American Alex Penelas and African American Arthur Teele. Their election, accompanied by Key Biscayne's rebellion exemplified a thirst for political change at the polls (Strouse 1990). Faced with Key Biscayne's steadfastness, Metro commissioners voted in 1990 to allow metropolitan planners to review Key Biscayne's proposal for incorporation (Shuvovsky 1990, Petchell 1990). Planners proceeded to develop studies addressing the impact of Key Biscayne's incorporation on the fiscal tax base of Dade County. In 1991 Key Biscayne became independent from Dade County marking the first time in 30 years of Metro's founding that residents took action to claim self-determination (Faiola 1991). The island's revolt caught the attention of other groups in Dade County with similar concerns. The next wave of secessionist fervor would travel from the enclave of Coconut Grove in the city of Miami to the suburbs of Kendall in unincorporated Dade County.

### **Coconut Grove and Kendall Ally for Independence**

At night the glimmering lights of multi-million dollar mansions adorning the shore of Coconut Grove are visible from the western shores of Key Biscayne. This lush enclave of subtropical forests stands on an exposed eolithic limestone ridge extending as a plateau south of the Miami River. Coconut Grove – the Grove as it is colloquially known – was originally settled by Bahamian fishermen and wealthy white pioneers who used the bay's placid waters for livelihood, commerce and trade (Metropolitan Dade County Office of Community and Economic Development Historic Preservation Division 1982 p: 7 - 12). For much of its early history the Grove remained an independent township until 1925, when the City of Miami forcefully annexed its territory against the will of its residents (Livingston 2000).

Coconut Grove's unwarranted annexation unified its residents and led to a fierce sense of disenfranchisement. This factor defined the town's identity for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a singular place with a unique history. During the 1960's and 70's the Grove became the epicenter of counter-culture in Dade County. In the late 1980's, members of local homeowner associations and the Coconut Grove Chamber of commerce initiated the drive for independence. The desire for autonomy arose from similar issues that mobilized Key Biscayne's rebellion: the need for improvements in local services, a desire for control over zoning decisions, and the additional issue of improved police protection.

---

<sup>116</sup> According to (Ycaza 1989) "Of the island's 4,000 registered voters, 43 percent, or 1,715 voters, went to the polls. 755 favored incorporation and 530 opposed it. Preliminary articles of incorporation and a charter drafted by the Key Biscayne Council won approval from 677 voters, while 490 opposed the nonbinding documents".



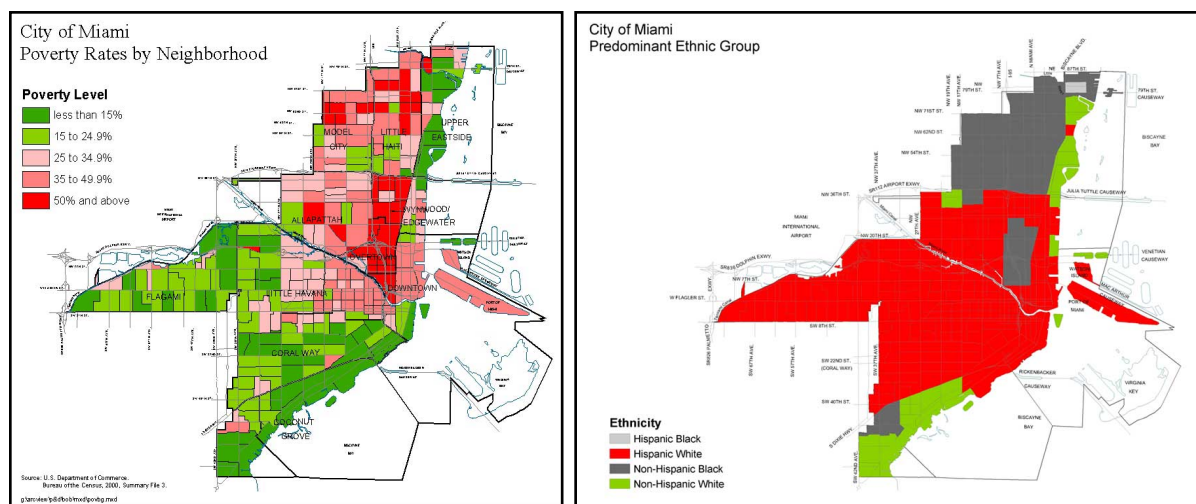
**Figure 33** The Tennis Center at Crandon Park, Key Biscayne (Source: <http://www.keybiscayne.fl.gov>)



**Figure 34** The location of the clearing for the Tennis Center access ramp (Source: Google Street View).



In the Grove, secessionism would develop in a starkly different manner than in Key Biscayne. Coconut Grove’s rebellion emerged from a context dominated by social inequality and racial divisions. While Key Biscayne was an island in unincorporated Dade County, geographically and politically detached from the mainland, Coconut Grove was a wealthy enclave in the heart of the City of Miami: its destiny was bound to the financial security of poorer communities. In the early 1990’s, the Grove was the wealthiest neighborhood in one of the poorest cities in the United States. Consequently, the financial importance of Coconut Grove’s tax base became a central concern for the leadership of Miami’s poorer communities (Figures 35 & 36). For Miami’s ethnic communities, Coconut Grove’s secession represented an attempt at partitioning the city, between rich and poor, affluent white and poor Hispanic and Black. This factor would place the quest for autonomy in direct confrontation within the City of Miami’s Cuban American leadership and African American activists.<sup>117</sup>



**Figures 35 & 36** Comparison of ethnic groups and poverty rates in the City of Miami 2000 Census (Source: <http://www.miamigov.com/Planning/pages/services/Demographics.asp>).

Groveites countered the fiscal flight argument by claiming that their taxes were spent disproportionately on Miami’s poorer neighborhoods. The fiscal argument forged Groveites into a common front. In early 1991 they formed the Coconut Grove Citizen’s Committee (Figure 37). Learning from KBRG’s efforts across the bay, the committee organized the election of a village council to “unify the grove and give it a greater voice” (Tanfani 1991b). It also proposed a nonbinding ballot measure asking voters about seceding from the City of Miami (Tanfani 1991a, Tanfani 1991b, Martin 1991). With slogans like “More Green less concrete” and “Independence and American Tradition”, 35 Candidates signed up and mobilized their supporters to the polls to fill 14 seats (Tanfani 1991b) (Figures 38 & 39). In 1992, the council was formed and the mandate for secession upheld by a majority of voters.<sup>118</sup> The next obstacle was to secure the official approval from the City of Miami Commission authorizing a citywide vote on secession.

<sup>117</sup> Besides the financial instability that Coconut Grove’s independence signified for Miami’s ethnic leadership, the partition of Miami represented a more practical concern for city officials. Miami City Hall is located in Coconut Grove. The Grove’s secession would have led to the bizarre circumstance of the city of Miami City Hall located outside of its municipal boundaries.

<sup>118</sup> 34% of voters in seven precincts in Coconut Grove turned out for the election. Of this percentage 78% of votes were for secession (Tanfani 1991d).



**Figure 37** The Coconut Grove Citizen's committee organizes. Source: University of Miami Digital Archives.



**Figures 38 & 39** Voting for the Coconut Grove Village Council. Source: University of Miami Digital Archives.

The reaction from City Hall however was immediate and unanimous. Cuban American Mayor Xavier Suarez and the city commissioners, which included African American members, condemned the Grove council and its ballot measure proposing secession. Unfazed by City Hall's condemnation, Groveites deployed an unprecedented strategy: they took their proposal for independence to County Hall thus circumnavigating the authority of City Hall by obtaining approval from Metro (Tanfani 1992a). Groveites designed this strategy to take advantage of the changing dynamics of Miami's political landscape in the aftermath of Key Biscayne's rebellion. Startled by the experience of Key Biscayne's secession, the Dade County commission voted in early 1992 to accept a measure proposed by a citizen's advisory committee on incorporation (Filkins 1992). The recommendation consisted of changing Dade County home rule charter to allow small communities of 5,000 or more people in a city with 50,000 people or more, to secede without the permission of the city's voters or government. If 20% of the voters in the



neighborhood of a city signed the petition, a measure for secession could appear directly on the election county ballot superseding the power of municipal leadership. Succumbing to popular discontent, the Dade County Commission passed the controversial measure allowing the vote with the ardent objection of City of Miami officials (Filkins & Strouse 1992).<sup>119</sup>

With the prospect of Coconut Grove's ballot election for secession ensured through a secure legal path, Miami's ethnic communities, leaders and business interests organized an anti-secession campaign that would sway Dade County voters against Groveites. For African Americans, Coconut Grove's secession would create a dichotomy between rich communities and poor communities (Tanfani 1992b). Marvin Dunn, a renowned African American activist declared: "I have grave reservations about incorporation, what it may inadvertently do is create deteriorating pockets of poor communities that can't help themselves." A similar reaction was exhibited by Haitian American leaders representing the economic interests of little Haiti and a coalition of Hispanic community voices, which included the Latin Builders Association, the Latin Chamber of Commerce, and SALAD (the Spanish American League Against Discrimination). In one particular scenario, Members from SALAD were dispatched to broadcast the anti-secessionist message in the Cuban American radio stations along *Calle Ocho*. Their strategy consisted on framing secessionism as a direct affront to Miami's Cuban community. Leaders of SALAD declared: "Many people want to attack the power of the Cuban people in Miami. The way to do that is to cut Miami up in little pieces" (Goldfarb 1992). Mayor Suarez joined in the coalition of voices by underlining the fact that Coconut Grove's secession represented the attempt of an affluent white community to underfund Miami's population: "The specific interest of this neighborhood can't be allowed to wreck our union," stated Xavier Suarez (Filkins & Strouse 1992).

At the height of the conflict, one level of Miami's government was set against the other: first tier against the second tier, county against municipality. Falling in line with their mayor, city commissioners voted against county hall's resolution. In a further show of support, the Cuban American leadership of Hialeah, Dade County's second largest municipality, joined the anti-secessionist chorus. Hialeah's council and mayor joined city of Miami officials in blasting the measure by voting on a city measure repudiating Metro (Gonzalez 1992).<sup>120</sup>

In the wake of severe political pressure applied on numerous fronts, Dade County commissioners succumbed their mandate and postponed the vote on Coconut Grove. Unfazed by the sudden change of events, Groveites regrouped to seek a different legal path: placing the measure on the official Dade County ballot without the approval of county commissioners. They formed a political action committee - "Dade County Voters for Self-Determination" - that funded a campaign to obtain 62,000 signatures for the November 1992 ballot (Filkins & Strouse 1992). In August Coconut Grove's secession seemed certain. Signatures were rapidly accumulating towards the required total before the deadline.

Then the weather changed. On August 24, 1992, a week before the September deadline, Hurricane Andrew tore through metropolitan Miami with 175 miles per hour winds (Figure 40). Metropolitan Miami lay in shambles with its population in disarray, without water, electricity or basic services.

---

<sup>119</sup> In the early 1990's coconut grove represented only 6% of the city of Miami's Population, yet its residents provided 18% of the city's property tax (Filkins 1992).

<sup>120</sup> When Dade County commissioners passed the recommendation, the city of Miami was the only city in Dade County with more than 50,000 residents. Hialeah, was close behind with 40,874 registered voters (Gonzalez 1992).



**Figure 40** Hurricane Andrew over Miami (Source NOAA) **Figure 41** Coconut Grove after Andrew (Source Flickr)

In Southern Dade County, Florida City and the city of Homestead were destroyed. Hundreds of suburban subdivisions had disappeared from the landscape. In Coconut Grove, yachts lay scattered across main streets as centennial oak trees blocked its arteries (Figure 41). A week before the vote, Andrew crushed Coconut Grove's secession effort (Tanfani 1992c).

With their initial petition drive unfulfilled, Groveites held one last attempt at secession. A few months after Andrew they formed the *Protect Our Communities Alliance* – POC - a joint effort with the Kendall Homeowners Association<sup>121</sup> to place a combined measure on the 1994 county ballot. The measure would allow for the secession of Coconut Grove and establish new zoning boards in unincorporated Dade County. The zoning board measure sought to bring revolutionary changes to Metro by overhauling existing planning and zoning codes and placing land use decisions in the hands of democratically elected officials. The measure called for the creation of eight, eight-member councils that would serve as municipalities (Tanfani & Muhs 1993). The ideas defining the proposed measure were not new, they had been present in official county reports attempting to overhaul the deficiencies of Metro's two-tier system of government. Nevertheless, this attempt sought to initiate the implementation of councils through democratic action rather than through the vote of county commissioners. By January 1993, 4 months after Andrew, POC had gathered close to 100,000 signatures across Dade County, enough to place a measure before Dade County voters in the fall of 1994 (Tanfani 1993a).

With the groundwork for voting established, POC encountered one last obstacle - the economic interests of the Cuban American community. The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the Latin Builders association spearheaded a coalition of ethnic, political and business interests that united under the threat of regulation over Dade's construction industry. The establishment of the councils meant the introduction of a new layer of governance that would

<sup>121</sup> Originating from the suburb of Kendall in southwest unincorporated Dade County; the Kendall Homeowners Association had battled Metro over the construction of a strip mall in a residential area of Kendall. Similar to the episode of unchecked urban development in Key Biscayne, the need for zoning control emerged as a key issue in the minds of Kendall activists. County commissioners had authorized the variance on existing zoning codes that allowed construction of the strip mall.

control zoning variances at the local level. Such a system would challenge development interests and weaken Cuban American lobbying influence over the county commissioners.

With extensive financial power at hands reach, the anti-referendum coalition engineered an anti-measure campaign based on a “less government is better” message. The imperative of representation at the local level and the discontent with Metro’s extensive bureaucracy were used to re-conceive the POC initiative as undesirable and wasteful. Coconut Grove’s efforts were represented as the effort of a small self-entitled community seeking selfish goals in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew, and the provision of local zoning councils was re-framed as a measure that created a wasteful layer of government bureaucracy (Tanfani 1993a). Due to voter support against the proposed measures POC lost the ballot election in 1994, ending the secessionist efforts of Coconut Grove and the zoning overhaul espoused by Kendall.<sup>122</sup>

Two years after Andrew, secession remained a latent political project for many communities in Dade County. After Andrew, the reconstruction efforts re-emphasized Metro’s institutional role as a service provision and funding entity. Similarly, the destruction of residences in Kendall and southwest Dade dispersed suburban populations, diminishing the numbers of residents who had originally mobilized against Metro. Secessionism after Andrew appeared obsolete, nevertheless Key Biscayne, Coconut Grove and Kendall had led Dade County towards a new political atmosphere. Their secessionist efforts laid the groundwork for a wave of incorporations that would come a few years later.

### **The Second Wave (1995 – 1997): Aventura, Sunny Isles and Pinecrest Incorporate, Destiny Fails.**



**Figure 42** The City of Aventura (Source: elitemiamiproperties.com).

In 1995, four years after Key Biscayne, Aventura seceded from Dade County carving an ambitious path for subsequent revolts.<sup>123</sup> Named after a well-known regional mall, this high-rise

---

<sup>122</sup> According to newspaper reports from the time the voting results against the initiative had a margin of 2 to 1. The proposal failed in all of three of Dade’s ethnic communities. It was defeated by the largest margin among Hispanics more than 4 – 1 in some areas. In predominantly African American and non- Hispanic white neighborhoods, it failed as well, but not by such large a margin (Tanfani 1993c). Among countywide voters 62.5 percent voted “No” (Tanfani 1993d).

<sup>123</sup> Aventura’s incorporation took place after a referendum organized by the community’s homeowner associations. This action led to a vote by county commissioners against the referendum. The community’s homeowner associations filed a suit in federal court against the county, forcing Metro to allow the referendum (Lambert 1995). On April 12 1995, voters returned to the polls with 85% of 5,514 votes in favor of independence (Bell 1995, Cauvin 1995).

suburb located in North East Dade was considered the richest *donor* community in unincorporated Dade County at the time of its revolt. Its conglomerate of gated communities; golf courses and expensive condominiums (Figure 42) represented a coveted political prize for county politicians. Aventura had a tradition of vertical ward politics, bound together by a tightly woven network of condominium associations, retirement groups and ethnic identity (Filkins 1994). As with the case of Cuban Americans in the enclave of Little Havana, Aventura's Jewish "snowbirds" had the reputation of delivering the largest voting bloc in unincorporated Dade County. Their political capital empowered them and their supporters to assert incorporation and, by default, nourish secessionist agendas throughout Dade County.<sup>124</sup>

Aventura's incorporation caught Commissioners and Metropolitan planners off guard. The community's political clout and self-driven funding sealed its quest for incorporation, as Metro scrambled to generate policies to slow down subsequent rebellions.<sup>125</sup> For Metro, this strategy consisted of preventing the potential loss of revenue from fleeting tax bases in unincorporated areas (Hartman 1995a & Dade County Ordinance No. 95-78). This was achieved by passing ordinances that formalized the process of incorporation through new requirements. They included paying the county for the feasibility studies, presenting the signatures of one to ten percent of residents, allowing application reviews only in March and September of every year, and providing an arduous list of evidence supporting incorporation before any elections would be authorized. Additional ordinances empowered county commissioners to review the impacts of fiscal disparity and called for the development of a revenue sharing plan, a plan showing combinations of lower and higher property values in areas seeking secession and the formation of quasi city-councils that would have authority over zoning, and other local matters (Filkins 1995b). The new set of constraints sought to introduce order and rationality into a process defined by Metro's changing requirements and procedures regarding incorporation, the political influence of county commissioners, and new evidence which found that incorporation was not the first choice for unincorporated communities.<sup>126</sup>

---

<sup>124</sup> In 1993, Aventura residents voted as a bloc to elect Gwen Margolis, the first county commissioner who actively and predictably lobbied for secession. Margolis became a champion of secessionist agendas repeatedly challenged metropolitan planners on the validity and substance of their feasibility Studies. Margolis had a Rich political trajectory. She was first elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 1974 where she served for six years before her election to the Florida state senate in 1980. In 1990, she became president of the Florida senate. She moved to become a Metro commissioner from 1993 to 2002, then returned to the senate from 2002 to 2008. She left office in 2008 only to be re-elected to the Florida State Senate as a democrat in the 2012. [[http://ballotpedia.org/wiki/index.php/Gwen\\_Margolis](http://ballotpedia.org/wiki/index.php/Gwen_Margolis)]

<sup>125</sup> The slow-down was also proposed by the Dade County manager who called for additional plans recapitulating the recommendations from the 1992 Citizens advisory commission. The county manager's plan called for the formation of a boundaries commission that would provide recommendations under the following guidelines: the inclusion of low income minorities if those residents want to be included, boundaries which include areas of 50,000 residents in order to be cost efficient, and the need for the new city's property value to fall under a specific range. Additionally, New incorporations would occur according to three alternatives: (1) in an incremental manner, (2) through the incorporation of all of unincorporated land into in a mega-municipality called UMSA, or (3) through the formation of community councils (County's Manger's report on Incorporation 1995).

<sup>126</sup> The restrictions Metro placed on communities of interest was substantiated by a comprehensive study from Florida International University which revealed that residents in unincorporated Dade County didn't consider incorporation the main solution for Metro's troubles. The report derived from a conference that took place on May 19,1995 entitled "Improving services for residents of Unincorporated Dade: Incorporation, annexation and other strategies" It included a survey conducted by the Institute for Public Opinion Research that stated that 1 in 5 residents in un-incorporated Dade favored incorporation (Filkins1995, Dluhy1995).

In 1995, Metro institutionalized the boundaries commission with the mandate of securing the place of low- income areas in new municipalities. This measure emphasized the core question of the incorporation debate: how to protect poorer areas of unincorporated Dade that depended on the tax base of affluent areas (Hartman 1995 a,b,c)?<sup>127</sup> Similar in composition and mission to the 1992 Citizen's advisory commission on incorporation, the boundaries commission coordinated efforts with county commissioners and metropolitan planners to develop further guidelines for incorporation.<sup>128</sup> This time however, the boundaries commission would uphold Metro's slow moving approach by supporting a county commission vote that placed the incorporation prospects of three areas in danger (Filkins 1995c).

At the time of Aventura's incorporation, six other communities actively sought secession, three of them - Pinecrest, Sunny Isles and Destiny - had carried out the necessary steps of organizing the grassroots and fulfilling county requirements to reach the point of holding referenda on secession.<sup>129</sup> Ultimately, two Pinecrest and Sunny Isles Beach, would succeed while Destiny would fail. Their respective stories offer revealing vignettes concerning the underlying ethnic dynamics between *communities of interest* and planners that were pervasive throughout the rebellion of municipal incorporations.

Pinecrest is a wealthy suburb on the southern edge of Dade County. It is home to historic mansions and Parrot Jungle, one of Miami's most recognized touristic landmarks. Separated from the rest of the county by US 1, Pinecrest remains even today an ethnically homogenous community composed mostly of Anglos. Pinecrest incorporated in 1996, after its residents organized threatened to sue Dade County for not allowing them to conduct a vote on incorporation. Its drive for incorporation was underlined by the need for police safety, arising from the concerns of residents who feared the presence of African American residents living in the adjoining suburbs of Goulds and Homestead.

Sunny Isles incorporated after Pinecrest in 1997. A tiny strip of Atlantic coastal land that originally sought to become part of Aventura, Sunny Isles Beach mobilized for independence after Aventura secessionists withdrew support for their annexation to their newly minted municipality. Aventura residents considered the strip geographically detached from their community, and as Key Biscayners a six years before, became preoccupied with the increased circulation of traffic and people. Sunny Isles remained, however, a prime tourist destination, attracting Canadian and European visitors seeking quieter and less spectacular vacation venues from the crowds and kitsch in South Beach. Sunny Isles residents had already been mobilizing for secession after Aventura's success. The community's location on an elongated key along the Atlantic Ocean separated from Dade County by the intercostal made it a self-contained area. Its independence placed zoning decisions in the hands of local residents who allowed a construction

---

<sup>127</sup> The new boundaries commission would be made up of 13 residents: seven from unincorporated Dade, three from areas trying to become cities and three from cities seeking to annex unincorporated areas (Hartman 1995a).

<sup>128</sup> The steps were the following: 1) Gather signatures from four percent of the registered voters living in the area seeking to incorporate, 2) Take the case to Metro commissioners who would make an initial recommendation, 3) Metro's planning director prepares a report outlining the boundaries and the effect of the proposed incorporation, 4) Metro's planning advisory board considers the request in a public hearing and makes the recommendations to Metro, 5) The Boundaries Commission considers the request as well as an alternative, such as the creation of community councils and makes the recommendation to metro, 6) the Metro commission decides whether to allow the incorporation, strikes it down or modifies the boundaries, 7) A group is appointed to write a charter (Hartman 1995).

<sup>129</sup> For the purposes of this analysis I am only concentrating on communities that achieved incorporation. It is important to note that up to 18 different *communities of interest* sought incorporation from 1991 to 2005. In 1995 the six communities were: Redlands, West Kendall, East Kendall, Pinecrest, Sunny Isles Beach and Destiny.

boom that dramatically altered its urban landscape (Figure 43). Sunny Isles Beach became a city after County leaders and metropolitan planners allowed its referendum to go forward by justifying the city's geography and ongoing efforts as the main reasons.

The case of Destiny, the incorporation of an African American middle class community that never was, offers an example of the ethnic tensions and contradictions that defined the work of planners during this period. Destiny was envisioned by a group of grassroots activists comprised of African American residents who moved to North Dade during the 1960's and 1970's to purchase single-family homes following desegregation. During the 1980's they formed UPAC United - *Unrepresented People Action Committee* – to mobilize against the construction of Joe Robbie stadium (Figure 44). During the 1980's, the planning of the stadium was coordinated with Metro, whose leaders authorized its site selection in a vote carried out by an at-large county commission that was mostly white. The construction of the stadium went forward during the late 1980's, but the experience of political disenfranchisement resonated with Miami's African Americans, who had lived a recurrent history of segregation. As the first waves of the rebellion started in the early 1990's, UPAC members came together with a new mission: The incorporation of Destiny around the stadium, literally absorbing its property value and making it an asset for a new city led by Miami's African Americans.



**Figure 43** Sunny Isles Beach (Source: Flickr) **Figure 44** Joe Robbie Stadium (Source: Flickr)

While planners and county officials wanted to develop a process of incorporation that would be rational, racial politics and financial influence would determine Destiny's future. Destiny was challenged from the onset by the stadium's owner, J. Huizenga, a Miami corporate magnate who built his fortune on waste management and Blockbuster Video. Huizenga didn't want his property to pay municipal taxes and framed his position as an issue of property rights. As Destiny supporters mobilized their grassroots to carry out a referendum on incorporation, Huizenga used his financial coffers to shape an anti-Destiny movement. Much like the anti POC campaign faced by Coconut Grove and Kendall in 1994 waged by the Latin Builder's association and the Hispanic Chamber of commerce, Destiny's secessionists faced a \$100,000 campaign that invalidated their cause by claiming that it would create a fiscal burden leading to job-flight to the surrounding communities (May 1996).



In the middle of the struggle, metropolitan planners took the position of standing against Destiny and joined Huizenga's corporate chorus to stop its incorporation.<sup>130</sup> Their feasibility studies demonstrated that the area didn't have the necessary property tax base to maintain services.<sup>131</sup> Furthermore, they worried that Destiny's incorporation would cause high-income areas in unincorporated Dade to opt-out from servicing poorer unincorporated communities. Metropolitan planners held on to a good government argument to stake their position. The incorporation of Destiny would lead to a financially weaker municipality and would also be ethnically divisive for unincorporated Dade County.

Their data and the financial might of Huizenga proved to be an insurmountable obstacle for UPAC. Planners justified their work as rational approach based on hard data and color blindness. Nevertheless, UPAC accused Metro of racial bias: by not supporting the incorporation of an African American community Metro was setting a double standard based on high-income. White communities such as Aventura and Pinecrest were allowed to incorporate while Destiny faced insurmountable roadblocks.<sup>132</sup>

While the communities that I have described experienced different paths towards incorporation, county commissioners allowed their progress at a time when a moratorium on incorporations was taking effect. This contradiction occurred for political expediency. As incorporation fever spread throughout Dade County, its political capital became a well of potential votes for commissioners. Three county commissioners voted in favor of allowing the Sunny Isles Beach and Pinecrest to incorporate: Arthur Teele, Maurice Ferre, and Alex Penelas. All planned to be contenders in the 1996 Dade County mayoral elections (Hartman and Filkins 1995b, Miami Herald 1995). The rebellion, therefore, symbolized a delicate choice for commissioners. Harnessing political support for re-election by supporting the drive of municipal incorporations led by grassroots groups, versus safeguarding of Metro's status quo as a regional government.

The challenge of balancing Metro's budget would eventually come to the forefront after the failure of Destiny. In 1996, Miguel Diaz de la Portilla, a rising Cuban American politician recommended the creation of 8 to 12 community councils (Tanfani 1996). As described in previous sections of this chapter, this recommendation arose from previous reports and referenda and had been a key recommendation of the 1992 Citizen's countywide committee on incorporation in 1992. What made the existence of community councils feasible in 1996 was a rising budgetary crisis faced by Metro. Soon after the vote on community councils, county commissioners took a drastic step to freeze incorporations for one year and give the councils an opportunity to be tested. This moratorium would also allow them and planners to continue

---

<sup>130</sup> Interview with Lucy Silverman.

<sup>131</sup> Feasibility studies are reports written by Dade County Planners to assess the financial viability of a potential municipality tax base. Feasibility studies are one of the steps necessary for an unincorporated area to become a municipality. Tax bases were formulated by aggregating the value of properties in a designated area – a square mile – and calculating this amount against the cost of supplying service provisions. Property tax bases resources can be compared in two ways: 1) in terms of the taxable value per capita and 2) in terms of the taxable value per square mile. The per-square mile measure, which associates the tax base with the full array of services needed to serve a developmentally diverse area serving residents and non-residential populations, is a better indicator of fiscal impact. According to Olmedillo: "The taxable value of property is often used as a key indicator of local government fiscal resources. Within Dade County, in the fiscal year 1994 – 1995, unincorporated areas accounted for 46 percent of the revenue of municipal-level services in the unincorporated area (Olmedillo 1994 p: 5).

<sup>132</sup> The vision that informed Destiny however, would not be lost. In 2003, community stakeholders came back with a proposal holding a larger industrial base to incorporate the city of Miami Gardens. I will explore this episode in a latter section.

analyzing how fiscal disparity could be solved (Finefrock 1996). The memorandum on municipal incorporations was officially established after the failure of Destiny and the incorporation of Sunny Isles Beach, setting back the plans of other *communities of interest*.<sup>133</sup>

### **Metro's Alternative: Community Councils (1997 – 2000)**

County commissioners and metropolitan planners embraced community councils as an innovative way to alleviate the problems of under-representation and inefficiency that had historically plagued the two-tier system of government. Community councils functioned until the mid 2000's, when new budgetary constraints forced Metro to close them. Over their decade long trajectory, however, they became important forums where local governance concerns were addressed and municipal incorporation germinated through the support of ethnic empowerment. The councils became a litmus test of the changing demographics and politics that shaped rebellion of municipal incorporations.

Community councils were the main institutional innovation carried out by Metro to bring government closer to the people. In the mid 1990's as Metro developed policies on incorporation, county officials pushed the creation of satellite Metro offices in six sites throughout Dade County (Charles 1995). *Team Metro* as the network came to be known operated with county staff to provide destination points where residents could bring their local concerns (Cauvin 1995) and have direct contact with their county government.<sup>134</sup> Team metro offices were supposed to function as the offices of Metro government in key locations throughout unincorporated Dade County. They complemented the introduction of community councils, which were envisioned to function as actual local government councils.

Indeed, community councils would emerge as a form of self-representation that would empower people by giving them a voice in the decision-making processes.<sup>135</sup> Their functions included a wide range of activities: deciding on local zoning requests, voicing opinions on regional zoning requests, compiling profiles of local communities, preparing annual statement of community needs, recommending comprehensive master-planning measures, recommending expenditure priorities and revenue needs, functioning as forums for community issues, disseminating information on community and county organizations and work with Team Metro Offices (Dade County 1996). To carry out their tasks, county employees and metropolitan planners served as referees and facilitators during their meetings.

At the center of the idea of community councils lay the notion that a smaller unit of governance closer to the people would fix many of the issues that had mobilized *communities of interest* against Metro.<sup>136</sup> Metro sought to accomplish this mission by using zoning, as the stage

---

<sup>133</sup> After Destiny, three other communities stood in line for incorporation Miami Lakes, Palmetto Bay and Doral.

<sup>134</sup> The idea of Team Metro originated from the City of Miami where NET offices – neighborhood enhancement team – were instituted following the Coconut Grove rebellion.

<sup>135</sup> According to the Metro-Dade County Boundaries Commission on Issues of Incorporation, Annexation and Community councils, the organization of community councils would be as follows: "Community councils should be organized to have seven members, six of which should be elected from sub-areas and one should be appointed by the board of county commissioners. No more than two of the elected members may be non-residents who have significant business or community involvement in the council area. Those members must be residents of Dade County. All other members must be residents of the council area. Existing county staff should be assigned to work with the community councils so as to minimize new costs associated with their implementation. Such staff may include: a local area community council administrator, and administrative assistant, clerical staff and others needed (1996: p 7).

<sup>136</sup> The idea of community councils was rejuvenated in the Dade County Citizen's advisory committee on incorporation that adapted the notion from previous Studies that considered the Two-tier problem. Their report

that would mobilize a democratic platform were local political representation could be bred and practiced. Zoning had traditionally been a major issue driving public discontent against Metro. The control of zoning issues at the local level fed the secessionist fires in white communities across Dade County, but also provoked reactionary anti-secessionism from groups such as the Latin Builder's Association (LBA).

To place community councils on the political map of metropolitan Miami (Figure 45), planners attempted to draw council zones in unincorporated areas by balancing diversity, economic status and arranging rational geographic boundaries. Nevertheless, their mapping was influenced by the politics of county commissioners. DPZ Metropolitan Planner 1, a practicing planner at the time explains:

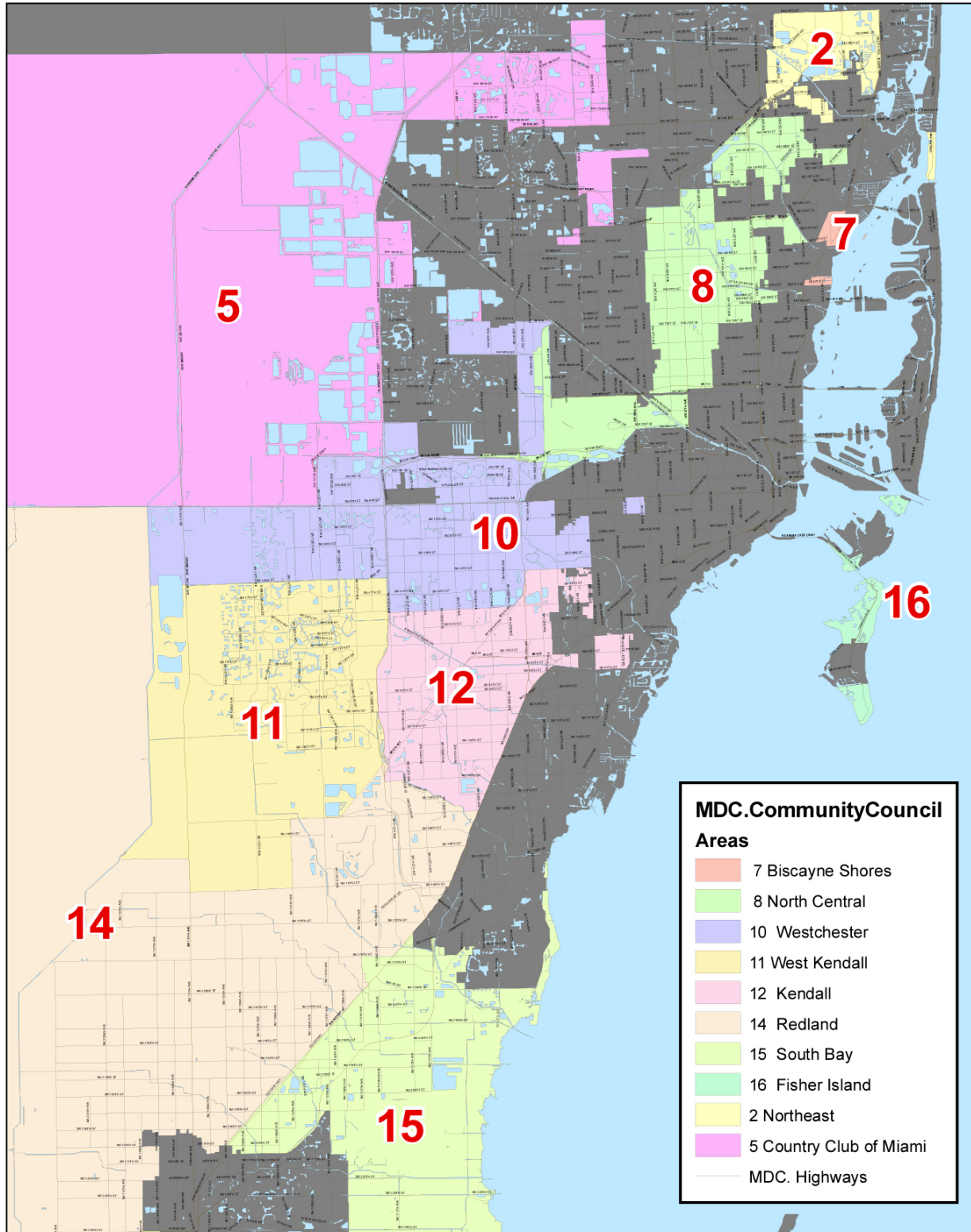
Back in 1996, when the councils were voted on and there were 16. One of the things we tried to do was to use the boundaries of the commission districts, and follow the census of designated places. The US Census recognizes historically recognized communities as census designated places. That was one of the things that helped us keep these communities together. That and the fact that each commission wanted to have a staff appointment in each of the number of councils. But there was a risk, by ignoring recognized communities and empowering unincorporated areas with planning decision, you also begun to empower them with non-zoning or non-planning issues such as incorporation.

As planners focused on a rational approach that would bring configurations based on size, variable sub-areas, recognized communities, and census designated places, the implementation of the councils would eventually translate into burgeoning ethnic political power which included not only Hispanics but also Blacks and Anglos. They became political territories where organizing in behalf of *communities of interest* took place, including pushing for agendas espousing municipal incorporations. Their forums became incubators for future political leaders. Juan Martinez explains:

The councils have been breeding grounds for the powers to be, you had councils where mayors have come out. For example in Doral community council 9 JC Bermudez was the original chair and then chair and then, He is Cuban. Then there is Paul Vrooman, who was the chair of community council 15 and became Mayor of Cutler Bay. Then you have Juan Zapata from Colombia who came out of the community council from Westchester and went to become state representative as well as Marta Perez who was originally elected as the chair for community council 6 and became a member of the School board. In the case of Miami gardens all of their community council went to the town. They all have been a very good step for everything they had been pursuing.

---

called for: "smaller zoning boards to bring zoning decisions closer to the smaller *communities of interest* in the unincorporated area" (Citizen's advisory committee on countywide incorporation Final Report February 1992 p: 2).



**Figure 45** Miami Dade Community Councils (DP&Z). Certain councils no longer exist because they have either been annexed by municipalities or become new municipalities. The contemporary numbering of councils corresponds to the original numbers attributed when the councils were implement in 1996.

### **The Third Wave (2000 – 2005): Miami Lakes, Palmetto Bay, Doral, Miami Gardens and Cutler Bay Incorporate.**

The third wave of municipal incorporations took place between 2000 and 2005. This period was defined by the birth of new municipalities that had been stalled since the 1996 moratorium. In the four-year interim, county commissioners and metropolitan planners explored an array of options aimed at dealing with the pending challenge of fiscal flight (Finefrock 1999). These included the passage of new ordinances calling for Metro's withdrawal from unincorporated service provisions, the failure of ballot measures offering a half penny tax increase that would provide additional county revenue, and a series of lawsuits against Metro accusing it of budgetary violations. After three years Metro still did not have a clear blueprint for rebel communities that remained paralyzed at the threshold of independence.

In 1999 Doral, a rich suburban community in West Dade joined a lawsuit with Palmetto Bay - another affluent suburban community in South of Dade - claiming that Metro was violating the rights of citizens in unincorporated Dade County because the county commission was halting incorporations. The lawsuit was first upheld by a Dade county court, boosting incorporation efforts, but then was turned down by a court of appeals. The impasse led to a thawing period between county leaders and *communities of interest* in which mutually beneficial compromise was explored (Finefrock 1999).

Talks continued until 2000 when a new referendum was carried out calling for special conditions such as mitigation fees and the retention of county services (Yee 2000). The referendum passed by a slim majority. This vote set another legal battle in motion in which Doral, Miami Lakes and Palmetto Bay joined forces to argue that Metro's two-tier government was unconstitutional and it should be dismantled (Finefrock 2001). The lawsuit played out in the courts as the communities mobilized for referenda until county commissioners offered rebel communities a choice: incorporation for a mitigation fee. Palmetto Bay, Miami Lakes and Doral agreed with the stipulation and proceeded to incorporate over the subsequent years: First Miami Lakes in 2000, Palmetto Bay in 2002, and Doral in 2003. The town of Cutler Bay joins them in 2005

In 2003 Miami Gardens emerged from the ashes of Destiny. Seven years after the defeat of UPAC, its organizers devised a new plan that annexed industrial land and in the residential areas surrounding Joe Robbie stadium. Metropolitan planners carried out their usual repertoire of feasibility studies addressing the new tax base's financial sustainability, but their results were still unfavorable for UPAC (Martinez 2002). Faced with another round of potential battles reminiscent of the failure of Destiny, Metro commissioners allowed Miami Gardens to incorporate under a strict financial plan requiring the county to monitor the city's finances for a year. Miami Gardens formed under these circumstances and remained financially unsustainable during its first year of existence. A year later however, a county study showed that the county spend \$15 million to service the area instead of a foreseen \$23 million. The wrong calculation liberated Destiny from its financial burden of proof and drove criticism towards Metro. Miami's Garden's fiscal report established an opening to re-consider Metro's imposed mitigation fees. In 2007 two years after the last incorporation the county appointed a task force which determined that Metro was doing much better than breaking even, and recommended stopping the payments (Rabin 2007). Metro's surplus dissipated after the financial crisis of 2008. Today, a weakened Metro system stands of the verge of new incorporation battles.

## **Conclusion: Setting the state for a Post Cuban Spatial Politics**

The rebellion of municipal incorporations represents an intricate planning history in which planning practice shaped and was shaped by the challenges brought forth by communities of interest in a changing political field.

During the 1990's demographic change continued to become a source of political tensions as *communities of interest* organized for incorporation to gain further control over their local tax base and challenge the emergence of ethnic political power in the county commission. The emergence of new leadership achieved through grassroots organizing and electoral processes demonstrated a vibrant political landscape comprised by residential groups that organized to reclaim political control in the midst of Cuban American empowerment and the aftermath of the Meek redistricting decision. In the early phases of this process ethnicity became an additional element with class and institutional discontent to generate counter-claims that became territorialized as municipalities. *Communities of interest* were numerous, diverse and divided along class and ethnic lines.

These set of characteristics provoked preoccupations for planners who considered the waves of new municipalities the fragmentation of county control along ethnic, economic and political lines. Planners reacted with innovations in their practice, but these innovations were themselves challenged by conditions on the ground. These included the introduction of new policy initiatives and modes of managing municipal rebellions, such as the development of reports/studies to enable decision making over incorporation, as well as the designation of a new unit of governance; community councils. The latter did little to stop the drive for incorporations and actually provided settings for the education of budding politicians.

Planners were caught between the desires and needs of local residents who claimed their place in Miami in the face of social transformation and the imperative of the public interest. In the next chapter I turn to two locations in metropolitan Dade County – the Art district of Wynwood and the municipality of Opa Locka – where cultural production becomes a method for place-making. The use of culture as to activate urban development processes occurs in aftermath of Cuban American empowerment and signals the reconfiguration of spatial politics into new forms of political action based on community, identity and multiculturalism.



When we were deciding whether or not to buy a warehouse I walked around. I found working people who took pride in their homes. I wasn't scared off. To the contrary, I am an immigrant myself.

Mera Rubbell <sup>137</sup>



Figure 46 Living Room 2001

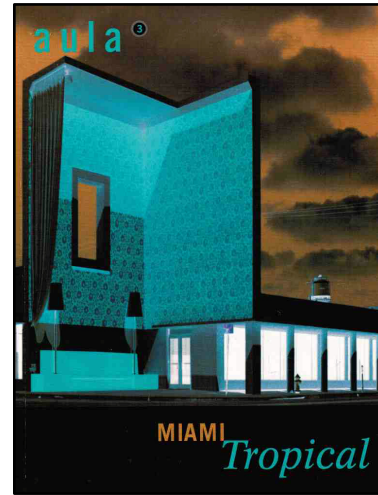


Figure 47 Living room 2005



Figure 48 Living Room 2009



Figure 49 Living Room 2011 Source

Figures 46 thru 49 The transformation of the Living Room from 2001 to 2012.<sup>138</sup>

### The Ghost in the Living Room

The Living Room looked like a haunted house. Still standing at the western edge of Miami's Design District a couple of blocks from the Julia Tuttle Express Way and Wynwood, its coat of black muralist paint struck me with nostalgia. The structure once stood as a crisp icon symbolizing Miami's fin de siècle cultural boom (Figure 46). Over the last ten years it had

<sup>137</sup> Mera Rubbell is one of the most important Art collectors in Wynwood and proponent of the Miami Art Model (Martin 2004).

<sup>138</sup> Sources: Figure 1: <http://www.architonic.com/ntsht/-form-follows-fear-in-conversation-with-roberto-behar-and-rosario-marquardt/7000470>, Figure2: Aula 2005, Figure 3: Author, Figure 4: Author.

undergone a peculiar metamorphosis devolving from a monument adorning the front page of premier design publications such as AULA Magazine (Figure 47) to a vandalized ruin on the verge of demolition (Figure 48). In its latest reincarnation the Living Room was re-purposed as an outdoor promotional event space for the 2011 Miami Art Basel Fair<sup>139</sup> (Figure 49).

I contemplated the building on a mild Miami winter night and wondered how this once important beacon had become a specter of an emblematic past. As an architecture student in Miami during the early 2000's, I recall how the Living Room captured Miami's public imagination. Residents and tourists alike became captivated by the structure and its suggestive architectural puzzle: The private space of an ordinary living room, a mundane, yet intimate zone of everyday life - complete with interior wall paper details, furniture, and accessories – became a public space for anyone to occupy.

This paradox was a result of its design. The off-scale proportions of the structure's concrete profile suggested a liminal zone between the closed domesticity of home and the possibility of Miami's urbanism beyond an invisible yet suggested enclosure; a cinematic, tropical, airy, starkly shadowed physical landscape, fraught with social tensions and anonymous encounter. The building's ambiguous message was emphasized by its location at a corner, where intersecting internal and external gazes allowed passers-by to simultaneously become observers of the city and urban specimens strategically staged for observation. At that crossroads, the boundaries of territories defining "my" v. "yours" became blurred by the absence of complementary walls while a long brightly colored concrete bench at the structure's base invited anyone to sit, interact and become part of a game of urban choreography.

A stage set for the performances of city life, but also a refuge from the sweltering South Florida sun, the Living Room proposed a space where we all became part of the same undefined zone. By stepping into its frame pedestrians, residents and tourists entered an interstitial room between the "outside/inside", the "here/there". We shared the built/un-built city as inhabitants of the Living Room/Miami: homeless, transient, immigrant, complete, and incomplete, yet claiming the room in calmness and tension, for each other and ourselves.

Designed by Roberto Behar and Rosario Marquardt in the late 1990's and built in 2001 – a year after the beginning of the Miami Art Basel Fair (Burch 2001), the Living Room became monument to a changing immigrant city at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Behar 2005). For me the building offered a contradiction that captured the city's zeitgeist. It turned Miami's urbanism, urban design and planning into an interrogation about community at a crucial moment in the city's history. On its bench you sat with others like you and unlike you to render a visual composition of the tensions making up Miami's political community. Who did the Living Room belong to? Immigrants, residents, artists, the homeless, tourists, everyone, no one? And how did we come together in this city or not? Through choice, citizenship, race, shared immigrant history, luck?

During fieldwork, I returned to the Living Room repeatedly to observe how people continued to interact with the structure as the building deteriorated. For me, it held a unique magnetism signaling clues about Miami's urbanism. The political questions it foregrounded did not disappear, rather, its metamorphosis pointed at a complex and emergent process occurring in Miami where art, politics and the activities of individuals engaging in use and traffic of culture as a value - cultural producers - were reshaping Miami's urbanism through concrete practices in

---

<sup>139</sup> Art Basel Miami is a yearly art fair held in Miami in the city of Miami Beach and the district of Wynwood. Its events have been held in Miami since 1999. I delve deeper into the history of the fair and its effects on Miami later in this chapter. For a description of its 10-year history see Miami Herald Editorial 2011.

the city. Aiming to find clues about how the ghost of the Living Room embodied this process, I sought and interviewed its architect. During the interview one particular answer stood out regarding the building's transformation politics and urban space:

“The living Room aims to represent the idea of Miami, it does not aim to represent all. Kendall is in Miami but it doesn't represent the idea of Miami. Unfortunately it is square miles of pathological urban development. From the point of view of architecture and art, Kendall doesn't exist”.<sup>140</sup>

Roberto Behar<sup>141</sup>

This statement revealed a tension that became evident in further interviews and practices I observed in Miami during fieldwork. While the Living Room was open to interpretation, for its author its interpretation was meant to exclude much of the people in unincorporated Dade County. Artistic production signaled the construction of a territorialized discourse based on the value of culture as a political tool and force for physical change.

In the early 2000's, the construction of the Living Room coincided with the arrival of the Miami Art Basel Fair when organizers from the renowned Swiss art fair announced they would make Miami Beach the premier destination for the fair's winter activities. With the development of Art Basel Miami Beach into a recurrent yearly event - complete with satellite fairs, outdoor exhibition spaces and gallery openings - Miami joined the ranks of international cities comprising a network of art market destinations. With this newfound status, a contingent of local and non-local cultural value makers – artists, gallery owners, museum representatives, collectors and art market speculators – gained influence in Miami.

The importance of Art Basel and the influence of its cultural producers were captured by the Living Room. The structure's celebrated appraisal by local and international critics resulted from its symbolic value as a marker of Miami's evolution into a world-class city where a global art market could be hosted. For me, the Living Room turned “Culture” from a category standing as a euphemism for an urban past defined by immigration and ethnic strife to a performative civic statement about the value of social diversity and the role of art shaping in the future of Miami's urbanism<sup>142</sup>. The translation of culture from deficit to asset not only represented a discursive shift which sketched out a new politics for Miami in the midst of a new round of social upheaval, it also proposed the design of an economic value, as Miami's social diversity became the subject of aesthetic objects, artifacts and monuments that came to represent culture.

The factors that underlined the Living Room's cultural importance would also bring its agonizing decay into an unmemorable pop-up event space. Over the years, Art Basel Miami would lead to the use of culture as a force of revitalization for the real estate industry. This lineage between art and real estate is similar to the art as revitalization strategies mobilizing

---

<sup>140</sup> As I have demonstrated in previous chapters, the reference West of I-95 alludes to populations in unincorporated Dade County as well as municipalities comprised by mostly ethnic populations of Hispanics and African Americans.

<sup>141</sup> For information on Roberto Behar and Rosario Marquardt work see: [www.rr-studios.com](http://www.rr-studios.com)

<sup>142</sup> This statement represents a personal reflection that does not stand for a celebration of the Global City discourse. On the contrary, it is an observation which aims to consider the contradictions embedded within that frame of analysis based on the value of a monument in the Miami. Much like I do in previous chapters, where I start with vignettes that deal with architecture, the Living Room represents one of these references from which a reflection on the city can be carried out. Its choice is arbitrary, but serves to illustrate a tension that is present in Miami.

gentrifying processes in other metropolises.<sup>143</sup> In Miami, this process was re-branded as the “Miami Art Model” and given precedence in public debates about Miami’s urban development.<sup>144</sup>

With the establishment of Art Basel and the growing awareness of the Miami Art Model, Wynwood and the Design District became cultural destinations in Metropolitan Miami: property prices in these areas increased, and real estate speculation became pervasive under the influence of commodified cultural artifacts. Real estate entrepreneurs gambled on investment opportunities by allowing their real estate inventories - retail frontages, warehouse spaces and derelict lots to fall in disrepair, or be demolished to be re-built. Under these circumstances the Living Room became prime land for re-development in a real estate scheme controlled by a number of local actors with connections to Art Basel’s international art markets. This self-enclosed system promoted capital accumulation where the inflated price of a painting sold during Art Basel Fair would lead to the inflated value of land in Wynwood since many of the traders who trafficked in the art market were part of the apparatus of real estate development in the neighborhood. As the value of the Living Room’s adjacent building increased, its civic value underwent a crisis.

The structure’s political symbolism, however, prevented its immediate demolition and lay bare a tension between the local forces of urban re-development and the meaning of memory, community and monumentality. For the architect, the Living Room remained a monument to Miami’s diversity, but one dedicated to a public with exclusive characteristics that were not representative of all residents in Metropolitan Miami. This act of re-branding, but also reclaiming, the city’s diversity was accomplished by the Ghost in the Living Room.

### **Cultural Production as Spatial Politics**

In chapters three and four, I considered *spatial politics* through a historical analysis framed by specific episodes in Miami’s metropolitan planning and immigrant history.<sup>145</sup> I analyzed how the empowerment of Cuban Americans led to repercussions in metropolitan planning, community development, and municipal and county politics. I followed by considering the counter-mobilizations by *communities of interest* that sought to municipal to acquire political control over their respective territories. In this chapter I turn to the first decade of this century to consider how the social change which exemplified this history extends into the practices of artists, art dealers, real estate speculators and community leaders. I carry out this analysis by considering the networks and modes that define cultural production in Miami.

My goal with this chapter is to dissect its assumed common sense regarding multiculturalism and culture exemplified by the voices of Roberto Behar and look beyond the

---

<sup>143</sup> To consider these processes in Chicago and New York see Deutsche 1998, Lloyd 2006, and Zukin 1995. For a comprehensive study on gentrification see Lees et al 2008.

<sup>144</sup> The “Miami Art model” is a public-private partnership in which local art collectors open their galleries to the public thus facilitating access to their art collections. This approach emphasizes the contributions of private collectors with particular curating agendas and artistic inventories rather than the development of cultural programs designed by public institutions. Many of the private galleries that exemplify the “Miami Art Model” are located in the neighborhood of Wynwood and contribute to its value as a cultural destination. For more information on this history see (Martin 2004, and: <http://www.theartnewspaper.com/articles/Public-service-or-private-passion/?/25271>)

<sup>145</sup> In chapter three I analyzed how the Mariel crisis led to the formation of a Cuban American community development apparatus that supported the birth and evolution of ethnic bloc voting patterns leading to the political empowerment of Miami’s Cuban American community. In chapter four, I followed this period by exploring the reaction of *communities of interest* to these political changes. I examined how from the mid- 1990’s to the early 2000’s, neighborhood groups organized to counter-balance the influence of Cuban Americans and the inefficiency of Dade County government by embarking on multiple waves of municipal incorporation efforts.

architecture towards an understanding of how such common sense is formed and practiced by a constellation of actors with specific intentions.

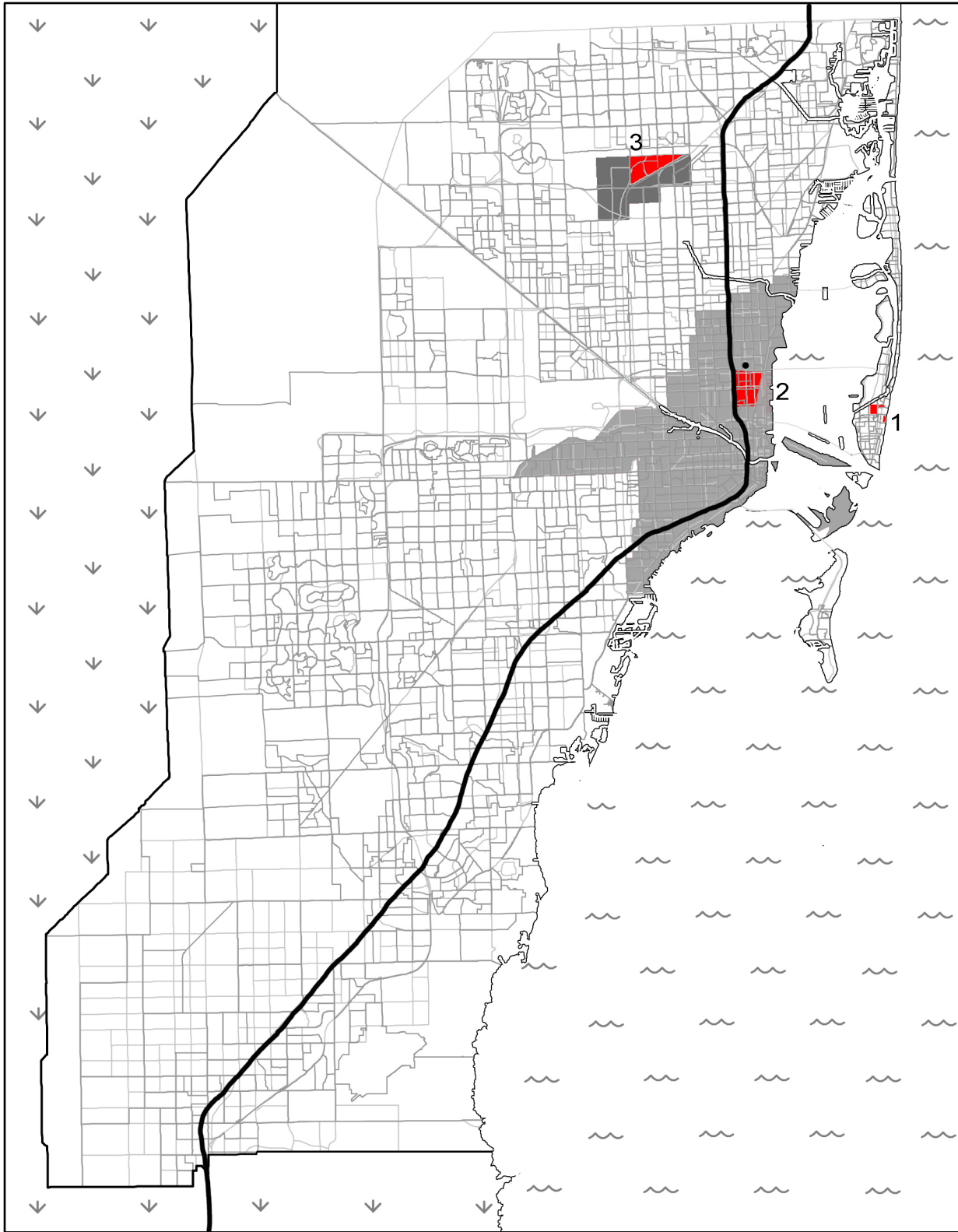
Miami's *spatial politics of cultural production* is defined by networks of politicians, planners, community development specialists, residents, activists, and artists who deploy culture – visual art, street art, muralist art, and public art - as a value-making process to achieve the control of urban territories, claims to social and political status, and the development of competitive “multicultural” discourses.

Cultural production in Miami represents a competitive field where established and emergent ethnic communities mobilize political agendas through a cluster of activities that involve art and speculative development. While this process occurs throughout many cities in the world, in Miami it develops in the backdrop of a context where Cuban American empowerment and Latin American immigration have reshaped a pre-existing social order and culture becomes an aesthetic commodity with both discursive manifestations and physical outcomes.

In this chapter I focus on how the deployment of cultural production – the use of culture as a value - comprises a political activity through four tensions: First, the making and unmaking of discourse which attributes value to Miami's urbanism, particular its sites of immigrant settlement and ethnic enclaves; second collective mobilizations of cultural producers who deploy the notion of community to deal with a set of perceived set of urban crises where they become protagonists; third, the practices of local and cosmopolitan cultural producers who compete for access, status and capital by using identity as a source of agency, and four the development of a competitive pan-African multiculturalism as a value to claim political status through community development led by African Americans in the municipality of Opa-locka.

While I used the Living Room to introduce the political, social economic, and physical dynamics that sketch out these tensions, my analysis will be carried out in more detail through a comparative ethnography of two key sites in Metropolitan Miami: the district of Wynwood and the municipality of Opa-Locka (Figure 50). In these sites the tensions I describe above become visible through the use of art as a place-making strategy, as well as parallel practices by cultural producers in Miami's burgeoning art scene.

By using ethnographic data to elucidate how the historical trajectories of these sites inform their present conditions, this comparison allows me to detect differing modes of cultural production across urban locations. This analytical lens is based not only on an exploration of how these discourses move from one location to another, but also on an analysis of how they are adopted, reconstructed and reshaped with different institutional frameworks. These characteristics underlie the capacity that different groups and locations have in accessing Miami's global art market, as well as the legacies of localized racial and immigrant histories that define community and identity in Miami.



**Figure 50** Map of *spatial politics* as cultural production. The Living Room shown as a black dot, the dividing line between East of I-95 and West of I-95 is shown as heavy black line. 1: Yearly Art Basel Events in the Miami Beach, 2: Wynwood Art District in the city of Miami, and 3: NSP-2 revitalization zones in Opa-Locka.



I begin by offering a description of the methods I carried out for this chapter. The observations in this chapter derive from a set of concerns that link built form to cultural production, but also involve a continuing exploration of spatial politics through the process of cultural production.

I continue by providing an introduction to the analysis of cultural production in Miami. I summarize George Yúdice's chapter entitled *The Globalization of Latin America: Miami* in his book *The Expediency of Culture* (2003). This chapter provides a study of Miami's burgeoning cultural industries in relation to the use of culture as an economic value providing the city with attractive urban qualities based on a vibrant cultural economy. While his work opens a new focus by considering how Miami's cultural industries have re-shaped the city's urbanism, in a so called "Post-Cuban" context (Yúdice 2003), Yúdice's analysis is based on an economic analysis that emphasizes new media and entertainment industries rather than artistic production at its core. By bringing in ethnography I am able to consider how in the decade since the publication of Yúdice's work, cultural production is influencing not only the practices of the cultural industries linking the local to the global, but also the practices of local residents - urban developers, community development specialists and artists - who engage in cultural production to revitalize areas in metropolitan Miami.

I follow by considering the discursive process by which value is attributed to different locations in Miami according to their physical and social attributes. The process of making and unmaking "absent urbanisms" - which I explain later in this chapter - discounts the contributions of residents in specific areas of the city - mostly unincorporated Dade County - and has the effect of de-emphasizing cultural value at one place and emphasizing culture at another. This condition allows for cultural production to become the source of place-making initiatives. Besides providing the platform for the deployment of urban development projects in key zones of revitalization, cultural production also mobilizes a political imagination that disempowers certain groups - poor immigrants - and locations and empowers a new set of actors - mostly cultural producers - with notions of authenticity, identity and discourses based on multiculturalism.

In the fourth part, I focus on the district of Wynwood. I consider the neighborhood's recent development history and its transformation after the arrival of the Art Basel Miami fair and the apogee of the "Miami's Art Model" by interlacing two field observations: the first considers collective practices based on the mobilizations of Wynwood's artistic community around the construction of a new casino in downtown Miami, and the second chronicles the individual practices of local and non-local artists who negotiate their identity to access capital, status and acquire benefit during Primary Flight, one of Miami Art Basel's satellite fairs.

In the fifth part of this chapter, I turn to the municipality of Opa-Locka where a community development apparatus led by African American elites currently deploys cultural production as a re-development strategy to revitalize the municipality's poor areas. The "Opa-Locka Art model" includes the development of an art master plan convening experts, artists and architects in similar fashions to activities in the district of Wynwood. Yet it differs by the advancement of a discourse of pan-African multiculturalism that competes with other modes of multiculturalism in Miami. This process is enacted through the appraisal of Opa-locka's Moorish revival architecture, the use of federal redevelopment grants to support local arts, construction industries, and the inclusion of non-local African American cultural producers in the revitalization efforts. Standing in sharp contrast from private entrepreneurship that defines Wynwood, Opa-Locka art as place-making approach is heavily subsidized by the federal

government. I conclude by providing some notes regarding the spatial politics of cultural production in Miami based on the comparative ethnography I develop in this chapter and by offering a rejoinder to Yúdice's analysis of cultural production in Miami.

### **Methods: Fieldwork Between Wynwood and Opa-Locka**

The information on this chapter is based on participant observations between two sites: The art district of Wynwood in the city of Miami and the Municipality of Opa-Locka in Northwest Dade County. During the time I was carrying out research on the history of metropolitan planning, I also participated in observations throughout different locations of the city. These observations were aimed at detecting what was currently happening in metropolitan Miami in relation to urbanism, urban development and urban planning – I was looking for answers concerning who were the actors and what were the processes shaping the built environment.

These excursions brought me face to face with different actors involved in planning and urban development. The observations I carried out included the mobilizations of the Right to the City alliance in behalf of affordable housing and against big development, the post-earthquake planning efforts of the Haitian American diaspora to rebuild Port-Au-Prince, and the grassroots mobilizations carried out by local neighborhood groups challenging the current implementation of the Miami 21 form-based code.<sup>146</sup>

Throughout my observations I sought to make sense of the historical evidences I was finding. My goal was to link the history of metropolitan planning contemporary urban phenomena. I started to focus my attention on the relationship between Art and real estate in Miami Beach and Wynwood because it seemed to address some of the dimensions comprising my thoughts on *spatial politics* – the manner in which local social groups – in this case cultural producers – carried out practices and tactics in urban space to achieve empowerment. The contours of the *spatial politics of cultural production* were not initially evident to me, but they started to acquire shape due to the similar characteristics and visible differences they exhibited in relation to the experience of Cuban American empowerment and the rebellion of municipal incorporations.

They were similar in the manner in which local groups developed political capacities within a context exemplified by immigrant empowerment. In their cases they exhibited similar uses of discourses regarding the failures of metropolitan planning. They also offered a similar configuration in the manner that the scale of spatial politics was practiced. The practices and tactics that I saw did not take place at the county level, rather they represented a scale that was similar to the mobilizations of *communities of interests* – the municipality and the neighborhood. What differed was the absence of metropolitan planning as central a central aspect of this process and the introduction of cultural production as a means to mobilize place-making interventions. Through this process the city embodied a new set of values regarding political action on the streets, the use of public space, and the importance of urban design and planning projects.

As illustrated by the vignette of the Living Room, this focus also emerged from the attention I personally gave to the physical transformations of Wynwood. This process was exemplified by the series of changes I noticed the structure undergo in the last decade. This focus on built form derives from my own training as an architect and urban designer and my former

---

<sup>146</sup> Much of this material was not included in this dissertation and will be used for future research.

membership as a graduate student and architectural practitioner inside the networks of architects and designers who still remain influential in shaping Miami's built environment. While I held a bias regarding built form and was aware of it during my research, my interest in understanding what lied beyond architectural form arose from the desire to understand how human practices challenged the purity of architectural design, not only as a discourses of knowledge and professional practice, but also regarding the unseen politics that architectural and urban design embodied in Miami's social context.

The work of Goerge Yúdice provided an essential footing to carry out an understanding of how human practices were influencing the built environment in Miami. As I will demonstrate, through a review of his chapter in the *Expediency of Culture* (2003), I was able to harness the notion of cultural production as a frame of analysis to carry out my observations regarding the actors shaping this type of urban transformation.

My observations took place over the span of three years; from 2009 to 2012, usually during the first week of December but also beyond this small time frame. These observations took place during the events of the Miami Art Basel Fair, when Miami Beach and Wynwood become artistic destinations. These periods usually took place for about a week. At the beginning my activities consisted on visiting galleries and observing the outdoor events of the fair to evaluate how art was used in conjunction with built form and particularly urban development processes. I interacted with gallery owners, street artists, local artists and urban developers who participated in the events in Wynwood.

Over time I became interested in what actually happened before and after the weeklong Art Basel event every December. I became interested in knowing what happened to the people who remained after the event and what they did after the Fair's activities. The expansion of my fieldwork to periods before and after Art Basel opened a much richer picture. This approach allowed me to forge connections with local artists, visit them on a regular basis when I came to Miami to carry fieldwork and carry out archival collection, see and get know them on a personal level and talk to them about their art and their artistic process. Art Basel provided the stage to meet the artists consider, gallery owners and the developers I describe in this chapter, but throughout different periods during the year - usually in the summer - I was able to actually get to know them as they prepared for the events of the Fair at the end of the year.

During this overarching three-year long period, my observations led me to develop contacts with networks of cultural producers I describe in this chapter. My relationship with the Urban Environmental League and the Developers in Wynwood arose not only from my visits the Wynwood but also from connections I had with individuals working in an array of topics in the city: artists dealing with art in public space, architects working on public space design, community development workers focused on affordable housing issue, and other PhD students doing urban research. The observations I carried out in the anti casino forum led by local Wynwood developers and sponsored by the UEL were enabled by a previous student-professor relationship I had with a University of Miami history professor. My expertise in design and planning allowed me reconnect with previous relationships and to access the meetings of the UEL, as my knowledge the brand of Berkeley became a value that enabled social capital among these circles.

This particular condition was evident in the way I was able to access my observations at the Opa-Locka Community Development Corporation (OLCDC). My access to the OLCDC was based on my role as an economic development advisor to the organizations board. I obtained this unpaid role following my participation in *charrettes* for the neighborhoods I will consider in this

chapter. The connection however was energized by my personal relationship with Walter Thomas who not only considered my Berkeley credentials in his decision to include me in the board but also relied on my knowledge of urban design, historic preservation and current research to obtain a source of references and information. In this sense, I provided a value to the OLCDC's mission and goals. I aimed to balance this role with my research focus, which I made Thomas Walter aware about. I struggled with reconciling my participation in master plans being deployed in Opa-locka and the foregoing gentrification effects my contributions would eventually bring to the municipality.

The additional data that comprising this chapter is based on archival research from the Miami Herald, from websites representing local organizations and from public information comprising OLDCD annual and monthly meeting minutes. As in previous chapters, I used a combination of archives to develop a general time line to consider a sketch of the intersecting histories such as the urban development of Wynwood, the arrival of Art Basel, Primary flight and the Opa-Locka master plan initiatives. The information collected on the discourse of absent urbanisms was carried in a simultaneous fashion with the work I was I developed in Wynwood and Opa-Locka. Initially the were not connected to the data from these sites, but eventually by comparing interviews from locations in unincorporated Dade County to interviews in Wynwood I was able to discern a pattern that gave predominance to certain types of urbanism in Miami.

My participation observations with the artists I describe were not recorded; instead they represent information that I was able to write down from memory. Much of these conversation occurred in an informal manner during events in Art Basel Miami, social gatherings, and the artist studios as they worked.

### **From Global City to the Local Practice: Yúdice's Cultural Industries**

While cultural production has occurred throughout history and places, in this analysis I consider cultural production in Miami specifically over the last decade. I analyze the practice of agents – cultural producers - who engage in the development and traffic of aesthetic artifacts and commodities – such as visual art, street art, and muralist art – within Miami's expanding local and international art markets as well as the city's streetscape. For them this process is not only about making things – i.e. art, but also about generating financial value through the act of their making and exchange. Building upon the work of George Yúdice, I contend that this process not only has an economic logic but also political and spatial dimensions that have been re-arranged into a new configurations over the last decade. These configurations are visible through the way that individuals – urban developers, community development specialists and artists - carry out their practices and urban development takes place in Miami.

A focus on Miami's cultural production represents a recent development in academia. As described in previous chapters, studies on the city have focused on Cuban immigration and the political empowerment of Cuban Americans. Yúdice's work, however, breaks new ground by proposing a "post-Cuban" frame of analysis. This perspective is developed from an analysis of the "transformation of Miami and surrounding counties and cities by the fashion, entertainment, communications, and new media industries" (Yúdice 2003). Yúdice argues that such industries have turned Miami into a secondary world city, where a cultural economy has important repercussions on the city's urban economy and cultural identity. Yudice defines a cultural economy as the "selling and buying of human experiences" in "themes cities, common interest developments, entertainment destination centers, shopping malls, global tourism, fashion, cuisine, professional sports and games, television, virtual worlds, and other simulated experiences"

(Yúdice 2003: 196). By engaging the literature on globalization, Yúdice considers how Miami's geographic proximity to Latin America has contributed to its function as a hemispheric gateway for people, goods and ideas in a post industrial economy. He states that the presence of cultural industries represents a type of trans-national industry – such as banking and finance - that emerges in the South Florida region.

The argument that Miami is a global city is not new, but Yúdice recalibrates this question by moving beyond knowledge and labor as key factors that define Miami's status in the global city network. Instead he focuses on the value that culture provides in this logic. This lens leads him to evaluate how the life of immigrants becomes part of a value-making process that makes Miami global by asking: “What can be taken from immigrant life that can be transferred into value that provides city life” (Yúdice 2003: pg. 196). This chapter is based on this central question and aims to focus on the value that immigrant life gives to cultural production.

According to Yúdice, cultural value in Miami is produced in several ways to support a city's entry into globalization processes. Immigrant life enables the adoption of a particular type of Latin American multiculturalism where color blindness is normalized through the acceptance of hybridity or *mestizaje* as the mainstream norm in the racial spectrum.<sup>147</sup> This perspective equips an extensive cultural economy that encompasses new media industries as well as entertainment industries as “the very logic of capitalizing on Latin culture as a resource is internalized as a discourse” (Yúdice 2003: 211).

Another way in which that immigrant life provides value is the way it empowers existing residents and newly arrived immigrants with a sense of cultural citizenship. Because of the sheer number of immigrants, there is another option besides the assimilationist path or the identity politics paradigm common to the US. Rather residents develop a sense of cultural allegiance that is based on a pan-Latino consciousness as well as tolerance and acceptance of immigration. This openness emphasizes the value of culture and its expression as unique characteristics in Miami. Certain sub-fields of the cultural industries – particularly in the arts – are underlined by a type of cosmopolitanism where Miami becomes a hub and new identities take shape rather than being “rooted in specific or minority identity” (Yúdice 2003: 206).

Yúdice's work provides the theoretical grounding for my ethnographic analysis in the following pages of this chapter. Differing from a focus on Miami's status in the global city network, my analysis turns to an understanding of cultural production by considering the characteristics of specific local practices carried out by networks of actors who participate in the production of art as well as its traffic. This approach allows me to consider cultural production beyond the global-local nexus of privileged sites in Miami, towards a new set of sites and dynamics with a deep sense of local specificity.

---

<sup>147</sup> Yúdice crafts his argument about Latin American multiculturalism by citing Croucher (1997) who argues that in the 1990's, multiculturalism was accepted by the white minority as “a way of maintaining a place in the new power dynamic, largely underwritten by Latin culture and a way of dealing with ethnic conflict” ( Yúdice 2003: 198). However he continues by expanding from Croucher to maintain that Miami's multiculturalism is not the same as the rest of the United States because of the influence of Miami's cultural industries “which have contributed to features of Latin American discourses of *mestizaje* and hybridity, which are generally thought to be more inclusive than U.S. Identity politics. According to Yúdice the adoption of this type of Latin American multiculturalism has excluded local African American and Haitian populations who exist on the extreme end of the racial spectrum (Yúdice 2003:198).

Similarly this chapter provides a new perspective on Yúdice's work and the recurrent glorification of culture in Miami. First this analysis challenges the position that culture and its products provides benefits only for those who partake in the pan-Latino identity. As I will demonstrate, the main actors heralding cultural production in Miami are not Hispanics – who are actually excluded from the process – but rather Anglo Americans and African Americans. Similarly the interviews and participant observations that I carry out show that agency within the circuits of cultural production are built through claims of authenticity, identity and multiculturalism complementing the activity of global networks. Lastly, this chapter also demonstrates that the cultural economy that Yúdice describes is deeply linked to urban development processes defined by ethnic power.

In the next section I show how culture becomes a place-making strategy through the generation of a public discourse that renders a series of “absent urbanisms”. This discourse is important to consider because it postulates the use of culture as a tool to revitalize areas perceived to be in crisis.

### **The Discourse of Absent Urbanisms: Displacing Culture to New Sites**

Starting in the summer of 2008, when I first arrived to carry out preliminary research for this dissertation, through the duration of my official fieldwork experience from the fall of 2010 to the summer of 2011, the absence of urbanism in Miami became a dominant topic of conversation among the people I interviewed. The view that Miami was a “non-place,” was “placeless” or lacked recognizable infrastructures characteristic of a “world class city” predominated among the voices of professional practitioners and residents I met, with the exception of people who lived in unincorporated Dade County.

For the individuals I interviewed - residents, planners, community development specialists, artists, and architects - who lived in the core areas of Metropolitan Miami – mainly the inner suburbs within the Municipality of Miami - the city's urbanism west of I-95 was perceived as a series of fragmented pieces lacking cohesiveness due to the endemic failure of comprehensive planning and the corrupt leadership of county and municipal politicians (Burch & Rabin 2009). The professional subgroup within this cohort included practitioners whose work was related to interventions in the spaces of the city such as artists focused on public art and grassroots activists. All felt that they were active in improving Miami not only through physical means, but also through aesthetic interventions and social justice work. For them Metropolitan planners played a role in the failure of Miami's urbanism, as onerous regulators incapable of dealing with the city's social, environmental, and economic challenges. The failure of their work and the paralyzed role of the municipal and county agencies they belonged to was exacerbated by the corruption of ethnic political figures; Cuban American and African American politicians who placed their political futures, and the needs of their ethnic constituencies, ahead of the city's most dire needs. Faced with an over-arching set of urban crises including lack affordable housing, the threat of environmental degradation, urban poverty and the threat of global sea level rise, Miami required dire urban intervention.

Unlike Yúdice's emphasis on the value of immigrant life as an asset in the development of the Miami's cultural economy, the discourse of Miami's absent urbanisms attributed a more complex understanding to the value of immigrant life. For many of my interviewees Miami's social diversity was a positive attribute, but the places where immigrants lived were not. The places where immigrants carried out their social, political and economic practices were seen as negative examples of urbanism and city life.



For the community development specialists, architects, and urban developers I interviewed, Miami's immigrant settlements – from poor working class neighborhoods in the municipality of Miami to suburban middle class neighborhoods in unincorporated Dade County – emerged as undesirable residential locations due to their distance, pollution lack of urban amenities – including parks, libraries and cultural institutions - and the general perception of an unpleasant quality of residential life. Locations in the southwestern and western portions of Dade County including the suburbs of Kendall, Westchester, and the cities of Hialeah and Sweetwater fell under this over-arching category and were considered anti-urban because of their characteristics of urban sprawl, their gated communities and a dependency on a car-oriented lifestyle.<sup>148</sup>

The devaluing of immigrant settlement also extended into a characterization of the densely populated ethnic enclaves closer to Miami's central business district. These included locations within the city of Miami such as Little Havana, Allapatah, the Haitian American enclaves of Little Haiti, as well as the African American enclave of Liberty City. In their cases, absent urbanism was framed through the pervasive perception of poverty, crime and danger. In addition what made these locations open to critique was their co-existence next to sites of urban intervention where vitality and vibrancy were perceived to be adequate through a balance of urban form and social creative multicultural life. Examples of these dichotomous sites included the derelict Bahamian neighborhood of West Coconut Grove next to the central district of Coconut grove, Little Haiti next to the Design District, and the Puerto Rican neighborhood of Wynwood next to Wynwood's art district. In these neighboring sites, the insularity and economic deprivation of one location was placed in opposition to the cosmopolitan consumption, public space attributes and tourist attractions of their oppositional twin.

The talk of Miami's absent urbanisms attributed failure to some of the most populous locations of immigrant life in the city. This discourse also legitimized places where city life

---

<sup>148</sup> The residents of unincorporated Dade County whom I interviewed presented a very different view of the city departing away from the negative frame of absent urbanisms imposed on them. While they declared a dependency on the car to carry out the activities of daily life, the status that came with auto-mobility represented a source of pride and independence for them. For all – who immigrated to Miami from Latin America, Central America and the Caribbean - the suburbs of Metropolitan Miami represented a far cry from the chaos of the Latin American city where amenities, safety and mobility were impossible. While this sample is minimal and in not comprehensive in terms of ethnography, it provides a slice of the perceptions residents in unincorporated areas held regarding their living environment. These interviews included four families: A Cuban family that migrated in the 1980's, a Nicaraguan family that migrated in the 1990's, a Peruvian family that migrated in the 1990's and a Chilean single mother who migrated in the early 2000s. All with the exception of the Cuban family lived in the suburbs of Kendall. The Cuban family lived in an unincorporated subdivision located in the center of Metropolitan Miami. In my interviews they expressed enjoyment with the centrality of their home since it provided them with access to major county sponsored amenities: the airport, a water park and adjacent baseball parks. The Nicaraguan family pointed out the capacity to access malls, hospitals and supermarkets by car in West Kendall. A similar view was provided by the Peruvian family, which considered investing in their suburban home a positive decision, since it provided them with more square footage for less money, and the possibility for their teen-age daughter to attend newly constructed high schools and Florida International University. For the Chilean single mother, life in a gated community offered safe grounds for her young daughter who could play and interact with other children whose parents – of diverse races and origins - she came to know. While these interviewees represent the other side of Metropolitan Miami's absent urbanisms, it is important to note that these families projected the absent urbanism discourse to locations where African American and Haitian American populations lived. In their speech this discourse was framed with the fear of crime and violence. While I don't have space in this analysis to explore these frames in detail they provided a strong framework for residents in unincorporated Dade County to understand their place in their social world. For a paradigmatic case about how the fear and talk of crime shapes social relations in the city see Caldeira 2000.

“works,” cases where good urban form, economic development, social order and multicultural citizenship were crafted through the right combination of physical and social factors packaged for transfer. These exemplars varied in scale and location throughout Miami, but included historically preserved sites that were considered authentic. New developments attracting social creative multicultural consumers also fell in this category. They included the historic “garden suburb” of Coral Gables, Central Coconut Grove, the City of Miami Beach, Miami’s Design District (Martin 2011), the new development of Midtown - a multi-acre development north of Miami’s CBD (Walker 2010) - and most importantly the district of Wynwood, which stood at the vanguard of these models due to the use of art in incentivizing urban revitalization.

The juxtapositions I heard in my interviews revealed deep political and class-based claims about urban life in metropolitan Miami. Much like the contradictory common sense expressed by Roberto Behar – the architect of the Living Room - the attribution of a set of positive and negative values defining the good city v. the bad city mapped Miami with prescriptive frames negating the contributions of the city’s existing immigrant social life. The individuals I interviewed under-valued the neighborhoods where immigrants lived thus enabling an imagination of absent urbanity that required action through the intervention of urban design and planning projects. Their discourse substituted the cultural value of immigrant life in unincorporated neighborhoods with the cultural production of place-making strategies.

The discourse of Miami’s absent urbanisms allowed terms such as community, identity and multiculturalism to be deployed as rhetorical frames that provided meaning to planning and urban design projects. By discursively framing urban crises that could be resolved through the re-introduction of culture in the form of infrastructure, entrepreneurship, creativity, art and civic action, an antidote to alleviate the city’s lack of “place” could be resolved.

The recalibration of culture from sites of “absent urbanisms” to new sites is carried out through a complex process involving actors mobilizing around cultural production. In the next sections I demonstrate how culture is re-valued to deal with Miami’s discourse of absent urbanism. There are two epicenters for this process: the district of Wynwood, where collective and individual actions by cultural producers foster new political identities and the municipality of Opa-Locka where cultural production embraces a renewed notion of culture based on pan-Africanism and African American social creatives.

### **Wynwood: Re-valuing Culture for a Destination**

Located north of Downtown Miami, Wynwood has rapidly become Miami’s premier cultural destination. Renowned for its distinctive artsy-hip flavor and outdoor art events, Wynwood has been undergoing a rapid process of gentrification over the last decade, transforming from a working class Puerto Rican enclave once known for its poverty and race riots (Holmes 1990) and garment warehouse district (Figure 51) to a thriving arts district filled with galleries, private collections and innovative interventions of art in public space (Hanks 2011, Martin & Santiago 2007, Ovalle 2003 & 2004).

Wynwood’s success as a cultural destination is based on three factors: location, the Miami Art Basel Fair, and real estate schemes. These factors offer a historical context to understand the deployment of culture as a value in the formation of community and identity.

Wynwood is found at the crossroads of Miami’s urban geography. Located just north of downtown Miami, the neighborhood is bound to the west by Interstate 95 and located between Miami International Airport and Miami Beach. To the east, it meets Biscayne Boulevard, one of Miami’s premier coastal corridors binding all of the inter-coastal municipalities along its multi-

mile north-south route. Immediately to its north, the neighborhood is bordered by Mid-town - a major new high-rise development – and the Miami Design District. These contiguous locations encompass a regional destination for human and economic currents composed of locals as well as tourists arriving to partake in the glamour of Miami’s sun and beaches.



**Figure 51** Wynwood and the Garment District 1979  
 Source: City of Miami Garment District Redevelopment Plan

Wynwood’s transformation also needs to be understood within the effects that Miami Art Basel Fair brings to Miami.<sup>149</sup> As described in the beginning of the chapter, Art Basel Miami has turned Miami into a global destination by harnessing the value of culture and transferring much of its logistical and creative infrastructure to the city. While the fair was located in Miami Beach during its beginning, much of that human infrastructure making up artistic and design brands and cultural industry professionals has spilled over to Wynwood in the last decade (Martin 2004, Martin & Chang 2007). This process has energized the neighborhood’s value as a cultural destination and expedited its ongoing process of gentrification (Jeffers 2005).

The other factor that has turned Wynwood into a cultural destination is capital accumulation through real estate (Feldman 2011). Many of the physical changes and resulting displacements accompanying Wynwood’s gentrification are being carried out through the efforts of individual developers, art collectors and artists who first participated in the gentrification of Miami Beach during the 1980’s and 1990’s. Wynwood’s current centrality as a new urban frontier can be understood as an extension of the Miami Beach real estate boom that originated with the establishment of the Art Deco district and its subsequent waves of re-development (Morales 2007).

During the 1980’s as Miami Beach underwent a period of urban decay, local Miami Beach activists and historic preservationists organized to force the municipality and county government into saving South Beach’s Art Deco architecture. The result of their work was the establishment of the Miami Beach Art Deco District in 1982.<sup>150</sup> In the 1980’s and 1990’s, the success of the district led to the dominant presence of Miami in TV, film and media, the birth of cultural industries, and the arrival of international celebrities who decided to make the Beach their second home (Yúdice 2003). The apogee of the Art Deco District led to a real estate condo

During the 1980’s as Miami Beach underwent a period of urban decay, local Miami Beach activists and historic preservationists organized to force the municipality and county government into saving South Beach’s Art Deco architecture. The result of their work was the establishment of the Miami Beach Art Deco District in 1982.<sup>150</sup> In the 1980’s and 1990’s, the success of the district led to the dominant presence of Miami in TV, film and media, the birth of cultural industries, and the arrival of international celebrities who decided to make the Beach their second home (Yúdice 2003). The apogee of the Art Deco District led to a real estate condo

<sup>149</sup> For the purposes of this chapter, in this section I provide a very brief description of the arrival and effects of Art Basel to Miami. In order to fully address Wynwood’s transformation a more in-depth analysis would be required. This research will make part of a future project.

<sup>150</sup> As described in chapter two, the birth of the Miami Beach Art Deco District not only provided the impetus for the revitalization in Miami Beach, it also produced a new awareness regarding the value of the built environment.

and real estate boom where many of the current actors leading Wynwood's process of gentrification practiced their craft and generated investment capital to re-deploy in new prime locations (Martin 2007).<sup>151</sup>

In this fashion, the factors that contributed to the transformation of Wynwood into a cultural destination can be understood not only as the devaluing of the culture found in immigrant suburban and enclave neighborhoods, but also as the transfer of a real estate formula from the islands of Miami Beach to the mainland. The success of Wynwood is built upon the emphasis on the value of Miami Beach as a real estate and cultural laboratory.

In a context where the discourse absent urbanisms leads to a perception of urban crises, cultural production becomes a source of mobilization to make Miami more urban. Indeed, Miami's absent urbanism discourse frame Miami Beach's cultural industries as a value that can be transferred to the mainland Miami by linking urban development, real estate speculation and artistic work – ie. cultural production – as a comprehensive place-making strategy.

This process does not only imply the application of discursive frames that “unmake” a place to “make it” again, but also the development of collective and individual practices where such discursive frames are enacted by using the products of culture and the acts of making culture as assets that unite people around resources, capital and political agency. In the next two sections I focus on two ethnographic itineraries to consider these practices.

#### **Art v. the Mega-casino: Cultural Production as a Political Community**

In May 2011, Malaysia's Genting Group International (GGI) – a multinational destination resort corporation – shocked Miami's local news by announcing the acquisition of the Miami Herald building housing the city's most prominent news daily.



**Figure 52** Genting's Resorts World Miami  
Source: Arquitectonica International



**Figure 53** Art and Place-making in Wynwood  
Source: Author

The subsequent political mobilizations led by some of Wynwood's most influential developers illustrate how a network of cultural producers organized to defend its local economic interests against an urban development project challenging their established place-making model. I conducted participant observations in public meetings where Wynwood's real estate moguls,

---

<sup>151</sup> This lineage can be attributed to two of the most important developers in Wynwood: David Lombardi and Tony Goldman who started their real estate empires by buying and selling property in Miami Beach. Tony Goldman's real estate trajectory takes him all the way back to New York City in the 1980's, where he was involved in the redevelopment of SOHO.

gallery owners, artists and political allies coalesced to take a stand against GGI by deploying a discourse based on the claims of an authentic community (Goldman 2012, Hanks 2012a).<sup>152</sup>

In the summer of 2011, GGI's announcement of the Herald's acquisition was followed by the display of a re-development vision calling for the construction of a \$3.8 billion waterfront resort billed as the "largest casino destination in the world" (Hanks 2011a). When *Resorts World Miami* was presented to the public its scale was declared to be four times as large as the gambling spaces in the Las Vegas strip, with up to 8,000,000 square feet of casino space and 5,200 hotel rooms - three times as much as the combined gambling floors and hotel space of the Mandalay, the Bellagio and the MGM Grand casinos in Las Vegas (Hanks 2011a) (Figure 52).

Following the unveiling of the plans, a number of Miami's local civic leaders proceeded to describe it as a major threat to downtown Miami's weak yet recovering economy. The magnitude of the building was foreseen to become an insurmountable challenge to local urban planning, traffic and transportation (Braman 2011, Sorenson 2011). Their concerns were based on the potential economic repercussions and development costs a destination resort of such type would provoke by encapsulating a range of economic activities within a single property (Shoer 2012). GGI's response was to tweak the proposal and re-frame the mega-development as the "anti-Vegas of casinos" (Walker 2012). Genting also underlined the economic benefits of jobs for tourism and the construction industry (Hanks 2011b). The new messaging strategy was also injected with a dose of global city branding by promoting the concept that: "Miami deserved a world class resort because it was a world class city" (Hanks 2011a). Following the announcement, Genting's vision obtained support from several important voices in Miami's economic sphere including the Latin Builders association, and the Florida State Chamber of commerce (Hanks 2011a).



**Figure 54** "Gambling our future" Forum at the Light Box Theater  
<http://www.miamilightproject.com>.  
Source: Urban Environmental League

GGI's sales pitch, however, backfired. The mega casino vision clashed against the economic interest of Wynwood's cultural producers and its allies. For many among Wynwood's stakeholders, CGI's development would "reverse the City's cultural progress" (Hanks 2012a) and prevent the downtown area from "finally become what it needs to be" (Hanks 2012a). As the proposal quickly became a subject of debate, additional concerns were added to the list: accusations of corruption as GGI lobbied the Florida legislature to pass a law allowing casino gambling in the state, a list of endemic social problems

linking casinos to gambling, vice and crime which would spill on to Wynwood, the closure of Miami's waterfront, and most importantly, concerns about the flight of pedestrians - who made

---

<sup>152</sup> I attended a total of three meeting including a large public forum against the construction of the casino. These observations took place in July and August in 2011 and in December 2011.



up Wynwood's valued walking traffic, away from its mural filled streets (Figure 53) (Miami Herald 2011 b, c, e, Hanks 2012a)

The locations of the meetings symbolized the influence of the actors who were invested in the process. They took place inside Wynwood's most prominent indoor performance stages (Figure 54). In these gatherings some of Miami's most prominent art collectors, gallery owners, artists and civic leaders discussed the details of the Genting proposal as public opinion took shape. Such locales provided a stage set where the performance of politics as well as the display of art and artistic production became part of the same space.

Miami's Anglo elite including Wynwood's most recognizable developers, members of Miami's Urban Environmental League, retired politicians, and corporate CEO's composed the leadership of this group. Many of the individuals attending the meetings did not live in Wynwood but were avid art collectors who participated in the district's art-oriented events. The consumption of art became the basis of alliances and camaraderie between people congregating to display civic awareness and responsibility, in behalf of the burgeoning art community. Other attendees saw themselves as small mom-n-pops gallery owners taking a stand against the corrupt lobbying practices of Genting. Slowly, as public opinion started to increase in its volume, the ideal of a small homegrown community under threat by an urban development Goliath took shape in the meetings as politicians, developers, artists and residents alike claimed the mantle of historic preservation and localism on behalf of Wynwood's artistic community (Miami Herald Editorial 2011).<sup>153</sup>

The discussions that took place during the two month period of my observations focused on deliberating on the right type of action to stop the development and generating momentum towards an event that would present a coherent front. The debate on how to accomplish this objective ranged from establishing an actual nonprofit which would represent the community, to the forming of a coalition of interested parties that would leverage influence and campaign contributions in municipal and county elections.

Throughout my observations explicit references to the notion of community were made and reinforced by highlighting the contributions of artists, their works and their patrons. The general frame dictating opinion relied on the contributions provided by Wynwood's emergent community of social-creatives, who in essence, represented the seed of an alternative urbanism nurturing a local economy in the face of crisis.

We are the ones building community here by making art and bringing people to walk on the streets. When casinos arrive in a city, it turns into a gambling community, not a community of art. We bring community to this place where there was none. This is an artist community that brings life. Without our help the city would not know what to do with Wynwood.

Morris Smith<sup>154</sup>

Community was energized with an injection of validity by connecting it to authenticity. The former became another buzzword and rallying cry against the proposed Genting Development which was eventually defeated (Miami Herald 2012, Hanks & Walker 2012, Klas 2012). This frame was reinforced by the imminent threat the Genting proposal brought to

---

<sup>153</sup> It is important to note that the meetings were attended by a variety of art stakeholders, most were not actual residents of the community.

<sup>154</sup> Morris Smith is a pseudonym for one of the most important real estate developers in Wynwood. This statement was made during the "Gambling our future" forum held on December 11<sup>th</sup> 2011 at the Light Box Theater. See: <http://uel.org/2011/11/29/gambling-with-our-future-uel-casino-dialog-december-10/>.



historically preserved structures in the area and the imminent destruction of the Miami Herald Building. This threat was capped by the idea that non-local developers could do with Miami what they wanted to, without the proper review and consideration of local citizens (Goldman 2012, Sorensen 2011).

### **Primary Flight: The Cultural Production of Identity**

Beyond collective practices that turned culture into a political value by forging community, I turn towards the practices of artists who negotiate their identity to gain access, capital and status in Wynwood's artistic social milieu. Like the frame of community this focus provides me with a new dimension to understand how Miami's absent urbanisms are reclaimed, in a context where cultural value empowers individual actions.

I now introduce this perspective based on interviews with artists from 2010 to 2012 during participant observation at *Primary Flight* (PF), one of Art Basel Miami's most prominent satellite fairs.<sup>155</sup> Organized by a major Wynwood developer, PF has evolved to become a visibly compelling place-making strategy converting Wynwood's streetscape into an "outdoor gallery where community is generated by pedestrian eyes on the street" (Chang 2009). In 2009, the event began as a way to include street artists in the repertory of activities inundating Wynwood during the Art Basel Miami Fair. It has grown to include artists from around the world, who arrive to the city to turn the walls of dilapidated properties into public muralist spaces.

During several of my trips to Miami I developed friendships with struggling artists of different types and capacities who actively engage in the formation of social networks within the area. In my experiences with them, I was able to observe how they carried out practices to access social and economic capital, and develop artistic status by claiming different modes of identity within the networks of cultural producers.

Their practices offer a window into how individual lives are shaped by the use of art as a value geared for a means to an end. Culture becomes a means to achieve personal, economic and political goals and a set of claims about being – and becoming - urban in Miami. These artists were not only shaped by Miami in their artistic production – by making urbanism and urban topics a subject of their artistic work – they also shaped their personal and professional futures by practicing being artists in particular ways.

Their profiles give the specific narrative of gentrification in Wynwood degrees of agency, where make-do creativity is formulated, negotiated, and acquired despite social, legalistic – citizenship based - and class based constraints. Outside the process of collective mobilization, the way their process is carried out involves a micro-political scale of inter-personal relationships, competition, and negotiated status within established groups with certain codes and values that determine who participates and doesn't in Wynwood's artsy urbanism.

Most of the time, these artists enacted tactics to access conduits of economic activity based on the experience of immigration in their lives. Immigration became a source of inspiration for personal improvement, a claim to local knowledge, and a subject matter for artistic representation that provided legitimacy. These frames were produced in relation to the cosmopolitan mobility characterized by the renowned artists and art collectors who came to the city to partake in Art Basel's activities. For these artists, being an immigrant or having mobility added a sense of ownership to their artistic production, connecting them to an authenticity that was simultaneously local and global as they negotiated entry into Wynwood's community of cultural producers.

---

<sup>155</sup> For more on primary flight see: <http://primaryflight.com>

These profiles also demonstrated competition among different artists in defining cultural value, this was accomplished by engaging what was good art or not, attributing taste and critique on style and technique, thus engaging cultural production as a means to attribute high and low standards and determine status among them.

You know I come here to see culture, because this is where it's happening. Nothing is happening where I live, there is no culture there, but here you see people and artists on the streets and that's exciting, I want to be part of that.

JJ<sup>156</sup>

I met JJ during a noisy night in Wynwood. Reproducing the talk of absent urbanisms, JJ had driven from the suburbs of Kendall with a friend to partake in the effervescent activities of a Saturday night during PF. Following that conversation we kept in touch. Over the next couple of years I would see JJ every time I returned to Miami in different gallery openings, and imagine mural art projects with him. JJ was an outsider to Wynwood's cultural producers, who sought to access Art Basel's and Wynwood's art market with varying degrees of success.

Those Art Basel people they come here and have a party in our house and then they leave. We can't come to that party, you know, these jetsetters bring their money and put up their big tent events, and what about us, what do we do, we are artists too, we want to eat too. Art Basel doesn't pay attention to any of us in Miami.... It's tough to be part of primary flight because they have their people, that is why I do my own thing and present at small galleries. I know that my art is still young, but it only takes selling a painting for a high price and your value goes up, so that is what I am aiming for,.....

JJ

JJ, was very entrepreneurial and strategic about his work. He had a plan. Early on he had developed a particular brand based on characters. Fado, one of them, predominated in JJ's art pieces (Figure 55) Murals (Figure 56) and products such as t-shirts, mugs and pens. JJ's commercial attitude set him apart from local Wynwood artists who saw him as a sell-out interested in making money and producing low quality art work. JJ was also criticized as an artistic plagiarist, a novice who copied Romero Britto, a famous Brazilian artist who had initiated Miami's brand of pop art based on a colorful happy celebration of Miami's multiculturalism.<sup>157</sup> While JJ readily accepted that he was an artist in the tradition of pop art himself, he explicitly separated himself from Britto's brand by stating that he respected Britto for being an immigrant who made it, but his art was about the struggling immigrant.

Like other artists – and residents – in the metropolitan Miami JJ had no papers. This condition placed him in a peculiar situation. He had to negotiate his visibility and exposure regarding payment, and commissions. The similarity of his style to Britto's brand made him palatable and accessible to a market of art buyers who were looking for art representative of Miami. JJ started to get commissions to paint murals abroad, but he couldn't leave the US because of his citizenship status. This tension led him to articulate a conversation about the subject of immigration in his work, one that justified why he did what he did. In the backdrop of

---

<sup>156</sup> JJ is a pseudonym that for a young Venezuelan man in his mid 20's who has quickly become one of Miami's up and coming muralist stars. His family migrated in the aftermath of the political changes which took place in Venezuela in the late 1990's with Hugo Chavez' rise to power.

<sup>157</sup> For information on Britto see: <http://www.britto.com>

Britto, JJ saw himself as a representative of a community of artists who could not access the art market because of their legal status.

I am doing this for all my friends who also don't have papers. Fado is like an immigrant you know, he is like a hustler, the little guy that does what he has to do in order to get there. I know so many people in Miami who went to New World School of the Arts like me. And now they don't have jobs and they can't work. They don't do their art. I am the lucky one. I am doing this for them.

JJ

Other Artists shared similar inspirations in different ways. Don A. a Colombian had migrated to Wynwood with his family at an early age.<sup>158</sup> Like JJ, he was also an undocumented resident. In his mid 30's Don A. had seen the transformation of the neighborhood and witnessed the changes that had taken place. He was proud of the changes:

When I was growing up in this neighborhood, I used to take mangos from trees on the street, you know people would just do things like, take fruit from trees, but they would also leave trash. What is happening now is great because people care more about their neighborhood than before, they want to do things and be able to change the place for the better. Wynwood will always be an immigrant neighborhood the difference is that now those immigrants have money and buy art, and what is wrong with that? Art makes the place beautiful.

Don A.

Unlike JJ who came from the suburbs of unincorporated Dade County, Don A. considered himself an authentic member of Wynwood's artistic community even though he was not an artist. He was a local who had grown in the Puerto Rican neighborhood adjacent to the art district and gone to Florida International University, but not finished his degree in engineering. Over time Don A. had become intrinsically linked to the local network of cultural producers, and ethnic Hipsters who circulated in and out gallery spaces in the area.

Don A was also undocumented person and held a couple of informal jobs to make ends meet; one at a bike shop where he regularly hanged out with a group of "fixie" friends who participated in Miami's Critical Mass and other bike related events, and another as a jack-of-all-trades for the different art galleries in Wynwood. Don A. had adopted the social creative lifestyle. He rented a condo close to Wynwood, was into computers and information technology, lived an artsy bohemian lifestyle without a schedule, got involved in art projects and activities with different collaborators, and articulate a political discourse based on liberal politics which usually criticized Miami's politics for its corruption.

A well liked jovial guy with good looks and a willingness to always help; Don A. regularly gained access to special art events from which he would emerge to tell outlandish stories about artists. While he didn't know the developers or gallery owners personally, he was well known enough to participate in setting up some of Art Basel's most important performance pieces and installations. Don A. disliked JJ because he considered the younger artists too commercial and his art too infantile for the quality of art in Wynwood: "That guy, he paints like Britto, He wants to be like him. Its all about thick lines, there is no imagination in that, a child can do that." he would chide at JJ's mural.

---

<sup>158</sup> Don A. is a pseudonym for an informant.

Paradoxically, Don A. was also an imitator of sorts because he copied the style or ideas of renowned artists. This fact became evident when he copied the idea of a participatory outdoor installation during Primary Flight 2011 and renamed it “Miami’s Wish Tree” (Figure 57). Unlike JJ’s entrepreneurial Fado, Don A.’s installation was less about making money and more about claiming artistic status within the social network of neo-bohemian cultural producers he inhabited. The installation occupied an empty lot where participants could fill out pieces of paper that would hang on the branches of the steel-framed tree. Don A. asked participants to write wishes that would make Miami a better place, and place them on the branches as fruits. The wish tree was a success as people avidly participated.

The Miami Wish tree captured the imagination of absent urbanisms and transformed it into a pop-up installation where a reflection and re-imagination of the city’s urbanism was possible. This message was at the core of Don A.’s relationship to art. He believed art was about transformation and self-improvement, not making cash. The Miami Wish Tree was meant to demonstrate to his community of ethnic hipsters that he - and they - could also make culture happen in Wynwood. Don A. held a particular degree of access and status within the Wynwood’s artistic community. He had access to the artistic circles but didn’t have the same status as other artists he met, many of which came from Latin American and Europe to participate in PF. This tension led him to deploy the Miami’s Wish Tree as an exercise to claim artistic status.

The last profile I want to describe is Glo, one of the international artists who was invited to PF and associated with Don A.’s social network.<sup>159</sup> A French Parisian woman in her early thirties, Glo eventually breached out from PF to find local clients for her work. This move was articulated both in relation to local street artists who were women and a validation of locality and place as the subject matter for her work.

I stay away from the other women working on that wall because I want to be considered a street artist first, not a woman who is a street artist. Anyway I don’t know any of them; I think they all are from here. I wouldn’t want to be there because I don’t want to be placed somewhere where I don’t feel comfortable doing my art you know. A lot of what I do is collaborating with other artists like me so I need to keep on doing that.

Glo

Glo, was unhappy with PF because she felt she was categorized according to her gender and taken away from the cohort of international artists who were her community. In my conversations she accused PF organizers of abusive practices towards international artists, who didn’t get any of the credit they deserved. These abuses included the lack of payment, housing during the event, and financial support for art supplies. She was not happy with PF’s co-sponsors Levis, and the way they organized the fair as a chaotic non-regulated, free for all zone, where artists had to compete with each other to get the best wall to display their work. While she appreciated the capacity to re-encounter fellow street artists – mostly men - who belonged to the travelling street art community circumnavigating the globe to attend fairs, Glo complained that all she did during PF was stand in front of a wall and not get to know Miami or Wynwood.

Glo’s unhappy experience with PF eventually led her to seek local sponsors for her work in subsequent PF’s. She sought local business owners who would offer her prominent wall space in exchange of displaying work inspired by the business brand - local mom and pop shops and

---

<sup>159</sup> Glo is a pseudonym for an informant.

automobile workshops (Figure 58). For Glo, this approach was a way to represent the authentic culture of Wynwod and give her work more meaning.

The experience of JJ, Don, A and Glo demonstrate how artists in Wynwood carry out cultural production activities not only to compete amongst each others but also to again access to capital and enforce their existing social networks. Throughout this process, these local actors use art to produce an identity based on branding, commodification and entrepreneurialism. In the next section I move to a different part of metropolitan Miami. While much of the material written on art has focused on Art Basel Miami and Wynwood (Triff 2006) its effects have not been considered beyond the municipalities of Miami Beach and the city of Miami. Opa-locka provides a compelling comparative case to explore how cultural production equips an ethnic community with a competing discourse of pan-african Multiculturalism.

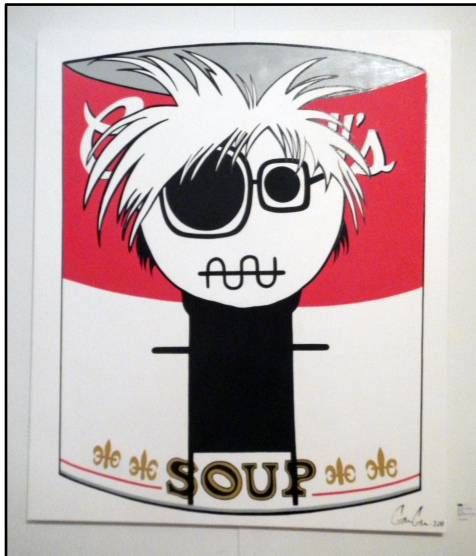


Figure 55 Fado's Soup. Source: Author



Figure 56 "O" Cinema Mural. Source: Author



Figure 57 Miami's Wish Tree. Source: Jennifer Siqueira



Figure 58 Pyke Bros. & Son Autor Workshop Mural. Source: Author

## **Opa-Locka: Re-valuing Culture for Pan African Multiculturalism**

Located in North Western Dade County, Opa-locka<sup>160</sup> is a predominantly African American municipality with a small but growing population of Hispanics of Central American origin (Figure 50).<sup>161</sup> Due to its demographic history, government and community development institutions are under the control of African American civic leaders who belong to metropolitan Miami's African American political elite. Unlike other locations that have remained politically disenfranchised in Dade County, Opa-locka's African American leadership has held the helm for decades following gentrification that saw the flight of white suburbanites, the settlement of Cuban immigrants and the influx of middle class African Americans into the area.<sup>162</sup>

Due to this history the revitalization efforts in two of Opa-Locka's most important areas – its historic downtown center and the Magnolia North neighborhood – are embedded with political goals underlining the experience of segregation, displacement and political underrepresentation of African Americans in Miami.<sup>163</sup> These goals acquire new dynamics when culture is deployed as a value by a community development driven place-making process rather than local developers who circulating through local and global art markets.

Opa-locka's revitalization efforts have been led by the Opa-Locka Community Development Corporation (OLCDC); the city's most powerful urban development institution.<sup>164</sup> Unlike the symbiotic relationship between real estate and cultural producers present in Wynwood, Opa-Locka's case is shaped by the provision in 2010 of a federal NSP2 HUD grant totaling an amount of 20 million dollars (Opa Locka Community Development Corporation 2012). This opportunity transformed the OLCDC into a catalytic agency with the political capital to leverage new funds into future funding opportunities. In addition to the federal grant, the community has received a \$ 250,000 National Endowment for the Arts grant to collaborate with the Dade County Art in Public Spaces project.<sup>165</sup> The successes of the OLCDC have secured the participation of professional artists in the design of public art pieces within the city's Historic center and the Magnolia North triangle (Opa-Locka Community Development Corporation 2012).

---

<sup>160</sup> Founded in 1926, Opa-Locka is a municipality of 11.6 square miles. According to the US census Opa-Locka's demographic break down is the following: 66% African American, 28% White and 35% Hispanic.

<sup>161</sup> My participant observations in Opa-locka took place through my involvement with the OLCDC economic advisory committee. I was able to become part of the work carried out by the OLCDC through a contact that facilitated my entry. My contact worked for a local housing agency and was part of the organizing team for the Charrettes carried out in Opa-Locka. I provided my help in this process and thus was able to introduce my expertise as a planner/urban design/architect to the OLCDC. My role consisted on provide recommendations regarding the revitalization efforts occurring in the municipality due to my association to UC Berkeley and a design professional. I was the only non-African American member of the committee as well as the sole Hispanic in the board of the OLCDC. I believe that my participation was important to the OLCDC in order to demonstrate that the board was not an all black board, but that it included Hispanics.

<sup>162</sup> For a comprehensive history of the African American experience in Dade county see Dunn 1997. For accounts and analysis of the race riots which took place in Miami during the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's see Dunn 1997, Hector 1969, Marable 1981. Tscheschlok 1995. For brief account of the history of Opa-Locka see Nicholas 2005 and Miami Dade County Historic Preservation Commission 1982.

<sup>163</sup> For an account of this history see chapter two where I consider the segregation of Overtown and displacement of African Americans in metropolitan Miami. For an account of metropolitan planning see chapter four.

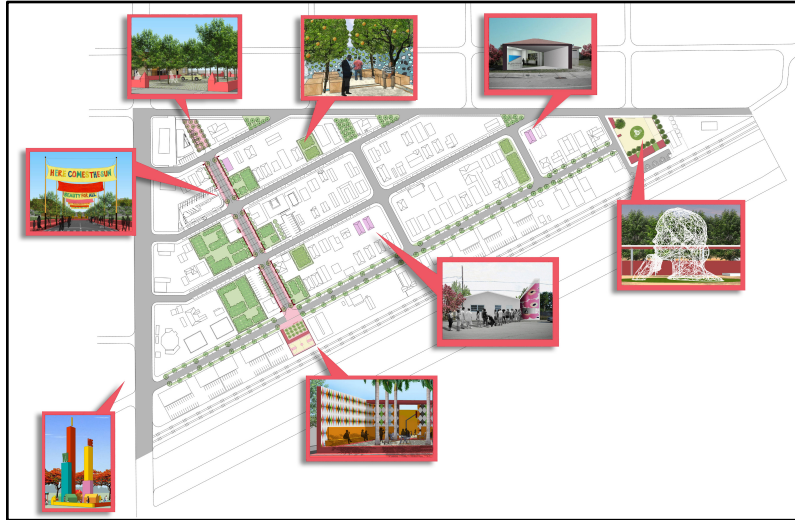
<sup>164</sup> <http://www.olcdc.org>

<sup>165</sup> <http://www.miamidadepublicart.org>





**Figure 59** Opa-Locka City Hall  
Source: Author



**Figure 60** Image of artist interventions in the Magnolia North Art Masterplan. Source: R&R studios.

To jumpstart its efforts OLCDC has carried out a downtown *charrette* aimed at turning its Historic district into a cultural destination.<sup>166</sup> The proposals arising from the *charrette* have focused on the existing main street grid as a model for a main-street and the proposals of restaurants, specialty retailers, and the preservation historic Moorish revival buildings through programmatic re-uses (Figure 59). Another *charrette* has focused on the Magnolia North neighborhood by developing an art master plan (Figure 60). Through these processes, the OLCDC has brought leading artists, designers, and urban planners to Opa-Locka.

We have historic buildings, We have warehouses, we have a train station, we have an airport,... why can't we be like Wynwood? We can do it here and we can do it right without all that craziness that goes on in that neighborhood. That is why we are here, to build up our community and make sure our people feel they are part of that.

City of Opa-Locka Council Member<sup>167</sup>

The African American council members and community development specialists, who envision the transformation of Opa-locka, frame their revitalization efforts in relation to the Wynwood model. This comparison not only implies the designation of standards and models to re-envision Opa-locka in a different fashion but also the development of a discourse of pan African multiculturalism. This discourse enables a competitive civic ideology derived from the experience of African Americans in Miami to invigorate the city's revitalization efforts with claims of heritage, identity and history.

The OLCDC leadership links Opa-Locka's Moorish-styled architecture heritage to the urban and architectural heritages of Spain and North African, in this manner connecting the local to an alternative conception of the global. In one particular case, Walter Thomas a member of the OLCDC travelled to these regions to study Moorish buildings. Following his trip, he informed

<sup>166</sup> The logic of this process is different than the art district of wynwood because it doesn't involve official planners who deploy a community development toolking. In Wynwood the process is lead by urban developers and artists who comprise the networks of cultural producers carrying out activities without the aid of planners.

<sup>167</sup> This observation took place on December 20<sup>th</sup> 2010, during the final presentation of the master plan for the Opa-Locka 20/20 Community design *charrette*.

his findings to the OLCDC board and Opa-Locka municipal leaders. This research was used to equip the brand the OLCDC and influence the work of artists with a palette paying homage to the city's authentic colors, motifs and styles comprising local architectural identity. While city's architectural history has no relationship to the traditions held across the Atlantic, they serve to justify Thomas' cultural tourism excursion by making Opa-locka a hub for African Americans in Miami, Afro-Caribbeans the Africans across the Atlantic.

The OLCDC pan-Africanist discourse was also displayed in the choice of artists, projects, and method of curation defined by the rules of the Magnolia North Master plan. Unlike Wynwood, Opa-Locka's place-making strategy is carefully regulated by a chosen board of artists and local leaders who deliberate on the aesthetic value of the interventions. While this top-down approach is meant to solicit a multi-racial cohort, specific artists were chosen and placed in key locations of the plan due to their focus on the African American experience as a main subject matter of their work. One such artist, Gale Fulton Rose, conceived a wireframe sculpture called "One Story", which would represent the head of an African American woman in traditional headdress symbolizing "the calm, power and dignity of hardy laborers as well as the nurturing mother" (Opa-Locka Community Development Corporation 2012 p. 14).

The capacity to generate a discourse based on cultural production to equip a place-making strategy extends beyond community development into actual consumption practices carried by OLCDC' leaders. Through the process of Opa-locka's revitalization – branded as the Art of Transformation - Thomas became an avid collector of art produced by young and lesser known African American artists from Miami and beyond. His new hobby allowed him to join the circuit of art collectors who navigated through the galleries of Wynwood and the fair tents of Miami Art Basel. This capacity to consume art became a means to access brush shoulders with new funders, display status and seek funding opportunities exploding metropolitan Miami's growing art scene.

The new consumption patterns by some of the members of the OLCDC leadership also translated into specific values regarding urban life. Inspired by Richard Florida's social creative mantra (Florida 2004) Thomas became invested in bringing not only African American artists but also African American social creatives to Opa-Locka.<sup>168</sup> He and other municipal leaders advocated in making Opa-locka a destination for African Americans in need of housing entertainment and culture in Metropolitan Miami. Thomas alluded to the possibility of gentrifying poor local African Americans and Hispanics who didn't fit the profile of educated professionals.

Why can't we bring black people to Opa-Locka and make it a destination for African American professionals. Opa-locka can be for young African Americans what Miami Beach was to the crowds of people I used to hang out with when I was young. Look at what Miami Beach was in the early 1980's and where it is now. The place completely changed. We could do the same for black people.

Walter Thomas<sup>169</sup>

---

<sup>168</sup> The "social creative class" discourse is robust in Miami's planning, design and urban development circles. While I don't engage in the vast critiques of "creative cities" (Landry 2006 & 2008) and the "creative class" (Florida 2004) in this chapter, they would greatly contribute to theorizing the data that I have collected. For the purposes of this chapter I only concentrated on showcasing the empirical data I collected. The theorization of this data will encompass future research on Miami.

<sup>169</sup> Walter Thomas is a name I use for an informant. Portions of other interviews with him are also included in chapter three of this dissertation. Walter Thomas.

While the OLCDC has focused on developing affordable housing outside of Opa-Locka, in the adjacent municipality of Miami Gardens and other locations in unincorporated Dade county (Opa Locka Community Development Corporation 2013), it has not been explicit about the displacement of poorer populations in the proposed zones of revitalization. Their type of cultural place-making has been defined by the emphasis on professional values and habits attributed to a consumer who would come to the city's historic center and the new Magnolia north neighborhood, to live, work and play.

The Opa-Locka model represents the re-deployment of cultural production found in Wynwood and Miami Beach by a community development processes with ethnic agenda at the forefront: the support and preservation of African American identity and the stability of African American power within that territory. This development is underlined by the displacement of poorer ethnic populations who cannot participate in the consumption and production of art thus engendering a new set of inequalities within the context of ethnic empowerment.

### **Conclusion: Re-visiting the Ghost of the Living room**

Over the last decade metropolitan Miami has become a prime site for the activities of local and non-local cultural producers who influence how the city is shaped by applying competing discursive claims based on notions of community, identity and multiculturalism. This process has developed by re-purposing culture into a value that mobilizes place-making strategies defined by dimensions of local history, authenticity, ethnic affiliation and immigrant experience.

My analysis unravels this process by developing three contributions departing from the work of George Yúdice. First, it builds from Yúdice's cultural analysis by turning an ethnographic lens to an understanding cultural production in the city. Yúdice's "post-cuban" point of departure provides me with a basic theoretical framework to understand how immigrant life becomes a value that is unpacked and repackaged by collective and individual practices that turn culture into spatial and political activities in metropolitan Miami. This vale also becomes a source of contention as competing communities and agents claim the city to achieve political goals.

Second, this approach allows me to understand the value-making of culture beyond the global-local nexus of cultural production sites exemplified in his work to consider how cultural producers and their allies react against urban development projects, carry out displays of identity in public spaces and deploy a community development apparatus in behalf of a ethnic political power. The departure from this global-local nexus allows me to explore how actual urban spaces are planned in relation to the activities of cultural producers. Similarly this approach allows me to consider the specific histories and social tensions that define the different experiences of ethnic communities in Miami.

Lastly, my analysis demonstrates that Yúdice's notion of a pervasive pan-Latino multiculturalism that excludes African Americans has cracks. Today, networks of cultural producers continue to generate symbols, images and spaces embedded with consuming notions of difference, tolerance and ethnicity. These symbols, images and places portray a particular brand of multiculturalism based on a pan-Latino experience and the notion of a racial democracy. But, African Americans as well as other residents in metropolitan Miami have become part of that process. They have been able, through market driven and institutional means, to acquire the capacity to recalibrate a pervasive discourse of multiculturalism into a tool for competition and political empowerment in Metropolitan Miami.

## **Conclusion: Spatial Politics: from Identity Politics to Urban Citizenship**

In this dissertation I have explored the history of metropolitan planning in Dade County based on the consequences of demographic change and the legacies of empowerment by the Cuban community. These legacies involves a complex process of spatial politics which includes their period of crisis, community development, and empowerment as well as subsequent waves of municipal incorporations and the use of cultural production as a place-making strategy.

By establishing this line of analysis I have considered two interlocking tensions: How does urban planning practice deal with immigrants? And how do Hispanic/Latino immigrants forge political power by using the mechanisms of urban planning.

The case of spatial politics in metropolitan Miami adds a new set of dimensions to these understanding by focusing on how Cuban Americans influenced metropolitan planning processes and by asking how metropolitan planning dealt with the waves of demographic change which transformed the city. The perspective that emerges is one where social change and urban politics are inextricably linked in a dialectic process that reverberates until today.

To consider the relationship between planning and immigration it is not enough to ask how they are mutually related. One must explore a historical case where the effect of social history over government institutions is feasible. An understanding of how an institution's policies, practices and methods are deployed over times allows us to consider in detail how normative techniques adapt to new contingencies occurring in the city. Over the scope of this dissertation have I considered the uncharted histories and mechanisms that cause changes in institutional planning, the mobilizations that produce municipal incorporations, the political influence of immigrant construction guilds, and the appropriation of community development toolkits by ethnic populations - to name a few – to understand the relationship between immigration and metropolitan planning practice.

In this manner, the history of metropolitan Planning in Dade County becomes an important contribution brought forth by this analysis, not only because its historical analysis has not been written, but also because it sheds light into a previously unrecognized facet of a familiar story: how Cubans assimilated and attained municipal and county power in Dade County.

By writing its account, I have contributed to the canon of planning history focused on major North American cities and the layers social life that influence their growth, politics and culture. Miami's planning history reveals that immigration, demographic change, and population mobility were issues at the center of metropolitan planning since it became an official practice with the inception of Dade County Government in 1957. This previously untold planning history serves as a platform to understand other major cities in the US that have undergone similar demographic change or may do so in the future.

Second, by linking this history to the presence of Cuban Americans and their process of incorporation I chart an unrecognized history of Hispanic minorities in American cities. The study of Hispanic life in American planning history remains limited and sequestered to a marginal role in the development of North American urban society. With the exception of a number of studies considering the contributions of Hispanics in the South West (Arreola 2004, Diaz 2005 & 2012, Valle & Torres 2000) Hispanics are not credited with contributing to the creation of cities in most; rather they are presented as peripheral agents in most portraits of the American metropolis. This dissertation contributes another brick to this field by providing a case in which this minority group's experience shapes the city – where Latino culture, politics and

economic power - albeit defined by a very particular sub-group within the categories of Hispanics - provides the fulcrum to understand the North American city.

Lastly, this case allows me to rethink political incorporation and minority rights as a form of spatial politics with concrete effects on institutions, norms and practices that define material outcomes in cities. The question of immigration is usually addressed as a type of cosmopolitan mobility, post-colonial identity, or difference in public space. The politics of immigrant life is presented as a facet of urban multiculturalism rather than as a form of agency used to claim political representation through immigrants' political contributions to their cities.

The case of Miami, can offer clues about how immigrants influence public life, with their culture, economic contributions and political actions, to produce an "urban" citizenship (Holston 2008, Holston Appudurai 2008) that allows them to become locally hegemonic and pursue national as well as international agendas. Understanding this type of citizenship is important for planners because it could allow them to become responsive to the changing needs of local communities affected by demographic change, diversification and transnational ties.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alvarez, L. 2012. "A Florida City that Never Was." *New York Times* February, [<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/08/us/islandia-a-florida-city-that-never-was.html?pagewanted=all>] February 8, 2012
- Arreola, D. 2004. *Hispanic Spaces, Latino Places: Community and Cultural diversity in contemporary America*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.
- Barkin, R. 1985. "New Agency Formed to Aid Small Business." *The Miami Herald*, Business Section, Final Edition, 25 November: 21BM.
- Behar, R., and Culot, M. 1997. *Coral Gables: An American Garden City*. Paris, France: Norma Editions.
- Behar, R., and Marquardt, R. 2005. "The Art of Being Neither Here Nor There." *Aula 3: Miami Tropical. Architectura Y Urbanismo En Las Americas/ Architecture and Urbanism in Las Americas 3* (2005): 68-75. Print.
- Behar, R., and Marquardt, R. 2012. "Opa-Locka Arts Master Plan." Opa-Locka Community Development Corp.
- Bell, M. 1995. "In Metro-Dade Wannabe Cities Seeking Control." *The Orlando Sentinel*, Metro Edition, Insight Section, April 23: G1.
- Berman, M. 1988. *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. New York, N.Y., U.S.A.: Viking Penguin.
- Bethel, A. 1987. "Key Biscayne Advisory Council Sought." *The Miami Herald*, Neighbors SE, Final Edition: 3
- Bloemraad, I. 2006. *Becoming a Citizen: Incorporating Immigrants and Refugees in the United States and Canada*. Berkeley: University of California.
- Biddulph, G. 1989. "Key Biscayne Group Pushes Incorporation." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Neighbors KE, 20 August: 6.
- Bolton, G. 1994. "Immigration Emergencies: Learning from the Past, Planning the Future." Refugee Policy Group Research Paper. US Commission on Immigration Reform. February. [<http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/uscir/respapers/ie-feb94.pdf>]
- Boswell, T. 1982. "Socioeconomic Context of Cuban Americans" *Journal of Cultural Geography* 3(1): 29 -41.
- \_\_\_\_\_. [1994] 1995. "The Cubanization and Hispanization of Metropolitan Miami." Cuban American National Council in collaboration with the Cuban American Policy Center and Department of Geography, University of Miami.
- Boyd, C. 1986. "Firm Complements Public Housing." *The Miami Herald*, Home and Design, Final Edition, 28 December: 7H.
- Braman, N. 2011. "Casino resorts? Braman says don't buy the hype." *The Miami Herald*, November.
- Burch, A. 2001. "ARTISTIC SUCCESS IS PRICELESS TO S. FLA." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local, January: 1B.
- Burch, A. & Rabin, C. 2009. "False promises, fallen leaders." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, 1A, November.
- Caldeira, T. 2000. *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo*. Berkeley: University of California.
- Carter, Luther J. 1974. *The Florida Experience: Land and Water policy in a Growth State*. John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore & London.



- Cauvin, E. 1995. "County Manager Proposes Satellite Government Centers." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Neighbors NE, March 2:3.
- Charles, J. 1995b. "Team Metro Centers Extend County's Reach." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Neighbors NW, March 26:4
- Ceo, R., and Lombard J. 2001 *Historic Landscapes of Florida*. [Miami, Fla.]: Deering Foundation & the University of Miami School of Architecture.
- Chang, D. 2009. "Graffiti artists make their Art Basel mark with Primary Flight." *The Miami Herald*, E1 December.
- Chandler, D. L. 1986. *Henry Flagler: The Astonishing Life and Times of the Visionary Robber Baron who Founded Florida*. McMillan Publishing Company: New York.
- Chardy, A. 2010. "Mariel Boatlift Tested Miami's Strengths, Then Made it Stronger." *The Miami Herald*, Sunday Edition, 25 April.  
[<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/04/24/vullstory/1596981/mariel-boatlift-tested-miamis.html>]
- Charles, J. 1995. "Team Metro Centers Extend County's Reach." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Neighbors NW, March 26:4
- Chasko, A. 1993. "1-Member Districts Fuel Secessionism." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Neighbors KE, April 23:3.
- Citizen's Advisory Committee 1992. "Metro Dade Dade County Citizen's Advisory Committee on County Wide Incorporation Final Report, February, Dade County Charter Sec. 5.05." Metropolitan Dade County, Miami Florida.
- Colon, Y. 1985. "Contract City Idea Proposed." *The Miami Herald*, Neighbors SE, Final Edition, 15 August: 3.
- Cronon, W. 1991. *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York: W.W. Norton, Print.
- Crook, M. a 1987. "Communication Failed on Underpass." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Section CT. 1, November: 3.
- \_\_\_\_\_. b 1987. "Underpass News Slipped Past Many." *The Miami Herald*, Section KE, Final Edition, 1 November: 16.
- Croucher, S. 1997. *Imagining Miami; Ethnic Politics in a Postmodern World*. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia.
- Culot, M., and Lejeune, J. 1992. *Miami: Architecture of the Tropics*. New York. Princeton Architectural Press.
- Dade Development Department. 1963. "Economic Survey Of Metropolitan Miami." Dade County Developmental Department.
- Dade County Metropolitan Study Commission, 1971 "Final Report and Recommendation." Dade County, Florida.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1992. "Metro Dade County Citizen's Advisory Citizen's Advisory Committee."
- Dade County Office of Community and Economic Development. 1982. "From Wilderness to Metropolis: The history and architecture Of Dade county." Office of Community and Economic Development. Historic Press. Div. Miami, Dade County.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1982. "Dade County Charter Review Commission Report" Dade County, Florida.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1986 "Citizens Charter Review Committee on Dade County" Dade County Florida.
- Dade County. 1995. "Ordinance Relating to Incorporation providing Procedures for filing and review of petitions for incorporation." Ordinance No 95-78
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1991. "Agenda Item No. 5 (g) (1) 2-5-91 RESOLUTION NO. 4-105-91" Dade County,

- Miami Florida.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1994. "Memorandum: Issues Related to Incorporation." Dade County Planning Department, Miami Florida 4 November.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1995. "County Manger's Report on Incorporation June 16 1995." Dade County Florida, \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1996. Report of the Metro-Dade County Boundaries Commission on Issues of incorporation, Annexation and community councils." Metro Dade County Boundaries.
- Deutsche, R. 1999. "Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 89, No. 1, pp. 164-166
- Del Campillo, M. 1986. "Ethnic Relations in the Cuban Community: A Summary of Workshop Proceedings: The Third National Conference of the Cuban National Planning Council." Miami: Cuban American National Council
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1987. "Miami Mosaic: Ethnic Relations in Dade County." Miami: Cuban American National Council.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1988a. "Freedom of Speech in Miami." Miami: Cuban American National Council.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1988b. "Miami's Latin Businesses." Miami: Cuban American National Council.
- Diaz, G. 1981. Evaluation and Identification of Policy Issues in the Cuban Community. Miami: Cuban American National Council.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1990. *The Challenge of Education: No time to Waste no Room for Failure.* Miami: Cuban American National Council.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1991. *Ethnic Voting and Polarization in Miami.* Miami: Cuban American National Council.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1992a. *Housing Needs of the Hispanic Elderly in Greater Miami.* Miami: Cuban American National Council.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1992b. "Laws and Politics in Florida's Redistricting." Miami: Cuban American National Council.
- Diaz, D. R., 2005. *Barrio Urbanism: Chicanos, Planning, and American Cities.* New York, Routledge.
- Didion, J. 1979. *The White Album Essays.* New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Dluhy, B. 1995. "Dade County Citizen Survey." Florida International University, May 1995, Institute of Public Opinion research.
- Dunlop, B. and Schezen, R. 1996. *Miami: Trends and Traditions.* New York: Monacelli.
- Dunn, M. 1997. *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century.* Gainesville: Florida University Press c.
- Faiola, A. 1991. "Key Biscayne: Dade's 1<sup>st</sup> New city in 30 years." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local section, 16 June: 1B.
- Feldman, M., 2011. *The Role of Neighborhood Organizations in the Production of Gentrifiable Urban Space the Case of Wynwood, Miami's Puerto Rican Barrio.* Diss. Florida International University, Miami: Florida International University, Print.
- Fiedler, T. 1992. "The Balkanization of Politics Strains S. Florida's Social Fabric." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Viewpoint Section, 12 July: 4C.
- Figueroa, A. 1987. "200 Apartments to House Elderly, Disabled." *The Miami Herald*, Neighbors Section, Final Edition, 22 October: 7.
- Filkins, D. 1992. "Groveites Cheer as Secession Plan OKD." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local Section, 7 June: 1D.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1994. "Concerned Residents Weighing Metro Vote NE Dade Candidates Pledge Stronger voice." *The Miami Herald*, Final, Local, August 15:18.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1995a. "4 Proposed Cities Win Ok to Proceed." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local,

- June 1:1B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1995b. "City Fever Sweeping The County." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local June 4:1B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1995c. "Metro Makes it Harder to Break Away." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Front, July 14:A.
- Filkins, D. and Strouse, C. 1992. "Metro Pulls Secessions Issue off Sept. Ballot." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local, July 8: 1B.
- Finefrock, D. 1996. "Metro Freezes Incorporations, Annexations." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local, October 8:1B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1999a. "Penelas Meets with Leaders of Incorporation." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local, October 7: 4B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1999b. "Commissioner, Activists Call a Truce." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local, November 14: 5B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2001. "Dade Groups Sue for Cities; Action Challenges Tax Representation." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local, January: 1B.
- Florida, R. 2004. *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Perseus Books Group, New York.
- Fogelson, R. 1967. *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930*. Berkeley: University of California.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1997. "Plan Would Turn Miami Dade into Mega-City." *The Miami Herald*, Broward Edition, Local December 3:3B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1999a. "Municipalities could Emerge (at a price) Under Sterheim Plan." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local, April 14:1B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1999b. "Penelas Meets with Leaders of Incorporation." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local, October 7: 4B.
- García Bedolla, L. 2005. *Fluid Borders: Latino Power, Identity, and Politics in Los Angeles*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2009. *Latino Politics*. Cambridge, UK: Polity
- \_\_\_\_\_. and M. R. Michelson. 2012. *Mobilizing Inclusion: Transforming the Electorate through Get-Out-the-Vote Campaigns*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- George, P. 1978. "Colored Town: Miami's Black Community: 1896-1930. *Florida Historical Quarterly*.
- Goldfarb, C. 1989. "Housing for Elderly gets Federal Funds." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Neighbors, 5 October :16.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1992. "Secession Movement Accused of Bias." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local Section, 7 July: 1B.
- Goldman, T. 2012. "Urban Miami doesn't need a casino." *The Miami Herald*, February 12 .
- Gonzalez, A.M. 1992. "Hialeah Blasts Dade Plan for City Secession." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Neighbors CT Section, 28 June: 14.
- Grenier, G., Stepick, A., eds. 1992. *Miami Now: Immigration Ethnicity and Social Change*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- Gutierrez, B. 1984. "More Hispanic Elderly Face Poverty." *The Miami Herald*, Living Today, Final Edition, 14 October: 1G.
- Hamm, P. 1985. "Key Biscayne Residents Discuss Incorporation." *The Miami Herald*, Neighbors SE. Final Edition, 28 November, 1985.
- Hanks, D. 2011a. "Miami casino would be bigger than Vegas competitors – The proposed Genting

- resort is larger than what Vegas Strip hotels offer gamblers – but the developer says that's the point.” *The Miami Herald*, October.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2011b. “Greater Miami Chamber releases pro-casino survey.” *The Miami Herald*, November.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2011c. “Genting: Our Miami casino won't be the largest in the world – The Malaysian company under fire for wanting to build the world's largest casino in Miami says the charge is a 'myth.' It blames an architect for getting the numbers wrong.” *The Miami Herald*, December
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2012a. “Miami's arts scene frames casinos as threat – With Miami's cultural scene on the upswing, casino foes warn of a reversal if big resorts come. Arsht leader has ‘grave’ concerns. But Genting says its resort will only help downtown.” *The Miami Herald*, December.
- Hanks, D. & Walker, E. 2012. “Casinos at the crossroads: 7 key moments marked historic debate – The past year's high-profile push to bring resort casinos to South Florida was marked by a string of notable moments. The debate is over for this legislative session but is sure to continue.” *The Miami Herald*, February.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2012. “Casinos in limbo, but the issue has changed landscape – Even with a casino-resort bill on its deathbed in the state capital this year, the battle lines have carved a new business legacy in South Florida.” *The Miami Herald*, February.
- Hartman, T. 1995a. “Metro mulls stricter Rules for Cityhood.” *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local, April 23:1B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1995b. “New Rules will Slow Rush To Incorporation.” *The Miami Herald*, Local Edition, May 3: 1B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1995c. “Vidal: slow Plans for New Cities Further Studies Needed, He Says.” *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local July 12:1B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1995d. “Metro Lets 3 Proposed New Cities Go Forward.” *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local, July 26:1B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1995e. “Cityhood: Race, Influence, Money, Fueling the Drive.” *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local, July 27: 1B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1995f. “New Cities Can’t Rule the Poor out of Bounds.” *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local, October 7:1B.
- Hector, L. 1969. “Miami Report.” National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence.
- Hernandez, E. 1985. “Study Urges Incorporation for Key Biscayne.” *The Miami Herald*, Neighbors SE, Final Edition, 3 October: 3.
- Hertz, B. 1984 “Governing Dade County: A Study of Alternative Structure”. Dade County Florida.
- Hiaasen, C. 1987. “Outrage, Guts Put a stop to Bulldozers.” *The Miami Herald*, Local, Final Edition, 4 November: 1B.
- Hirsch, A. 1983. *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire: Cambridge UP.
- Holmes, S. 1990. “The Nation; Miami Melting Pot Proves Explosive.” *The New York Times*, December
- Holston, J. 1989. *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasilia*. Chicago: University of Chicago
- Holston, J. 2008. *Insurgent Citizenship; Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.
- Holston & Appadurai. 1999. *Cities and Citizenship*. Duke University, Raleigh Durham.

- Husock, H. 1998. "Let's Break Up the Big Cities." *City Journal*, Winter, 1998.  
[\[http://www.city-journal.org/html/issue8\\_1.html\]](http://www.city-journal.org/html/issue8_1.html)
- Hutabarat, R. 2009. "Walkability: what is it?" *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability*. Volume 2, Issue 2.
- Jeffers, J. 2005. "Communities Out to Fight Gentrification." *The Miami Herald*, Neighbors, Final Edition, 3NH, September.
- Kelly, J. 1981. "Trouble in Paradise." *Time Magazine*. National Edition.  
[\[http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,922693,00.html\]](http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,922693,00.html)
- Klas, M. E. 2012. "Casino bill all but dies as Fresen asks for postponed vote." *The Miami Herald*, February.
- Kleinman, J. 1986. "Report: City of Key Biscayne Would be Costly." *The Miami Herald*, *The Miami Herald*, Neighbors SE, Final Edition, 30 Mar: 3.
- Lambert, M. 1995. "Aventura Residents Reject Dade, Resoundingly Vote for Own City." *The Miami Herald*, Local, Final Edition, April 12: 3B.
- Landry, C. 2006. *The Art of City-making*. Sterling, VA: Earthscan, Print.  
 \_\_\_\_\_. 2008. *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*. New Stroud, UK: Comedia.
- Li, W. 2009. *Ethnoburb: The New Ethnic Community in Urban America*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i.
- Livingston, G. 2000. "The Annexation of the City of Coconut Grove" Tequesta 2000, Number LX, pp. 33 – 55. [\[http://digitalcollections.fiu.edu/tequesta/files/2000/00\\_1\\_02.pdf\]](http://digitalcollections.fiu.edu/tequesta/files/2000/00_1_02.pdf)
- Lloyd, R. D., 2006. *Neo-bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City*. New York: Routledge
- Logan, J. L. 1967. "Coral Way: A Bilingual School." *TESOL Quarterly* 1(2): 50-54.
- Macari, A. 1983. "United Way Allots Funds to 63 Groups Agencies Share in \$10 Million." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local Section, 11 August: 1D.
- Marable, M. 1981. *The Fire This Time: The Miami Rebellion, May 1980*. Department of City and Regional Planning, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.
- Martin, L. 1991. "Grove Activists Back Board But Call Secession Unlikely." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local Section, 3 September: 1B  
 \_\_\_\_\_. 2004. "Art and Commerce Mix in a Revived Wynwood." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, 1A, November.  
 \_\_\_\_\_. 2007. "In two decades, Miami Beach's southernmost square mile has become a big draw with art, cuisine, architecture and nightlife." *The Miami Herald*, Florida Edition, A1, December.  
 \_\_\_\_\_. 2011. "Developer Craig Robins' vision for the Design District." *The Miami Herald*, October.
- Martin, L. & Chang, D. 2007. "Wynwood Buzzing During Basel." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, 1A, December.
- Martin, L. & Santiago, F. 2007. "The Impact of Art." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, 1A, December.
- Martinez, D. 2003. "Incorporation Supporters Confident Vote Will Pass." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Neighbors NW: 12NW
- May, P. 1996. "Breaking Up is Hard to Do." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local, May 26: 2B. Edition, Neighbors SE, 19 November: 6.
- McGarrahan, E. 1987a. "Islanders replant what bulldozer unearthed." *The Miami Herald*, Local, Final Edition, 15 November: 1B.

- \_\_\_\_\_. 1987b. "Council Wins vote on Key Biscayne." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, August 24.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1975. "Comprehensive Developmental Master Plan." Metropolitan Dade County.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1996. "Report of the Metro Dade County Boundaries Commission on issues of Incorporation, Annexation, and Community Councils." May. Metro Dade County.
- Meyer, L. 1985. "Island Cities in the Stream." *The Miami Herald*, Neighbors SE, Final Edition, 18 August: 24.
- The Miami Herald. 1982. "United Way Allocations." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local Section, 12 August: 4B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1987a. "Florida Growth Surges." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Home and Design, 11, October: 2H.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1987b. "What The Surtax Does." Final Edition, Local Section, 21 October: 1B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1988. "Help Hispanics Adapt." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, 31 January: 2F.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1988. "Two Tiered Approach." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Editorial, December 18, 2013 20: 34A.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1989. "Cuban Council's Classes Target High School Dropouts." *The Miami Herald*, Neighbors Section, Final Edition, 31 August: 6.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1990. "Two Tiered Approach." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Editorial December 20: 34A
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1994. "Dade's Orphan Communities." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Editorial, November 18:14A
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1995. "Cities Built by Politics." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Editorial, August 1: 12a.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2005. "Local Perspectives." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, 24A, September.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2011a. "Art Basel Miami Beach at 10: The Basel Effect on Miami – Art Basel Miami Beach opens its 10<sup>th</sup> fair to a city far more culturally aware than it was decade ago. The Swiss-run fair amped up to the volume on Miami's art scene and has helped it grow." *The Miami Herald*, November.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2011b. "How will historic sites survive mege-casino?" *The Miami Herald*, October.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2011c. "A community that cares." *The Miami Herald*, December.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2011d. "Miami casino plan could start shrinking – Even some supporters of Genting's plan for a mammoth resort casino in downtown Miami say it will have to be scaled back to win approval." *The Miami Herald*, December.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2011e. "Vital questions need answers – OUR OPINION: Once decision on casinos is made, there's no turning back." *The Miami Herald*, November.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2012. "Indecision roulette – OUR OPINION: Future of gambling in the Sunshine State remains unsettled." *The Miami Herald*, February.
- Mohl, R. 1988. *The Making of Urban America*. SR Books, Wilmington, Delaware.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2003. "The Second Ghetto Thesis and the Power of History." *Journal of Urban History* 29(3): 243-255.
- Morales, L. 2007. "Official: District is on the Rise." *The Miami Herald*, Neighbors, Final Edition, 6NE, December.
- Nepomechie, M. 2010. *Building Paradise: An Architectural Guide to the Magic City*. Miami: American Institute of Architects.
- Nicols, A. 2005. "A Brief History of Opa Locka." Opa Locka Community Development



- Corporation.
- Nijman, J. 1996a. "Drawing Election Boundaries." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local Section.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1991b. "Grove Independence Sought." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local Section, 28 July:1B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1991c. "35 Candidates Vying for Grove Council Tuesday." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local Section, 21 October:1B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1991d. "Grove Voters Pick Council, Support Secession From City." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local Section, 23 October: 3B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1992b. "Miami to take Anti-Secession Plea to Dade Commissioners." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local Section, 2 July: 3B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1992c. "Grove Secession Issue Off Ballot, Parks Plan On." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local Section, 15 September: 1B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1997. "Globalization to a Latin beat: the Miami Growth Machine." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 551(1): 163-176.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2000. "The Paradigmatic City." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Volume 90, Issue 1, March, pages 135 – 145.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2005. "Locals, Exiles and Cosmopolitans: A theoretical argument about place in Miami." *Journal of economic and social Geography*, Volume 98, Issue 2, Pages 176-187.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2007. "Locals, Exiles and Cosmopolitans: A theoretical argument about place in Miami." *Journal of Economic and Social Geography* 98(2): 176-187.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2011. *Miami: Mistress of the Americas*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.
- Ocana, D.1999. "Judge's Order Applauded on Both Sides." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Front, May 7:17a.
- Olmedillo, G. 1994 "Memorandum: Issues related to Incorporation." Dade County Planning Department, Dade County Planning Department, November 4, 1994.
- Opa-Locka Community Development Corp. 2013. "Annual Board of Directors Meeting." Arts Master Plan. January 28, 2013.
- Ovalle, D. 2003. "Area Due For Arts-Oriented Make Over." *The Miami Herald*, Neighbors NE, Final Edition: 3N
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2004. "Wynwood's Puerto Rican Character Fading." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition: 1B. June.
- Parks, A. 2008. *Miami the Magic City*. Community Media, Miami, Florida.
- Patricios, N.1994. *Building Marvelous Miami*. Gainesville: University of Florida.
- Petchell, J. 1990. "Key Biscayne Clears 1<sup>st</sup> Hurdle to Independence." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local Section, 6 June Final: 1B.
- Portes, A., & Sassen. S., 1993. "Miami: A New Global City?" *Contemporary Sociology* 22: 471-77. Print.
- Portes, A., & Schaufliker, R. 1994. "Language and the Second Generation: Bilingualism Yesterday and Today" *International Migration Review*. 28(4): 640-661.
- Portes & Stepick 1993. *City on the Edge; The Transformation of Miami*. London, University of California Press.
- Rabin, C. 2007. "New Cities fight over fees for Cityhood." *The Miami Herald*, Metro and State, April 10:1B
- Rush, R. 1979. "Technics: loadbearing masonry: innovations in masonry." *Progressive Architecture*. 60.2, February:86-95.
- Ruvin, H. 1990. Speech delivered to Dade County Commission.

- San Martin, N. 1993. "Repeal of English-only Law is talk of the Town, Spanish Speakers Celebrate, Foresee New Era." *Sun Sentinel*, May 20, 1993. [[http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/1993-05-20/news/9302120807\\_1\\_english-only-law-repeal-english-first](http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/1993-05-20/news/9302120807_1_english-only-law-repeal-english-first)].
- Santiago, F. 1986. "Two Sides of Freedom of Speech Panelist Say." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, 23 November: 1B.
- Santiago, F. 2011. "Gambling industry is selling an illusion." *The Miami Herald*, November.
- Sarni, J. 1990. "Tourney Chief: Lawsuit wont' Evict Lipton." *The Sun Sentinel*, Final Edition, 24 March. [[http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/1990-05-24/sports/9001090955\\_1\\_butch-buchholz-lipton-tennis-stadium](http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/1990-05-24/sports/9001090955_1_butch-buchholz-lipton-tennis-stadium)]
- Scott, J. 1998. *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale UP.
- Self, R. 2003. *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP.
- Serino, G. 1958. "Miami's Metropolitan Experiment" *Civic Information Series No. 28*, Administration Clearing Service of the University of Florida, Gainesville Florida.
- Sewell, D. 1985. "Miami Elects first Cuban Born Mayor." *The Daily Reporter*, Local Edition, 13 November: 3A [<http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1907&dat=19851112&id=aGYrAAAIBA J&sjid=BtkEAAAIBA J&pg=4581,4924507>]
- Shell-Weiss, M. 2009. *Coming to Miami: A Social History*. University of Florida Press, Gainesville.
- Shukovsky, P. 1990. "Metro to help Key's study on incorporation." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Neighbors KE, Section 8, February: 14.
- Shulman, A. 2009. *Miami Modern Metropolis*. Balcony Press, Glendale California.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2010. *Miami Architecture: An AIA Guide Featuring Downtown, the Beaches and Coconut Grove*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press.
- Shulman, A. and Lejeune, J. 2001. *The Making of Miami Beach: 1933 – 1942. The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon*. New York: Rizzoli Press.
- Skop, E. 2001. "Race and Place in the Adaptation of Mariel Exiles" *International Migration Review* 35(2): 449-471.
- Smily, N. 2005. *Yesterday's Miami*. E.A. Seamann Publishing Inc. Miami Florida.
- Sofen, E. 1961. "The Miami Metropolitan Experiment." *Metropolitan Action Studies*, No. 2 Indiana University Press, Bloomington c. 1963
- Sorenson, K. 2011. "Sorenson: Casino resorts bring false hopes, greed." *The Miami Herald*, December.
- Stack J. 1994a. Summit of the Americas: Advantages, Benefits, and Opportunities for Greater Miami. Cuban American Policy Center. Issue Brief No. 2, December. Miami: Cuban American National Council.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1994b. Summit of the Americas: Issues to be Discussed. Cuban American Policy Center. Issue Brief No. 3, December. Miami: Cuban American National Council.
- Starita et al, 1989 "Anatomy of a Disturbance: One Gunshot Devastates a City 3 days of Anguish in Miami." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Front Section, January 22:1A.
- Stepick & et al. 2003. *This land is our Land: Immigrants and Power in Miami*. London, University of California Press.
- Stofik, B. 2005. *Saving South Beach*. University Press of Florida, Tallahassee, c. 2005
- Strategy Research Corporation. 1988. *The South Florida Latin Market*. Strategy Research Corp.

- Stuart & Stack. 2008. *The New Deal in South Florida*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.
- Sugrue, T. 1996. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP.
- Tananarive, D. 1991. "CDCS get funds to plan housing that's affordable." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Neighbors NC, 14 July: 3.
- Tanfani J. 1991a. "Grove residents Consider Council." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Neighbors, CT July, 18:10
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1991b. "35 Candidates Vying for Grove Council Tuesday." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local, October 21:1B
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1992a. "Coconut Grove Council Works Toward Secession from Miami." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Neighbors NE Section, 9 April: 10.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1992b. "Miami to take Anti-Secession Plea to Dade Commissioners." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local Section, 2 July: 3B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1992c. "Grove Secession Issue Off Ballot, Parks Plan On." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local Section, 15 September: 1B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1993a. "Activists Become Architects; Neighborhoods Have Chance to Change Dade's Look." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local Section, 31 January: 1B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1993b. "Vote to be Referendum on Community Control." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local Section, 31 January: 1B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1993c. "Voters Reject Plan for 8 Elected Regional Zoning Boards." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local Section, 17 March: 5B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1993d. "Gersten tries to Link Up Allegation of Fraud with Vote on Zoning Issue." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Front Section, 20 March: 20A.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1996 "Block Secessionists, Metro Panel Urges." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local, May 22:1B
- Tanfani, J. and Muhs, A. 1993. "Power Up for Grabs." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Local, March 1:1B
- Tomb, G. 1985. "Bridge to Carry New Era to Key Biscayne." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition Local Section, 3 November: 1B.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1987. "Environmentalists Battle Bulldozers on Key Biscayne." *The Miami Herald*, Local, Final, Edition, 27 October: 1B
- Touche Ross & Co. 1978. "Report on a Review of Two Tier Government in Miami Dade County" Miami, Florida.
- Triff, A. 2006. "Miami Arts Explosion." *The New Times Column*. Thomson Custom Pub.
- Tscheschlok, E. 1995. *Long Road to Rebellion: Miami's Liberty City Riot of 1968*. Florida Atlantic University Press, Boca Raton.
- Unzueta, S. 1981. *The Mariel Exodus: A Year in Retrospect*. Miami: Metropolitan Dade County Government Office of the County Manager.
- Verdecia, C. 1988a. "Mission: Caring for Others – Cuban American National Council." *The Miami Herald*, Editorial, Final Edition, 4 February: 23A.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1988b. "Community Development: Cubans Building a Future." *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Editorial, 23 June: 25A.
- Walker, E. 2010 "DEVELOPMENT: Midtown Miami sparking an urban renaissance – Midtown Miami, an everything-in-one-place collection of stores, residences and the offices, is sparking an urban renaissance." *The Miami Herald*, A1, August.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2012. "Genting downscales in Miami as it seeks to expand its global brand –

- Malaysian casino giant Genting says it will move forward with more modest plans for its downtown Miami site. Globally, the company is seeking to expand.” *The Miami Herald*, July.
- WHITE V. METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY 563 So. 2d 117 (Fla App. 1990) Court Appeal of Florida Third District.  
[\[http://www.leagle.com/xmlResult.aspx?xmlDoc=1990680563So2d117\\_1658.xml&docbase=CSLWAR2-1986-2006\]](http://www.leagle.com/xmlResult.aspx?xmlDoc=1990680563So2d117_1658.xml&docbase=CSLWAR2-1986-2006)
- Wragg, J. 1991. “Local Government, Key Biscayne Style.” *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Editorial Section, 27 June: 2C.
- Wolff, R. 1951. “Negro Housing in the Miami Area: Effects of the Postwar Building Boom.” Issue 1. Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of Miami.
- Wolff, R. 1960. *Miami Metro: The Road to Urban Unity*. Bureau of Business and Economic Research. University of Miami.
- Valle, Victor et al. 2000. *Latino Metropolis*. Minneapolis, MN University of Minnesota Press.
- Ycaza, C. 1989. “Key Biscayne Poll Shuns Development.” *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Neighbors KE, 19 June: 18.
- Yee, I. 2000. “Municipalities Move Ahead with Incorporation.” *The Miami Herald*, Final Edition, Neighbors WE, October 22:20W.
- Yúdice , G. 2005. “Miami Images of a Latinopolis.” NACLA, Report on the Americas, November December.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2003. *The Expediency of Culture: the uses of culture in the Global Era*. Durham, Duke University Press.
- Zukin, S., 1995. *The Cultures of Cities*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, Print.

## Appendix: Interviews

- Bruce Clark [pseudo]. 2010 Interview by Author. Tape Recording. Miami, FL. February 6.
- Chilean Single Mother. 2010. Interview by Author. Tape Recording. Miami, FL. April 17.
- Cuban Family. 2007. Interview by Author. Tape Recording. Miami, FL. June 17.
- Don A. [pseudo]. 2011. Notes by Author. Tape Recording. Miami, FL. December 11.
- DP&Z Planner 1 2007. Interview by Author. Tape Recording. Miami, FL. August 17.
- Glo [pseudo]. 2011. Notes by Author. Tape Recording. Miami, FL. December 8.
- JJ [pseudo]. 2011. Notes by Author. Tape Recording. Miami, FL. December 9.
- Lucy Silverman [pseudo]. 2010. Interview by Author. Tape Recording. Miami, April 8.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2010 Interview by Author. Tape Recording. Miami, FL. May 17.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2010 Interview by Author. Tape Recording. Miami, FL. May 23.
- Nicaraguan Family. 2010. Interview by Author. Tape Recording. Miami, FL. June 3.
- Peruvian Family. 2010. Interview by Author. Tape Recording. Miami, FL. June 5.
- Peter O'Donnell [pseudo]. 2008. Interview by Author. Tape Recording. Miami, FL. Oct 12.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2010. Interview by Author. Tape Recording. Miami, FL. May 15.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2012. Interview by Author. Tape Recording. Miami, FL. January 22.
- Roberto Behar. 2007. Interview by Author. Tape Recording. Miami, FL. Sep 7.
- Walter Thomas [pseudo]. 2011. Interview by Author. Tape Recording. Miami, FL. May 4.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2011 Interview by Author. Tape Recording. Miami, FL. June 6.