1. FOUNDATIONS OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

PORTS AND FORTIFICATIONS

Barcelona and Havana were prominent fortifications and the main centres of economy and trade for the Spanish Monarchy.

During the late modern period, Havana was a prominent fortification and sea port that welcomed ships transporting riches from the Americas to the Cuban metropolis.

After the British occupation in 1762, its fortifications were expanded, forming an impermeable defensive system. Over time, new gates would be added to the city’s walls to allow for better communication and trade.

Barcelona, too, was a fortified sea port, surrounded by walls which in the 19th century became a serious obstacle to urban growth and the development of its economy, which was based on the textile industry.

THE BEGINNINGS OF TRADE RELATIONS

Starting in 1765, King Charles III of Spain decreed the progressive liberalization of trade between the Antilles and a number of Spanish sea ports, including that of Barcelona.

The advent of trade liberalization with the Americas led to a noticeable increase in the Catalan presence on the island.

Regular communication between the sea ports of Barcelona and Havana began in 1779. Catalonian ships carried goods produced in the region, such as indiennes cloth, as well as English-made equipment and tools for Cuban sugar refineries.

At the end of the 18th century, Havana was a major unprocessed tobacco export centre and the driving force behind the boom in Cuban sugar production, revolutionizing the old sugar mills into veritable sugar refineries. At the turn of the 19th century, and taking advantage of the crisis in Haiti, the Creole landowners, led by Francisco de Arango y Parreño, had become the world’s most important sugar producers, also specializing in the export of coffee. Slavery, which fuelled the production of both sugar and coffee, would become an essential part of Cuban society.

As Spain’s only industrialized city, Barcelona attracted investment from rich indianos – Spaniards who had made their fortune in Havana. This was the case of Josep Xifré, an indiano returning from Cuba, who, in 1837 built the first block of modern rental luxury flats in Barcelona, known as the Porxos de’n Xifré.

THE END OF THE CITY WALLS
In the 1830s many in Barcelona and Havana started to call on their respective governments to remove the systems of fortifications.

Between 1834 and 1838, General Miguel Tacón consolidated the system of boulevards and promenades in the city of Havana. This project, together with the city's palaces, mansions and casas quinta (French-style mansions) would transform the city into the aristocratic capital that Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier would call “The city of columns”.

The Picturesque map of Havana, created in 1849 by José María de la Torre, shows the city’s areas of expansion towards the west and south, highlighting its coastline and the densification of old Havana within the city’s walls.

In Barcelona, the burgeoning population and industry located within the city walls had sparked serious social and sanitation problems.

In 1859 the proposal for the Plan de Ensanche y Reforma de Barcelona (Barcelona Expansion and Renewal Plan) by Catalonian urban planner Ildefons Cerdà was approved; the aim being to create a newer, cleaner, more egalitarian city with easier access to all. The demolition of the city’s walls, which had begun in 1854, would last several decades.

Permission to tear down the walls of the city of Havana wasn’t obtained until 1863. Once the walls were demolished, the city saw the construction of a new neighbourhood known as Reparto de las Murallas; institutional and residential buildings were built around the Paseo del Prado, a street that now marked the frontier with Central Havana, home to the working-class neighbourhood where the tobacco factories and small businesses were located.

The wealthy Creole population moved to El Cerro, where the casas quinta were built, and began to populate the district of El Vedado. Meanwhile, old Havana was home to port warehouses, small shops and the cheaper, smaller dwellings created when property owners divided Havana’s old mansions into rental rooms in the interest of real estate speculation.

In Barcelona, after the revolution that put an end to the reign of Queen Isabella II in 1868, work began on the demolition of the old military citadel to make way for a park that would serve as a home to the city’s first public museums. The 1888 Barcelona Universal Exposition accelerated this transformation, leading to the construction of the Columbus Monument – a veritable feat of engineering that housed an electric lift within. Presiding over the city’s harbour, this monument symbolized trade with the Americas.

During this period, Havana and Barcelona were cities linked by trade and maritime transport. This was especially true after a shipping line was founded in 1850 by Antonio López. In 1881, this shipping line would
become the Compañía Transatlántica Española.

2. CRISIS WITHIN THE SPANISH EMPIRE, THE WARS OF INDEPENDENCE AND POLITICAL RESPONSES

The Spanish monarchy’s inability to meet the demands of Cuban reformists and the internal strife experienced in Barcelona after the deposition of Queen Isabel II of Spain favoured the onset of the Ten Years’ War, Cuba’s first war of independence.

Many in Barcelona were mobilized to participate, for the war represented a great risk to the important revenue and the import/export trade with the colony. It was from here that the first military detachments and volunteer battalions left for Havana.

The conflict became drawn out and the devastating effects it had on the population led to the Pact of Zanjón in 1878, in which one faction of the mambí forces accepted the conditions of surrender offered by Captain-General Martínez Campos. One of the conditions of the treaty granted freedom to Mambí army rebels who had once been slaves. Some rebels chose to follow Antonio Maceo and continue fighting, but the rebellion was impossible to sustain.

THE VICTORS AND THE VANQUISHED

Son of Spaniards, José Martí was imprisoned at the age of 16 and later deported.

While exiled in the United States, José Martí worked to unify the Cuban independence movement.

In February 1895, Cuba would once again fight for its liberation. Nationalist sentiment had matured and the rebellion spread throughout the island with the support of former military chiefs such as Máximo Gómez and Antonio Maceo.

Between 1895 and 1898 many Spanish soldiers and volunteers – many from Catalonia – arrived in Cuba from Barcelona, to quell the revolt.

There were numerous losses on both sides, and Cuban civilians also suffered from the “reconcentration” policy of General Valeriano Weyler, and this, together with the effects of the war itself, led to the massacre of a third of the population.

In 1898, United States’ opportunistic intervention in the war would restrict the Cubans’ final victory over the Spanish troops, hampering the full independence of the island.

Major General Máximo Gómez of the liberating army described the sentiment among the Cuban populace thusly: “the protection forcefully imposed by the Americans has embittered the joy of the victors but has also failed to sweeten the pain of the vanquished”.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE LOSS

For Spain, the return of its troops represented a painful episode. Their impoverishment and neglect symbolized
the “disaster of 1898” and a loss of prestige for the government.
In Barcelona, the difficulties faced by the Spanish state in financing the war in Cuba had a significant indirect effect as well. In 1897, to increase tax revenues, the government had authorized the unification of the city’s districts into a single municipality. Two years later, the amalgamation of Havana’s surrounding towns would also take place under different circumstances.
Although in Spain the economic impact of the loss of Cuba was not as dire as expected, the failings of the Spanish government activated a new sort of Catalonian nationalism that aspired to political autonomy, led by the Lliga Regionalista (Regionalist League), founded in Barcelona 1901.

3. CHALLENGES OF THE 20TH CENTURY

UNDER AMERICAN CONTROL

After gaining its independence, Cuba received an unprecedented wave of Spanish immigrants.
Catalonian emigrants worked mainly in the commerce, industry and banking sectors, residing mainly in Mercaderes, Obispo and Obra Pía streets.

During this period, the Cubans were under the powerful control of the government installed by the U.S. The Americans controlled the island’s foreign trade, promoting investment in Cuba in an effort to adapt its infrastructure.

Yet this modernization did not substantially improve living conditions for a large part of the population, causing nationalist sentiment to gather greater momentum among members of the Cuban labour movement, influenced by American and Catalonian anarchist movements. The year 1899 saw the founding of the General League of Cuban Workers. Its brief programme contained a number of proposals, including the defence of equal opportunities, protection of women workers and war orphans and a firm commitment to defending the future Republic of Cuba.

In 1902 the Republic of Cuba was installed, but its sovereignty was undermined by the Platt Amendment, which authorized the U.S. military intervention in Cuba whenever necessary, in addition to controlling Cuban economy and commerce.

PARIS AS A MODEL FOR DEVELOPMENT

In terms of urban development, the coming of the Republic did not represent a substantial change in the master plan for growth in Havana.

At this time, Cuban architecture sought to distance itself from the colonial style and the American aesthetic codes that pervaded neighbourhoods such as El Vedado and Marianao.
Instead, Havana adopted the eclectic architectural style often seen in Paris. At the beginning of the 20th century, the city looked to Europe in an effort to be "the Paris of the Caribbean", much in the same way that Barcelona aspired to be the "Paris of the Mediterranean", but still maintaining its own distinctive characteristics.

In the years following the 1888 Universal Exposition, Barcelona witnessed the formation of a singular, Catalanian version of Art Nouveau, known as Modernisme. This was an architectural style made famous by architects such as Lluís Domènech i Montaner, Josep Puig i Cadafalch and Antoni Gaudí.

The originality seen in Modernisme arrived a few years later in Havana. It represented a new architectural language for the city, promoted by wealthy Catalan families. One of the features of these buildings was the use of prefabricated decorative elements made out of cement, plaster and artificial stone.

The first Modernist works seen in Havana were the pavilions for the gardens of the old La Tropical brewery, built in 1904. Reminiscent of Antoni Gaudí’s Park Güell in Barcelona, they were designed by architects Ramón Magriñá and Jaime Cruanyas.

Later on, the creation of the Association of Architects in 1916 toughened the requirements for practising the profession and fostered a more autochthonous architectural style. These new conditions displaced the old master builders.

Meanwhile, Barcelona was undergoing economic changes associated to the electrification of factories and households, development of the automotive industry and growth of the chemical sector. The city also sought to establish a port with its own industrial harbour to make its industry more competitive.

Urban growth in the Ensanche (Barcelona’s expansion district) and its industrial suburbs was unstoppable. But there were also many elegant upper class neighbourhoods, such as the Dr. Andreu residences at the foot of the Tibidabo mountain.

4. CONFLICT AND DIVISION IN CUBA AND CATALONIA

POLITICAL TENSION

Born in 1902, the Cuban Republic was marked by instability from the outset.

Since its inception, the Cuban Republic was marked by instability, caused by the island’s precarious economic and social situation, and exacerbated by American interference and strife between Cuban pro-independence forces.

The re-election of the first republican president Tomás Estrada Palma, which took place against violent opposition, resulted in a political vacuum that gave way to the second occupation of Cuba by the U.S., which had invoked the Platt Amendment to occupy the island. This occupation lasted from 1906 to 1909.
Invoking the words of José Martí “to be Cuban is more than being white, mulatto, or black”, the Partido Independiente de Color (Independent Party of Color), was re-founded in 1908. This political party channeled the general unrest among the Cuban population, bringing about an armed revolt in 1912 which ended with the massacre of the rebels.

**SELF-GOVERNMENT AND THE WORKERS' STRUGGLE**

In Barcelona, resentment towards the Spanish government grew after the disaster of 1898 pro-Catalanist positions were starting to gain greater influence.

The demands of the Catalan populace vis-à-vis the Spanish government became clear after the 1901 elections in Barcelona, the mobilization of Solidaritat Catalana (Catalan Solidarity Party) in 1907, and the creation of the Commonwealth of Catalonia in 1914, which represented the region's first foray into self-government.

Tensions between the region and the Spanish government over the Catalan question were coupled by the intense conflict between the aspirations of the Catalan upper classes and the precarious working conditions of the city’s workers. During this time, industrial Barcelona was undergoing a profound social crisis, which took the form of frequent general strikes and violent clashes such as La Semana Trágica (the Tragic Week) of 1909. In Barcelona, which was known as “The Rose of Fire” by anarchists worldwide, social conflict was frequent, and was also fiercely repressed by the Spanish state and business interests.

Violence against workers’ organizations and their leaders led in turn to violent retaliation: these were the "lead-shot years” during which gunfighters held sway.

**ECONOMIC CRISIS AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS**

The internal strife in Cuba and the postwar crisis felt around the world, exacerbated by political interference by the American government (1917-1921), led to generalized crisis and corruption.

In Cuba, the crisis that followed the First World War was disastrous for the economy, for it brought about the financial collapse of banks, industry, and trade companies, many of which were taken over by American economic interests.

This instability gave rise to greater social consciousness, along with many workers’ strikes and student-led protests. In 1922 the Federación Estudiantil Universitaria (University Student Federation) was founded by Julio Antonio Mella, who would also create in 1925 the Liga AntiImperialista de las Américas (Anti-Imperialist League of the Americas) and helped to found the first Partido Comunista de Cuba (Cuban Communist Party).

**DICTATORIAL GOVERNMENTS**

Social upheaval in Barcelona is quelled by authoritarian means.
The bourgeoisie of Catalonia chose to support the military coup led by General Miguel Primo de Rivera, who later failed to recognize the Catalan ruling class that had once supported him. The dictator now had to contend with both the workers' movements as well as a growing pro-Catalan sentiment.

Under this dictatorship, new forms of resistance flourished, such as the separatist group led by Francesc Macià, known as Estat Català (Catalan State). Macià unsuccessfully sought military backing to overthrow Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship, and visited the Catalan businesses in Argentina and Cuba to seek support for his cause.

The leader of Estat Català met with Josep Conangla and Catalan separatist groups in Cuba. In Havana, the Constitución Provisional de la República Catalana (the Provisional Constitution of the Catalanian Republic) was drafted in 1928. The flag of separatism that was adopted featured a single star, inspired by the Cuban flag.

The arrival of General Gerardo Machado y Morales as president of Cuba brought about a number of changes for both Cuban society and politics.

5. MONUMENT-BUILDING IN HAVANA AND THE EXPANSION OF BARCELONA

MONUMENTAL HAVANA

Monuments become a part of Havana architecture and urban planning

After the economic crisis of 1920-1921, Havana witnesses a process of modernization, which is above all expressed in the emergence of architectural and urban patterns from the United States.

Under the government of Gerardo Machado y Morales, a Public Works Plan is developed, which, under the slogan “Water, roads and schools”, drives the construction of government and public buildings as well as a central motorway.

In Havana, a great number of works are undertaken, which are meant to monumentalize the city as the capital of the Republic and promote a tourist-friendly image of the city.

In 1928, the city organized the 6th Pan-American Conference, and American president Calvin Coolidge paid a much-awaited visit to the island. To mark the occasion, Cubans inaugurated the Parque de la Fraternidad Americana (Park of American Brotherhood), Avenida del Puerto (Port Avenue) and the gardens of the Presidential Palace and the University of Havana, which were designed by French architect and urban planner Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier, who had also worked in Barcelona. El Capitolio Nacional (the National Capitol Building) was opened in 1929.
Meanwhile, the districts of El Vedado and Miramar, home to the Cuban bourgeois, continued to grow. Following the lead of Paris and New York, Havana adopted the Art Deco style to express a certain elegance and monumental style in the city.

**BARCELONA UNDERGOES EXPANSION**

In Barcelona, the International Exposition propelled the transformation of a quickly-expanding metropolis.

In Barcelona, the International Exposition, which had been in the works since 1914 as an exhibition showcasing the electrical industry, finally took place in 1929. The project invigorated the south-west part of the city, namely the area surrounding the Plaza de España square, and served as the starting point for the growing city’s conquest of the Montjuïc Mountain. Partially landscaped by Forestier, the mountain had previously been under military control.

The fairgrounds featured the juxtaposition between historicism and the modern style, where buildings such as the Palacio Nacional and the rationalist German Pavilion, designed by Mies van der Rohe coexisted. In the city centre, renewal of the Plaza de Catalunya square was being undertaken, and Via Laietana was opened up. The monumental nature of the historical centre of the city was emphasized through the construction of squares and other architectural elements, transforming the old Cathedral district into the “Gothic Quarter”.

As these architectural changes were taking place, the expansion of the city, along with the construction of a new underground rail network, continued at an unstoppable rate. Barcelona was also home to large areas of shacks and huts. The construction of the first housing for the poor, known as the “cheap houses” did not solve the problem.