

Panamanian Museums: History, Contexts and Contemporary Debates

Ana Luisa Sánchez Laws



Dissertation for the degree philosophiae doctor (PhD)
at the University of Bergen

December 2008

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Katherine Goodnow, an academic and a person for whom I have the deepest respect, for her kindness and for the energy she put into following my advance. This thesis has greatly benefited from her continued support and criticism, and her work in the *Museums and Diversity* series has been a source of inspiration.

Thanks to the staff at the Department of Information Sciences and Media Studies for additional funding for fieldwork and especially for funding to attend conferences and seminars such as Making National Museums (NaMU) and ECREAs European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School. At these conferences and seminars, I had the great opportunity to receive generous feedback from a number of young scholars who encouraged me to rethink many of my assumptions. Thanks also to Prof. Jostein Gipsrud for his support as a grant for my travel to the Digital Arts and Culture (DAC) conference in Perth in 2007.

I want to thank my family, especially my parents Roberto Sánchez and Jinny Laws, first and foremost for all they have given me throughout the years, and second for their help in the development of parts of my fieldwork in Panama. During my field trips, they provided excellent logistic support and were always suggesting additional literature. Their good humour and sustained interest when touring around to see the various museums was a definitive blessing in face of the difficulties of finding some of the locations. Thanks to my sister Patricia Sánchez for her support in getting additional information about the new MARTA building, to my brother Bruno Sánchez for photographic material, and to my sister Olivia Sánchez also for her support. Special thanks and thoughts go to my late grandfather Guillermo Luciano Sánchez and to my grandmother Octavisa Moreno. Both of them have been models for me for their strength and will to defeat the many obstacles life put before them.

Hanne-Lovise Skartveit's suggestions on literature about games were very valuable. I am very grateful to her for introducing me to Gonzalo Frasca's work and

also motivating me to attend the DAC Conference. I also want to thank Kari Soriano Salkjelsvik, whose comments on an early version of chapter 3 helped me realize that I was presenting a prejudiced account of the period of the Spanish Conquest; I do hope it is less biased now. Heng Wu and José Fonseca Hidalgo were great company in the office we shared at Infomedia. I am also indebted to my colleagues at La Pecera, Ernesto Jara, Clea Eppelin and Camilo Poltronieri, for the rich learning that represented working together.

The biggest source of support, however, accompanied with a good dose of patience, has been Kamilla Bergsnev. Her company and love have been fundamental in keeping me motivated throughout the long road to a doctoral degree. I wish only the best for her in life and in her own career and hope I can be as supportive to her as she has been to me. I am sure we will continue sailing for many wonderful years with Luna, hopefully even across the Atlantic and through the Panama Canal.

Bergen, 2008.

Ana Luisa Sánchez Laws

Abstract

This study provides an in-depth analysis of the political and economic contexts in which dominant representations of nationhood and identity have formed in museums in Panama.

A focus on museums stems from the long history these institutions have of accompanying political transformations in Panama. A project for a National Museum was started as early as 1906, just three years after the official birth of the Republic of Panama, and with each political change in the country, the museum sector has been in one way or another restructured. During the first years of the military dictatorship (1968-81), a host of new museums were created, and after the return to democracy in 1989, government investments in museums increased. Other private and community investments in museums in the last few years (the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal inaugurated in 1997, the interpretive museum at the Panamá Viejo Visitor Centre inaugurated in 2004, the Museum of the Kuna Nation opened in 2005, and the relocation of the MARTA in 2006) also show that museums in Panama have once again attracted the attention of a number of stakeholders as sites for attempts at rearticulating nationhood and identity in Panama. A number of contemporary debates, in particular those related to Panama's ethnic diversity and its recent history of conflict, have nonetheless been silenced or muted in the displays of these museums.

The study is divided in three parts, one contextual, one analytical and one practice-based. Part I: *Contexts* presents a background of the debates surrounding the history of Panama that will be later on contrasted to current museum representations. Part II: *Cases* presents analyses of five museums: the Museum of Nationality, the Anthropological Museum Reina Torres de Araúz, the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal, the Panamá Viejo Visitor Centre, the West Indian Museum of Panama and the Museum of the Kuna Nation. The cases are analyzed in relation to their external and internal contexts. External contexts include political and economic factors affecting the museums (apparent in policies, sources of funding, and employment practices). Internal contexts included disciplinary changes affecting the conceptualization of

museums and their mission, as well as other normative changes affecting methods of collection and museum deontology. These external and internal contexts are national, regional and international, and have changed over time.

Part III: *Models* is dedicated to examples where silences or gaps in the representation of nationhood and identity in Panama have been addressed. Examples include urban art exhibitions in Panama City and temporary exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art and two New Media models (a computer game and an online video and audio centre) developed as part of this thesis.

Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Abstract	5
Contents	7
<i>List of Figures</i>	9
Part I: Contexts	11
Chapter 1: Introduction	13
<i>Chapter Outline</i>	16
Chapter 2: Framework of Analysis	19
<i>International Contexts</i>	19
<i>Regional Contexts</i>	25
<i>National Contexts</i>	27
<i>Practice-based Research</i>	30
Chapter 3: Pre-Republican Panama, Crossings and Permanences	31
<i>Pre-Columbian Panama</i>	32
<i>The Arrival of the Spanish and a New Beginning</i>	36
<i>Impact of colonization</i>	39
<i>Other Arrivals: African Slaves</i>	41
<i>Creating the Boundaries: New Panama</i>	44
<i>Independence from Spain</i>	45
<i>Union with Colombia</i>	48
Chapter 4: Republican Panama, Political Conflict and the Challenge of Democracy	54
<i>The Birth of the Republic of Panama</i>	54
<i>The Dule Revolution</i>	58
<i>Further Migrations, Panameñismo, and the Institutionalization of Racism</i>	61
<i>Growing Conflicts in the Canal Zone and the Torrijos Era</i>	65
<i>The 1980s Crisis</i>	74
<i>The New Democratic Period</i>	77
Part II: Cases	79
Chapter 5: The Museum of Nationality	81

<i>La Villa de Los Santos</i>	82
<i>Emergence of the Museum and Current Exhibition</i>	85
<i>Contemporary Debates</i>	89
Chapter 6: The Reina Torres de Araúz Anthropological Museum (MARTA)	91
<i>Emergence of the Museum of the Panamanian Man</i>	92
<i>The Exhibition</i>	96
<i>From Museum of the Panamanian Man to MARTA</i>	98
<i>The New MARTA</i>	100
Chapter 7: The Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal	108
<i>San Felipe</i>	109
<i>Emergence of the Museum</i>	113
<i>The Exhibition</i>	115
<i>Contemporary Debates</i>	119
Chapter 8: The Panamá Viejo Visitor Centre	124
<i>Panamá La Vieja</i>	125
<i>World Heritage and the Management of Panamá La Vieja</i>	128
<i>The Exhibition</i>	131
Chapter 9: The West Indian Museum of Panama	138
<i>El Marañón</i>	139
<i>Emergence of the Museum and Current Exhibition</i>	141
<i>Debates Around the Museum: Between Highlighting and Downplaying the Afro in Panamanianness</i>	145
Chapter 10: The Museum of the Kuna Nation	149
<i>The Comarca Kuna Yala</i>	150
<i>Emergence of the Museum and Exhibition</i>	152
Part III: Models	159
Chapter 11: The 7th Panama Art Biennial at the Museum of Contemporary Art	161
<i>ciudadMULTIPLEcity: Urban Spaces for Play, Critique and Reflection</i>	162
<i>The 7th Panama Art Biennial</i>	167
<i>The Exhibition</i>	170
Chapter 12: <i>Angie Against the World</i> and <i>CiudadPanama.org</i>	176
<i>Motivation: a Perceived Silence About the Invasion</i>	177
<i>Making Angie Against the World</i>	178
<i>The Game and Audience Response</i>	187

<i>CiudadPanama.org, an Online Multimedia Centre About Panama</i>	189
Chapter 13: Conclusion	195
<i>Cases</i>	196
<i>Limitations, Applications and Future Research</i>	199
Works Cited	201

List of Figures

<i>Figure 1. Model for the analysis of the contexts of museums and changes over time</i>	29
<i>Figure 2. Location of the Isthmus of Panama. Image generated with OpenStreetMap.</i>	34
<i>Figure 3. Display of ceramics at the new MARTA. Photo by Kamilla Bergsnev (2006).</i>	35
<i>Figure 4. Model of the first settlement of the city of Panama, on display at the Panamá Viejo Visitor Centre. Photo by Bruno Sánchez (2008)</i>	38
<i>Figure 5. The Province of Los Santos</i>	82
<i>Figure 6. The Museum of Nationality. Photo by Roberto Sánchez (2007)</i>	86
<i>Figure 7. The Province of Panama, where the MARTA, the Panamá Viejo Monumental Complex and Visitor Centre, the West Indian Museum of Panama and the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal are located.</i>	94
<i>Figure 8. The new MARTA. Photo by Roberto Sánchez (2007)</i>	101
<i>Figure 9. First Hall at the MARTA. Photo by Roberto Sánchez (2007)</i>	102
<i>Figure 10. Reina Torres de Araúz's passport. Photo by Kamilla Bergsnev (2006)</i>	103
<i>Figure 11. Display cabinet at the MARTA. Photo by Kamilla Bergsnev (2006)</i>	104
<i>Figure 12. Barriles sculptures at the MARTA. Photo by Roberto Sánchez (2007)</i>	105
<i>Figure 13. The Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal. Photo by Bruno Sánchez (2007)</i>	109
<i>Figure 14. The Panamá Viejo Visitor Centre. Photo by Bruno Sánchez (2008)</i>	132
<i>Figure 15. Entrance corridor at the Panamá Viejo Visitor Centre. Photo by Bruno Sánchez (2008)</i>	132
<i>Figure 16. Panel explaining methods of collection of the Panamá La Vieja Archaeological Project. Photo by Bruno Sánchez (2008)</i>	133
<i>Figure 17. Comic-like figures of pirates. Photo by Bruno Sánchez (2008)</i>	135
<i>Figure 18. The West Indian Museum of Panama. Photo by Roberto Sánchez (2007)</i>	141
<i>Figure 19. Dioramas at the West Indian Museum of Panama. Photo by Roberto Sánchez (2007)</i>	143
<i>Figure 20. The Comarca Kuna Yala</i>	151
<i>Figure 21. Opening sequence</i>	181
<i>Figure 22. Arcade images</i>	181
<i>Figure 23. Documentary footage</i>	182
<i>Figure 24. Shooting game</i>	182
<i>Figure 25. Questionnaire game</i>	183
<i>Figure 26. Angie runs for shelter in the streets of San Felipe</i>	183

<i>Figure 27. Labyrinth game</i>	184
<i>Figure 28. Toy soldiers attack Angie</i>	184
<i>Figure 29. Video archive</i>	185
<i>Figure 30. Opening Page</i>	192
<i>Figure 31. Video Section</i>	193
<i>Figure 32. Museums Section</i>	193
<i>Figure 33. Photo Gallery</i>	194

Part I: **Contexts**

Chapter 1: Introduction

Museums have a long history of accompanying political transformations in Panama. A project for a National Museum was started as early as 1906, just three years after the official birth of the Republic of Panama, and with each political change in the country, the museum sector has been in one way or another restructured. For example, during the first years of the military dictatorship (1968-81), a host of new museums were created, and after the return to democracy in 1989, State investments in museums increased. Other private and community investments in museums in the last few years (the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal, the Panamá Viejo Visitor Centre, the relocation of the MARTA and the community museums in Kuna Yala) also show that museums in Panama have once again attracted the attention of a number of stakeholders either as sites for attempts at rearticulating Panamanianness - that sense of belonging to or representing the unique character of Panama - or as places with economic potential within the logic of ‘cultural industries’.

What can an analysis of museums in Panama tell us about the current representations of Panamanianness, and what can this tell us about missing stories and voices? Why do some stories dominate the landscape of representations in Panamanian museums while others continue to be postponed? How are contemporary debates on Panamanian identity and history displayed, and what, in turn, can this tell us about the challenges these museums face? In this thesis, I analyse many of the new museum projects in Panama, and argue that these cases highlight dominant narratives formed by, amongst other things, historical developments and economic interests. Departing from what is shown in the selected Panamanian museums, I am also interested in what is absent and what has been muted, the telling silences and the changing memories.

Gaps or missing voices in the representation of Panamanianness are especially important for two reasons: the country’s ethnic diversity and its recent history of political conflict. Panama’s ethnic diversity is the product of a long history of

migrations: West Indians, Chinese, Jews, Greeks, Italians, French, Spanish, Chileans, Colombians and U.S. citizens have come at one point or another to the isthmus, to mix with local populations - or to displace them. The Spanish colonisers, who brought with them African and indigenous slaves from other parts of the continent, arrived at the isthmus in the sixteenth century, altering the landscape for the Chibcha and Cueva speakers living in the territory. Fortune seekers from the east coast of North America came during the 1850s Gold Rush in search for an expedite way to the riches of California. Arrivals and departures continued during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries during the construction of the Panama Canal, which in itself constituted a dramatic change in the geography of the country. Panama also opened its doors to exiles of Latin American dictatorships in the 1970s and 1980s, and in the 1990s to those returning after Panama's own dictatorship ended. Most recently, Panamanian authorities have encouraged the arrival of those wishing to escape the high costs of living in North America and Europe, causing an accelerated growth in real estate and construction activities from 2000 on. In this way, in spite of its small territory and population (just above 3 million), these centuries of migrations to the isthmus have produced the coexistence of a great diversity of ethnic groups in Panama. These, however, have in some cases not been allowed to or willing to become part of the national community. It is therefore pertinent to ask: how has nationhood, ethnicity and cultural diversity been addressed in Panama's museums? What is still missing?

Panama has also had a turbulent history, and these 'turbulences' or conflicts reflect imbalances of power: between indigenous and colonisers, between the elite, landowners and lower-class *Criollos*, between the country and its neighbours (including the United States). These conflicts have formed many of the narratives found within the museums, as well as the gaps. In this thesis, I look at the political and social conflicts that have marked the history of the country, and relate changing contexts to the way they affect representations of these events in museums. Why are these stories being silenced at the moment and what does this tell us about larger political processes? What are the pitfalls museums encounter when attempting to

narrate stories of political conflict or to include contemporary debates in their displays?

My aim is to identify what have been the key factors behind the selection of what gets to be represented in the museums, as well as locate where and when changes come about. The example of the country's recent history of conflict is a good case in point. Panama was under a dictatorship from 1968 to 1989, a period which ended with the U.S. military invasion that ousted General Manuel Antonio Noriega. Added to the moral and economic decay produced by the dictatorship was the violence of the invasion, yet until now these events and the contemporary debates around them have not been dealt with in depth in museums, or attempts of dealing with them have been done in temporary exhibitions (I will expand on this in Chapters 11-12).

I aim in this thesis to contribute to the study of the ways in which museums in my home country are reinforcing certain views or generating new knowledge, either by negotiating meaning with their audiences or by presenting closed versions of Panamanianess. The literature on Panamanian museums, I argue, has up to this point concentrated on providing historical accounts of these institutions that are more descriptive than analytical. There is a need for further analyses on whether and how the country's museums are addressing Panama's diversity and its history of conflict. The aim of this study is to be a step in this direction, within the limitations it may have as a PhD research work.

I also aim to contribute to theory and practice by providing empirical material from the Panamanian context that can be later contrasted to other places, and by attempting a multidisciplinary approach that may add to a holistic understanding of museums. For this purpose, I include in this thesis a practice-based section that brings in perspectives from New Media to propose alternatives to address silences or muted voices in museums.

Chapter Outline

This thesis is divided into three parts: one contextual, one analytical and one practice-based. Part I: *Contexts* (Chapters 1-4) includes this introduction and summary of what the thesis is about and chapter outline (Chapter 1), the theoretical framework that informs my analysis (Chapter 2) and a historical background to Panama's current situation and its rich ethnic and cultural diversity (Chapters 3 and 4). Chapters 2, 3 and 4 set the frames for the analysis of particular cases. Chapter 2 covers the framework used in the analysis of contexts, which provides a look at international, regional and national perspectives in the study of museums. In Chapters 3 and 4 I provide a background of the debates regarding Panama's history. To facilitate later consultation, I have split this background in two parts: Chapter 3 is concerned with the Pre-Columbian period up to the union with Colombia, and Chapter 4 covers the period between the birth of the Republic of Panama up to the current situation after restoration of democracy and turnover of the Panama Canal.

Part II: *Cases* (Chapters 5-10) comprises the analyses of current representations and silences in Panamanian museums. Each analysis includes how the chosen museums were created, their changing function over time (often related to political events around them), as well as an analysis of their current exhibitions.

I begin in Chapter 5 with the analysis of the Museum of Nationality, a museum that focuses on nationhood and therefore offers insights into the official version of Panamanianness and how that has changed over time. I look, for example, at how the military government led by General Omar Torrijos chose in the 1970's to define 'authentic' Panamanian identity as the one based in the traditions and customs of the Hispanic-Indigenous group.

In Chapter 6, I further point out how the indigenous component was included at a separate site but during the same period, in the Museum of the Panamanian Man. Pieces from the Pre-Columbian period form the core of the display. I follow this museum up to its transformation in 2006 into the MARTA, the Reina Torres de

Araúz Anthropological Museum, and discuss also here how the representation of the Hispanic and indigenous heritage has changed.

In Chapter 7, I look at the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal to view the narration of the saga of the construction of the Panama Canal in relationship with the political and economical context that surrounds the exhibition. In Chapter 8, I analyse the Panamá Viejo Visitor Centre and Monumental Site, a place dedicated to representing the arrival of Spanish explorers during the sixteenth century and the birth and development of the first Spanish settlement in Panama until today. Both this site and the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal link Panama to the global network of UNESCO's World Heritage sites.

This is followed in Chapter 9 by the analysis of the West Indian Museum of Panama. This museum tells the story of migrants from the West Indies who came to the isthmus for the construction of the Panama Canal, and it also serves as meeting point for the community of West Indian descendants that are now part of the Panamanian mix. I look in this museum at the alternative story about the construction of the Canal that is presented, and relate this to the museum's organization and its supporting community.

Part II closes in Chapter 10 with a return to the concern with representations of indigenous peoples through a look at the Museum of the Kuna Nation. This museum is part of a group of community museums created by the Congreso General Kuna (Kuna General Congress). Its analysis gives insight into how the Kunas are providing an alternative version of the nation in Panama.

Part III: *Models* (Chapters 11-12) makes up the practical component of the thesis combined with analysis of my own and other art and digital work. Common to the pieces discussed in this part is the attempt to address silences and to open spaces for missing voices in Panamanian museums.

I begin in Chapter 11 with the analysis of the 7th Panama Art Biennial, an exhibition held at the Museum of Contemporary Art in 2005. In this exhibition, the

participating artists brought up subjects that had so far remained absent from the displays at the major official museums. I also briefly review in this chapter *ciudadMULTIPLEcity*, an urban exhibition that I argue was a precedent to the changes in form and content of the 7th Panama Art Biennial.

Part III closes in Chapter 12 with the discussion of two New Media models that I developed as part of this research. I start with the analysis of my own computer game about the 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama called *Angie Against the World*, which was presented at the 7th Panama Art Biennial (available online at <http://www.ciudadpanama.org/game/start-web.swf>). The invasion represents a major turning point in the history of Panama, symbolising one of the most violent episodes of contemporary Panamanian history, and also the end of the dictatorship and the beginning of the preparations to receive the Canal from U.S. control in a new democracy. As the work has been exhibited in Costa Rica, Germany, Baja California and Perth, it also becomes a means to view different responses from audiences in various contexts. I analyse this piece's internal characteristics borrowing from game studies, in particular from writings about so-called 'serious games'. I finish this chapter with a description of an Internet model, *CiudadPanama.org*, an online multimedia centre about Panama. This model, which I developed between 2007 and 2008, is in a prototype stage.

Chapter 13 is a short conclusion where I present a summary of the research and point out its limitations, as well as suggest ways of expanding it in the future.

Chapter 2: Framework of Analysis

This chapter, albeit briefly, lays out some of the theoretical framework for the analysis of the selected museums. I have chosen to be brief because each chapter also involves drawing on concepts and theory from a variety of sources.

Across the museums and within each chapter, I will be looking at *the contexts in which museums emerge, are challenged and changed*. I will examine external and internal contexts and how they change over time. By external contexts I mean the political and economic factors affecting the museums, which are apparent in policies, sources of funding and employment practices. By internal contexts I mean disciplinary changes affecting the conceptualization of museums and their mission, as well as other normative changes affecting methods of collection and museum deontology. I will be analysing these contexts at national, regional and international levels. I will be looking at the impact these contexts may have in the display or silencing of particular issues in the chosen museums.

A look at these contexts brings up questions such as: what impact does political change have upon museum representations? How do the composition and levels of participation of the various stakeholders relate to changes in museum representations? What are the contexts that lead to or allow some parts of stories to be told or some issues to be muted or silenced completely? In the case of this thesis, I am mainly concerned with the political aspects of museum representations, and with museums as part of larger networks of meaning that develop within relationships of power. As a first step, I summarize the various sources that I will be using, which I have grouped according to how they provide information on the *international, regional* and *national contexts* of the museums.

International Contexts

For the *international contexts* affecting the museums, I am particularly interested in disciplinary changes related to conceptions of museums and museology. At a broad

international level, these conceptions have undergone various transformations since the 1970s. Assumptions underlying the strong but discreet role museums have in the development of a sense of identity and belonging in audiences, specifically their role in defining ‘who we are’ and in turning us into ‘citizens’, had for long been taken as givens and gone without criticism. So had the museum practices that enabled European and North American museums to enlarge their collections with objects from ‘other’ cultures. Between the 1970s and 1990s, however, a critique of the power relationships in which museums are embedded and of assumptions about their social role began to take form. Scholars started calling for a New Museology where conceptions of museums would include the wider social context, and thus, issues such as participation, trust, inclusiveness, dialogue and negotiation would become integral parts of a successful museum practice (see, for example, Peter Vergo’s 1989 edited volume *The New Museology*).

‘New Museologists’ began to address the assumptions about museums that included authority and mass consumption in communication, and museums were discussed as tools for healing, diversity and dialogue. Issues at stake ranged from who had the possibility to speak in museums, who or what was being spoken of, who were the listeners, how and for what purpose. The New Museology also emphasized a view of museums in relation to their purpose in society, their pedagogic function, and the need for the inclusion of various perspectives, assigning museums the role of ‘an educational tool in the service of societal development’ (Hauenschild 2000). Finally, New Museology implied a critique of former museum fixations on object collection, by ‘de-material(izing) these objects as mere semiotic indicators or rematerial(izing) them in social, political and economic contexts, or (doing) both’ (Starn 2006).

New Museology, however, was also criticized.

'In the political sense, the potential mission of museums according to The New Museology is enlarged, even glorified, to include the forstering of social justice. But at the same time, the potential social role of museums seems diminished by the negative tone of New Museology rhetoric. Attempts to define new missions seem riddled by doubts about the possibility of knowing in any meaningful sense, or of communicating effectively, or of presenting a message that is untainted by class or personal interests.' (Stam 1993: 275)

Regardless of claims of the success or failure of New Museology, 'New Museologists' were not alone in the shift of focus from objects to the social role of museums. Since the 1990s, other theorists such as Tony Bennett and Eilean Hooper-Greenhill also began to criticize the museum 'as an ideological construct, a battleground between competing ideologies, but largely controlled by the dominant elite' (Moore 1997: 4).

Hooper-Greenhill (1992: 8) pointed out that museology had considered museums in view of their historic development, but the linear history used to explain them did not acknowledge the plurality, the historical specificity, and the political, cultural, economic and ideological contexts of the museums. In *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (1992), she used Foucault's (1970) critique of systems of classification in *The Order of Things* to question the museum's orders of classification and regimes of knowledge. Hooper-Greenhill (1992: 5) asked whether museum taxonomies and documentation practices gave preference to particular ways of knowing at the same time that they excluded others, or whether these taxonomies were socially constructed rather than 'true'. Hooper-Greenhill (1992: 6) also cited Roland Barthes's statement in *Image-Music-Text* (1977) that 'there is little idea that material things can be understood in a multitude of different ways, that many meanings can be read from things, and that this meaning can be manipulated as required ... it is not understood that the ways in which museums 'manipulate' material things also set up relationships and associations, and in fact create identities'.

In her 'holistic' approach, Hooper-Greenhill (1995: 2) included the political and economic contexts in Britain during the 1990s as necessary to understand

changes in museums in that period. She linked these to how museums were ‘pushed by the government to think ... as an industry’, with museums hiring marketing experts, and shifting from ‘visitors’ (persons who do go to museums) to ‘audiences’ (persons who might come to museums) as the preferred term. At the same time, Hooper-Greenhill (1995: 7, 12) pointed out how the persons or institutions making the collection held the power over what was viewed, an issue that needed to be problematised, and also called attention upon the need to understand the *epistemes* (the set of relations within which knowledge is produced and rationality defined, a concept she borrowed from Foucault) in which museums operated.

As a contrast to Hooper-Greenhill’s (1992) genealogy of museums based on classification and display, Tony Bennett (1995: 5-6) proposed in *The Birth of the Museum* his own genealogy, which took into account the development of other cultural institutions, even those that seemed alien or disconnected from it, as for example fairs and exhibitions. He exposed the idea of ‘the exhibitionary complex’, an idea for which he used Foucault’s theories of disciplinary power in combination with Antonio Gramsci’s theory of hegemony. Bennett (1995: 7) also used Foucault’s critique of how man is both the *object* and *subject* of knowledge (*The Order of Things*), transferring this critique to the tensions in the museum’s attempt to construct their visitors and regulate their behaviours.

Also in the beginning of the 1990s, Ivan Karp and co-editors started a series of books whose approaches related to the debates previously raised by ‘New Museology’ (McCarthy 2007: 182). The first book of the series, *Exhibiting Cultures* (1991), was the product of a conference entitled *The Poetics and Politics of Representation* organized at the Smithsonian Institution in 1988, which focused on cultural diversity in museums (Karp and Lavine 1991: ix). Ivan Karp presented the initial argument that ‘[w]hen cultural others are implicated, exhibitions tell us who we are and, perhaps most significant, who we are not. Exhibitions are privileged arenas for presenting images of self and ‘other’ (Karp and Lavine 1991: 15). Other authors in the volume analysed the challenges of incorporating alternative perspectives in and about museums. These included the problems of translation when

presenting another culture's aesthetic standards, the way in which cross-cultural exhibitions could prompt the questioning and reorganization of knowledge, and the differences between experiencing an object in a museum setting and in its original setting (Karp and Lavine 1991: 16-24). All of these issues pointed to relations of power and control initially over objects but ultimately over articulations of identity, which in this volume were especially related to 'the other' and, to an extent, to postcolonial critiques of Western museums.

The second book in the *Exhibiting Cultures* series, *Museums and Communities* (1992), focused on 'the politics of public culture' (McCarthy 2007: 182). In it, Karp asserted that 'art, history and ethnography displays, even natural history exhibitions, are all involved in defining the identities of communities - or in denying them identity' (quoted in Sandell 2002: 12). The third book, *Museum Frictions* (2006), addressed museums in a global context, looking at 'museological processes that can be multi-sited and ramify far beyond museum settings' (Karp et al. 2006: 2). In this volume, Fred Myers (2006: 506) advocated a focus on the political economy and the social relationships of producing culture, rather on the analysis of exhibitions, as this would highlight 'the complex intersections and reorganizations of interest that are inevitably involved in any production of culture'.

Other critiques of museums have continued with the focus on the inclusion of alternative voices, as for example Richard Sandell's (2002) edited volume *Museums, Society, Inequality*. This volume, however, has gone beyond postcolonial issues and has provided a view of museums and their social responsibility in addressing inequality for a wider range of minorities, including the disabled, sexual minorities, children, indigenous people and migrants, and even themes that can be censored such as traumatic events and political conflicts. Sandell (2002: 8) is cautious to state that 'it is problematic to establish a direct, causal relationship between museum practices and contemporary manifestations of social inequality or their amelioration', yet 'museums ... cannot be conceived as discretely cultural, or asocial - they are undeniably implicated in the dynamics of (in)equality and the power relations between different groups through their role in constructing and disseminating

dominant social narratives'. He points out that the main argument is not that museums alone must tackle disadvantage and discrimination, or that they should become tools for social engineering, but that these institutions must be aware of their social responsibility and be committed to social equality (Sandell 2002: 21).

In a similar manner, museum practitioners have also started calling for 'dialogue' as a fundamental practice, as well as advocating new roles for museums. Jack Lohman (2006: 8), Director of the Museum of London, points out that 'dialogue and spaces to speak are particularly important in countries that have repressed the stories of others', and museums are appropriate institutions to create such spaces. Independent museum consultants such as Kathleen McLean (2004: 197) argue that 'an exhibition designed to encourage face-to-face interaction and dialogue among visitors ... is arguably one of the most vital contributions museums can make to the social dynamics of our times'. Helen Light (2005), director of the Jewish Museum of Australia, has contrasted previous ideas of museums as 'the keepers of things' and society's 'providers of links with the past', with contemporary conceptions in which museums should now be 'negotiating experience about culture' and are becoming 'places where knowledge can be contested'.

For Peggy Delport, leader of the curatorial group for several of the District Six museum's exhibitions in Cape Town, the recollection and display of the memory of traumatic events is seen as 'significant both as a way of overcoming the hurt of the past and of building strengths and insights that will productively shape the future', while 'the recollection of painful past events is a precondition for achieving the culture of reconciliation' and 'no future is satisfactorily imagined without a full and multi-faceted historical memory, to help us explore our own identity, to discover human potentialities and to steer us away from destructive possibilities' (quoted in Goodnow 2006: 118). Patricia Davison (2005: 186), on the other hand, has presented an even stronger critique of the suppression of historical themes in South Africa, boldly stating that 'museums have often been described as places of collective memory, but selective memory may be a more accurate description'.

Katherine Goodnow (2006: 26, 23) has also pointed out that ‘museums now have to face contestation from audiences that have been the ‘objects of study’, audiences which criticize the asymmetrical relation in which exhibition objects played the function of trophies for the conqueror or cultures displayed where less important than the discoverer, and often primitivized or exocitized’, and for these reasons, museums can be chosen ‘as fields for challenge and sites of protest relevant to social change because they have traditionally offered the 'authenticated' version and judgments that buttress a social status quo’. Goodnow (2006: 27) further argues that a look at representations of identity in museums can help us see power relations between the one represented and the one making the representation, and changes in this relationship. These and other critiques of museums and new approaches in museology have helped rediscover and revitalize museums as valuable sites for research.

Regional Contexts

In the *regional context*, the 1972 round table in Santiago de Chile, ‘The Role of Museums in Today’s Latin America’, became a landmark in Latin American museology. In this highly interdisciplinary round table (scholars and professionals from natural, social and applied science disciplines attended the meeting), the idea of the ‘integral museum’ took shape. The point was to take museums out of their stagnation and make them part of their contemporary contexts, to change the museum from an institution dedicated to custody and scientific classification disconnected from contemporary concerns into an institution that aimed at making heritage relevant to cultural development (Museum 1982b: 74). Felipe Lacouture, the Mexican museologist who participated in the restructuring of the Panamanian museum sector during the 1970s, argued at the time that ‘museums cannot stand apart from the major national needs and problems ... We certainly cannot afford the luxury of an unstructured type of museology, one that is mere dilettantism. It must be based on a global view, in order to integrate man into his total context’ (Museum 1982b: 74).

The same concern with the integration of the museum into its social environment resurfaced in the 1977 ‘Museums and Cultural Heritage’ Colloquium in Bogotá, Colombia, organized by the National Institute of Culture of Colombia (COLCULTURA), the Instituto Italo-Latino Americano in Rome (IILA) and the UNDP UNESCO Regional Project on Andean Cultural Heritage. Delegates from Europe and Latin America called for a museum where the integration with the socio-environmental context was key, and also proposed a definition of *musealization*, the process accompanying the concept of museum. This *musealization* implied ‘an active conservation policy’ that went beyond the concept of museum as a way to preserve old buildings and into making of museums active parts of the living environment (Museum 1982a: 127).

In 1984, the same year that North American and European scholars and practitioners met in Quebec, Canada, at the *1st International Workshop on Ecomuseums and New Museology*, their Latin American counterparts met in Morelos, México, at an encounter entitled *Ecomuseos: El Hombre y su Entorno* (Ecomuseums: Man and his Environment), and elaborated the *Declaración de Oaxtepec* (Oaxtepec Declaration). In it, ecomuseums were defined as pedagogic acts for eco-development that aimed at an integral development of man and nature as part of the Latin American context, not only of the European identity (DeCarli 2003: 6). Lacouture proposed a summary of the main characteristics of ecomuseums, where these were endowed with the task of recovering the natural and cultural identity of regional and national spaces through collective images and memories, promoting the knowledge of national, regional and international heritage, and transforming the traditional museum by

‘De un edificio hace[r] una región / De una colección hace[r] un patrimonio regional / De un público hace[r] una comunidad participativa.’

'Turn[ing] a building into a region / Turn[ing] a collection into a regional heritage / Turn[ing] a public into a participative community.'
(Quoted in DeCarli 2003: 6-7)¹

The emphasis on the specificities of the Latin American region, along with national concerns, ran as an undercurrent in the 1970s-80s meetings. For example, Manuel Espinoza, Director of the Galería de Arte Nacional (National Art Gallery) in Caracas, Venezuela, argued that 'if museums formerly looked to what was being done and appreciated abroad, today their task is to promote national identity' (Museum 1982b: 75). Espinoza was further concerned with 'Eurocentrism' in Venezuelan museums. In his view, Venezuela's museums had promoted European values in art, giving the highest value to pieces that could be of interest in the international arena and in the world's capitals, in this way disregarding the requirements of local communities (Museum 1982b: 79). Marta Arjona, Director of Cultural Heritage of Cuba, also voiced a postcolonial type of critique, arguing that 'when analysing museums and their relation to culture, it is essential to bear in mind the reality of America's history ... Can we study the presence of blacks in our lands without mentioning the savagery of slavery? Can we talk of our natural resources without mentioning the exploitation of the Indian, the first element of our identity?' (Museum 1982b: 75). A more practical concern in the region was how to influence policy-makers and how to make governments consider museums as part of their national development plans (see Museum 1982b: 78).

National Contexts

To complement the look at disciplinary changes at international and regional levels that may have had an impact at a national level, I look at projects that involve international organizations such as UNDP and UNESCO in collaboration with the Panamanian government. I examine the incorporation of directives from international

¹ Unless otherwise indicated in the list of Works Cited, the translations from Spanish to English are my own.

organizations into national practices through a look at policies and reports made by the Panamanian government to these organizations or vice versa, as a way of linking *international, regional and national contexts*.

In the following chapter, Chapter 3, I examine a report made by the Panamanian government to UNESCO in 1978 (Cultural Policy in the Republic of Panama) that I argue is relevant for understanding the cases of the Museum of Nationality (Chapter 5) and the Reina Torres de Araúz Anthropological Museum MARTA (Chapter 6). In the upcoming chapters, I will also look at how the collaboration with the Union de Museos Comunitarios de Oaxaca (México) serves as model for the development of the community museums of Kuna Yala and in particular of the Museum of the Kuna Nation (Chapter 10), and I will discuss how the inclusion into the World Heritage List has changed the management of two sites, the surrounding area of the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal (Chapter 7) and area of the Panamá Viejo Monumental Complex and Visitor Centre (Chapter 8). This can help view the ways in which cultural policies concerned with the promotion of national values, or concerned with changing economic contexts, have been put in practice over time.

Information on *national contexts* is also found in publications on the history of the museums, which may help identify turning points or continuities. The histories available may deal partly with directors (some of these stories being of ‘the great director’ kind), partly with the story of the building or location, and partly with the content of exhibitions and growth of collections at different points in time. In the case of Panama, documents of this kind include the publications by Raúl Gonzáles Guzmán (1976, 1997), Jorge Horna (1980) and Marcela Camargo de Cooke (1980, 2003). This material provides insight into the history of the creation of the chosen museums (legislation, initial funders, choice of location), and on the architectural characteristics of the buildings, the design of the exhibition space and flow including lighting, disposition of objects, as well as the organization of the museum in terms of departments, staffing, and protocols for the acquisition and management of collections and other research activities. Beyond the descriptive aspects, however,

and as Katherine Goodnow (2006: 25) points out, a look at the history of a given museum ‘brings out especially well the impact of particular people and the rise of established views’.

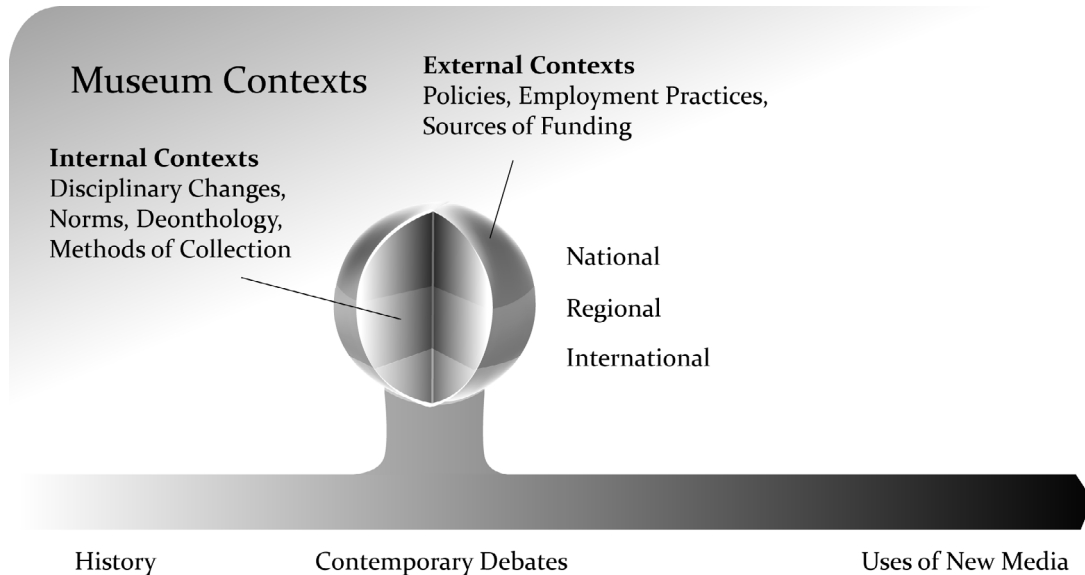


Figure 1. Model for the analysis of the contexts of museums and changes over time

To complete the analysis of national contexts, I have included a review of key historical and sociological texts related to the different themes presented in the museum exhibitions. The aim of doing this review is to identify topics that have been brought up in other areas, such as in historical and sociological literature, but that are still silenced, or muted, in the exhibitions analysed. Throughout the cases, I compare the debates found in other media to the representations found at the museums. In Chapters 3 and 4 I provide an overview of debates that I argue help point out missing voices or subjects in the selected museum representations. In addition, the explanation of the inclusion or exclusion of some subjects or the predominance of certain themes is compared when possible to interviews with museum directors and other stakeholders in the museum sector.

Practice-based Research

I have further attempted to expand the aforementioned approaches to the national, regional, and international contexts with the inclusion of a practical component in this thesis (Chapters 11-12). The component is made up of analyses of artworks and my own New Media products. These are examples of creative ways in which to open spaces for alternative voices in Panamanian museum representations.

In Chapter 12, I discuss two models I developed during this research. Hanne-Lovise Skartveit (2007: 18) has described how practice-based research, which entails the creation of artefacts or development of technology, ‘may also help formulating unexpected and interesting research questions’, pointing out that the creation of an artefact can prompt theoretical reflection, and can function as a ‘thinking tool’ that serves as basis for future work. Examples of attempts to make of experimentation and practice a source for critical analysis are also found in Sharon Macdonald and Paul Basu’s (2007) edited volume entitled *Exhibition Experiments*. In this volume, authors discuss exhibitions as sites of generation rather than of reproduction of knowledge, sites that are ‘experiments in meaning-making’ (Macdonald and Basu 2007: 3). I am interested in what Mieke Bal (2007: 73-93) does in this volume with her use of film theory for the analysis of *Partners*, an exhibition about ambivalent links between histories of Jewish and German peoples. Following this line of analysis, I bring in game theory to analyse my own computer game about post-conflict memory entitled *Angie Against the World*, using Gonzalo Frasca’s (2000) OSGON (One Single Game Of Narration) concept, which he proposes as a way to address difficult subjects through games.

CiudadPanama.org, the second New Media product I have developed for this practice-based component, is planned to be an online multimedia centre about Panama. The previous analyses of missing stories and voices in current representations feed into the model and define areas that could be useful to address in an online environment. As it is only in a prototype stage, however, I will only briefly describe it.

Chapter 3: Pre-Republican Panama, Crossings and Permanences

The Republic of Panama is a melting pot where ethnicities and cultures both mix and collide, and a place where the environment has undergone enormous human modification. It is a place that has been presented primarily as a crossroads. This condition of passageway has generated, in the eyes of scholars such as Omar Jaén Suárez (1991), a series of ‘structural permanences’ that have shaped the national character². This chapter is a condensed version of the history of Panama up to the birth of the Republic, in a primary attempt to summarize the ‘permanences’, and changes that are identified as key in the development of Panamanian nationality³.

The goal of Chapters 3 and 4 is to provide the reader with a general understanding of how the demographics, the social structures and even the geography of Panama have changed over time. In this way the current divisions and representations we witness in museums, with both their grand narratives and their silences, will be set in an historical perspective. The purpose is to set the background for the discussion about how the specific cases incorporate current debates present in areas of study that are related to museum work, such as history, archaeology, and anthropology (the focus of the theoretical component of the thesis – Chapters 5-10).

I take predominantly a chronological path, starting in this chapter with the Pre-Columbian period. This is followed by a review of the history of the Spanish colonial

² Omar Jaén Suárez (1991: 11) presented the concept of *structural permanences* (*permanencias estructurales*) in *El siglo XVIII en Panamá y las permanencias estructurales*. Suárez develops the idea that the moment of definition of the population’s sense of belonging and uniqueness of its condition in the isthmus of Panama is located around the eighteenth century, through the sedimentation of structures that formed throughout the colonial period.

³ For a fuller version of the history of Panama that I resume in Chapters 3 and 4, I would refer the reader to the works of Richard Cooke (1991) and his collaboration with Luis Sánchez (2004), Olga Linares (1979), and recent works by Julia Mayo on Pre-Columbian Panama (2004), the extensive work of Alfredo Castellero Calvo (1971, 2004) on Hispanic Panama, numerous works on the Republican and Hispanic periods by Celestino Andrés Araúz and Patricia Pizzurno (1980, 1996, 2006), George Westerman (1980) on West Indian populations in Panama, Armando Fortune (1975, 1977) on black populations in the isthmus, Angel Rubio (1950) on Panama City, Vanessa Spadafora and Eduardo Tejeira Davis (2001) on the Old Cask of Panama, Stanley Heckadon (1994) on Panamanian cultural manifestations, Carlos Manuel Gasteazoro’s (1951, 1954, 1980, 1983) work on the history and culture of Panama and works by Omar Jaén Suárez (1978) on the population of the isthmus, to name a few.

era in the isthmus and the foundation of the city of Panama in 1519, when Panama, and Panama City in particular, became one of the major passage points and destinations of human migration along the east-west Silver Route between Peru and Spain. I summarize the various waves of migrations, and the changes these produced in the ethnic and cultural composition of the isthmus. I review the historical debates surrounding the independence from Spain and later union to New Granada (present day Colombia).

This is followed by a summary of the completion of the Trans-Isthmian Railroad triggered by the 1850s Gold Rush in California, and how this event and the beginning of Canal works by the French are intertwined with the union to New Granada. In the following chapter, Chapter 4, I concentrate on the Republican period up to the present.

Pre-Columbian Panama

It is largely agreed that the ‘bridge’ of the Isthmus of Panama was formed in a very long process that started 20 million years ago, up to about 3 million years ago when the isthmus finally closed and plants and animals gradually crossed it in both directions (Mayo 2004: 9-10). Dolores Piperno (1984) has located the human occupancy of the isthmus at around the Late Glacial Period (cited in Mayo 2004: 13). Olga Linares (1979: 21-43) points out in turn that the existence of the isthmus had an impact on the dispersal of people, agriculture and technology throughout the American continent from the appearance of the first hunters and collectors to the era of villages and cities (cited in Cooke and Sánchez 2004: 3).

Richard Cooke and Luis Sánchez (2004: 4, 41-42) argue, however, that from the first human migrations to the isthmus, its character of ‘barrier’, conditioned by its environmental heterogeneity (a geography composed by large numbers of valleys and rivers, and the existence of two coasts markedly different from each other) was a stronger influence on the development of Pre-Columbian peoples than its function as ‘bridge’ between the two continental masses. These authors emphasize the

permanence of peoples in the terrestrial bridge of Central America, and the higher probability that Pre-Columbian peoples in the isthmus satisfied their needs by the exchange of goods, by commercial exchange and through social relationships with neighbouring communities, rather than by long distance exchanges (Cooke and Sánchez 2004: 41).

Research by Barrantes et al. (1990) about Chibcha-speaking groups further contradicts previous hypotheses where Central America was seen as a mere frontier for more advanced cultures from north and south. Speakers of Chibcha languages in the southern part of Central America were not recent migrants from northern South America. They were descendants of a population established in the region for thousands of years, genetically and linguistically different from neighbouring groups of Amerindians (Barrantes et al. 1990 cited in Cooke and Sánchez 2004: 39).

Dendrograms proposed by genetists and linguists and available information about styles and iconography of ceramic and stone objects also point to a successively complex dispersal of a population of millenary permanence in the isthmus and neighbouring areas (see, for example, Corrales 2000, cited in Cooke and Sanchez 2004: 39)⁴. Cooke and Sánchez (2004: 4) argue therefore that Panama is a singular example of diversity and endemism, and that Christopher Columbus' observations (1501-02) that 'although dense, every (village) has a different language and they don't understand one another' (quoted in Jane 1988) describe the ethnographic phenomenon of scattering and diversification of peoples that had inhabited the isthmus for several thousands of years.

⁴ 'Dendrograms are [branching] diagrams showing the evolutionary interrelations of a group of organisms derived from a common ancestral form.' (Encyclopaedia Britannica Online 2008)



Figure 2. Location of the Isthmus of Panama. Image generated with OpenStreetMap.

I point out this data because, in general, museum representations in Panama have emphasized the idea of the isthmus as a contact zone or bridge for larger civilizations in Pre-Columbian times. I argue that the debate about the character of ‘bridge’ of the isthmus in this period is muted in current museum representations. I will be discussing this in relation to the focus current exhibitions have in presenting primarily the process of obtaining evidence and presenting the pieces within a story of scientific discovery (I will discuss this issue in particular in the case of the MARTA, Chapter 6).



Figure 3. Display of ceramics at the new MARTA. Photo by Kamilla Bergsnev (2006)

Archaeologists in Panama have traditionally used ceramics, the most abundant form of evidence in the largest and most recent settlements in the isthmus, to define cultural areas and periods⁵. Ceramics and stone materials point to a differentiation of cultural regions at around 300 BC, when populations began to group in villages⁶. The

⁵ Cooke and Sánchez (2004: 66) describe cultural area as ‘the maximum extension of territory that possesses a group of characteristics of material culture that are reflected not only in the style and technology of the artefacts, but also in their thematic content and aspects related to survival, settlement and funerary practices. ... The term has often presupposed a statism that understates complex factors that have determined the geographic distribution and social, economic and political relations of the different groups. For this reason, the terms ‘historical region’ or ‘sphere of cultural interaction’ are preferred today.’

⁶ In this period, significant differences are noted between the cultural areas of Gran Chiriquí (from the General Valley and the Central Caribbean in Costa Rica to the West of the Veraguas province in Panama) and Gran Coclé (from the Gulf of Montijo to the Bay of Parita, including both coasts of the Azuero Peninsula). The third differentiated cultural area, Gran Darién (at the oriental side of the isthmus) was linked to Gran Coclé until 700-800 BC, after which increasing differences in ceramic traditions point to economic and ethnic changes (Mayo 2004: 16). Linares (1977) has argued that it is likely that from the end of the Middle Ceramic Period the families controlling fertile lands near the great rivers began to gain importance and originated the commanding lineages of the ‘Gran Coclé’ region (cited in Mayo 2004: 47).

period between 200 BC and AD 700 is known as the Middle Ceramic Period. During this period, the previous 'slash and burn' agricultural system, a mode of production that led to rapid degradation of soil and led to the constant need to occupy new land, was replaced by the system of agriculture of alluvial plains, that produced more stable human settlements than those using 'slash and burn' (Mayo 2004: 39). From AD 700 there is evidence of social differentiation, which included, most likely, an elite that held the political, economic and religious power⁷.

The Arrival of the Spanish and a New Beginning

One recurrent idea in historical approaches to the arrival of the Spanish to the isthmus and their encounter with Pre-Columbian societies is that this moment is the beginning of the formation of the Panamanian nation and the consolidation of the isthmus as passageway. An event that gains relevance in this frame is the movement of Spanish settlements from the Atlantic to the Pacific, for which the geography of Panama was key.

The Spanish Crown began to organize its conquest and colonization in 1508, when King Fernando the Catholic divided Tierra Firme into two provinces: Veragua to the West and Nueva Andalucía to the east of the Gulf of Urabá in what is now Colombia. The territory of Panamá (a word of indigenous origin borrowed by the colonisers) was designated as part of the Governorship of Veragua, which expanded from the Gulf of Urabá to Cabo Gracias a Dios. Colonisation in the continent took place initially in the Atlantic, and the first city to be founded was Santa María la Antigua del Darién (1510), located in the Gulf of Urabá. After the 'discovery' of the South Sea (Mar del Sur) by Vasco Nuñez de Balboa in 1513, Spanish interests were transferred to the Pacific coast (Tejeira Davis 2001: 26). Balboa's reports of gold and

⁷ Mayo (2004: 49) points out that according to sixteenth century chronicles by Pascual de Andagoya and Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdéz, the head of the elite was the *queví* (chief) who delegated functions to *sacos* (brothers of the *queví* or subordinated lords), who were in charge of valleys and plains. Following were the shamans, *tecuira* or *tequina*, who had the religious power and were partially independent from the *queví*. Further down were the *cabra*, warriors or people of merit, and at the bottom were the slaves or *pacos*, which were acquired in wars or by exchange.

pearls in Urabá, El Darién and the South Sea would make this territory become known as *Castilla del Oro* (Castilla of Gold).

In a document dated 2 August 1513, King Fernando the Catholic sent instructions to Pedrarias Dávila, new governor of Panama, regarding the treatment of indigenous peoples and the characteristics of new cities to be created. The note stated that new settlements must be in coastal sites appropriate for the anchoring of ships and, in case of a need to go inland, should be near rivers so that the transport of merchandise could be manageable (Olivares 1974: 241). Dávila's instructions also stated that he should give good treatment to indigenous peoples, and promote agriculture.

Captain Antonio Tello de Guzmán, while exploring the Pacific side in 1515, stopped in a small indigenous fishing town by the name of Panama. This was communicated to the Crown and in 1517 Don Gaspar De Espinosa, a Spanish Lieutenant, decided to settle a front post there. In 1519, Dávila decided to establish the Empire's Pacific city in this site. The new settlement replaced Santa María La Antigua del Darién, which had lost its function within the Crown's global plan after the beginning of the Spanish exploitation of the riches in the Pacific.

Emphasis is made by some historians upon how Panama City grew as a terminal port for *La ruta de la plata* (the Silver Route) between Spain and Peru. For example, Alfredo Castillero Calvo (1999: 75-124) described how Panama started to develop as the prime trans-isthmian commercial route in the sixteenth century, and the city became a key element in the regulated system of fleets that linked the Viceroyalty of Peru with the Metropolis. In this and other depictions of the history of Panama, the isthmus is portrayed as acquiring significance through the Spanish expansion, such as serving as starting post for Francisco Pizarro's expedition to Peru.



Figure 4. Model of the first settlement of the city of Panama, on display at the Panamá Viejo Visitor Centre. Photo by Bruno Sánchez (2008)

Angel Rubio (1950a) argued that to understand the city of Panama and its historical development one must consider in particular its relations to the rest of the world and its first colonisation by the Spanish Empire. Basing his thinking on Oswald Spengler's idea of the city as a synthesis of the nation, Rubio (1950a: 7) proposes that it is primarily through the city of Panama that the country of Panama established its relations with the world. For him, it is crucial to point out that the city of Panama did not have a spontaneous origin, as other cities that could have emerged from the previous existence of crossroads that helped in their establishment. On the contrary, the city of Panama was the product of the conquering plan of the Spanish Empire. The crossroads it has now become was not there at its origin, but was developed for the transfer of merchandise within the Empire. Thus, concludes Rubio (1950a: 8-9), the city of Panama has to be understood within the context of imperialist Spain and the needs of the Crown to establish terminal locations in the Pacific to trade merchandise coming from Peru and the south.

This explanation of the formation of Panama City as irradiation point for the Spanish empire and later as axis for the consolidation of Panamanianess, associated with the isthmus geographical position, will be discussed as key theme of the display at the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal (Chapter 7).

Impact of colonization

While colonisation in some museums is presented predominantly in a positive light, in others (such as the Museum of Nationality, Chapter 5), the arrival of the Spanish and their contact with Pre-Columbian societies is framed as having a negative impact for indigenous populations. Cooke (1991: 5), who is quoted in this museum, points out that Spanish colonization brought with it diseases and feudal military culture, and argues that this was a disaster for indigenous groups in Panama.

The size of indigenous populations in the isthmus at the time of contact is still uncertain, but scholars have concentrated on providing evidence of a considerable reduction of indigenous populations between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The earlier mentioned Dávila's instructions on the founding of cities, which amongst other items state that he should give good treatment to indigenous peoples, are contrasted with evidence of his implementation of a policy of extermination towards the indigenous inhabitants (Araúz Montafante 1991: 7). Cooke et al. (2003: 4) use the chronicles of Spanish Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdéz, which state that a population of 2 million indigenous was in a very short time almost extinct, as further evidence of the negative impact of colonisation upon indigenous populations. Alfredo Castellero Calvo (1995) has estimated that the indigenous population in the isthmus at the time of contact was from 150,000 to 250,000 individuals. He uses this data in combination with censuses of indigenous populations between 1519 and 1522 that report only 13,000 individuals as evidence of the devastating effects of the Conquest (Castillero Calvo 1995: 4). Paleoecological data is further used to support the

hypothesis that Spanish colonization produced a drastic demographic decline in indigenous populations⁸.

In the case of the Museum of Nationality (Chapter 5), I will be discussing some of the uses of this negative depiction of the Spanish colonisation within the projects started by the military regime in the museum sector in the 1970s. An example at this museum that is also used at the Panamá Viejo Monumental Complex and Visitor Centre (Chapter 8) is the depiction of *entradas a tierra*, ‘entries into land’. These were Spanish expeditions in search for gold or for labour for mining in El Darién where indigenous settlements were looted and its populations enslaved (Araúz Montafante, Tello de Burgos and Figueroa Navarro 2006: 218). The *entradas a tierra* are identified as an important factor for the rapid decrease of indigenous populations.

In spite of the emphasis on colonisation as producing the abrupt and pronounced decline of indigenous populations, Cooke et al. (2003: 6) are careful to point out that some of these populations survived. They argue that, during the sixteenth century, Spanish colonization was restricted to the transit zone, in a few cattle settlements in the Pacific side and scattered mines that were not exploited continuously, and cite amongst the factors for this type of occupation the resistance of indigenous peoples since the beginning of colonization and the incapacity of Spanish colonizers to adapt to regions other than savannas and pasture land (Cooke et al. 2003: 6). These authors find that Hispanisation was nevertheless evident, along with the extinction of languages and ethnicities, yet point to studies by Adolfo Constenla (1985, 1991) on the Dorasque and Chángena languages and studies by Peter Herlihy (1997) on contemporary Central American indigenous peoples to argue that a recovery of these populations began in the seventeenth century, and to affirm that seven indigenous groups managed to survive until the twenty-first century, amongst

⁸ Paleocological research includes the analysis of microscopic remains of plant species found in sediments of lakes and rivers in order to reconstruct the influence of human societies in vegetations through time. At three sites in Panama (La Yeguada, Cana and Wodeohouse Lagoon) the data has confirmed an abrupt recuperation of forests in areas that were used for agriculture by the indigenous. This change coincides with the arrival of Spanish colonizers (Cooke et al. 2003: 12).

them the Kunas (Cooke et al. 2003: 4). This debate will be picked up in the analysis of the Museum of the Kuna Nation (Chapter 10). Links to a Pre-Columbian ancestry have been invoked by the Kunas in disputes concerning ownership of land and self-determination.

The Kunas in particular are portrayed in historical accounts as successful in resisting colonisation and evangelisation. As an example of the significance of their resistance, Reina Torres de Araúz (1983d: 99, 134) describes the 1635 *bugue-bugue* rebellion, a series of assaults in Chepo, near Panama City that led the Spanish to begin an unsuccessful campaign of destruction towards them⁹. Other factors cited as key to the survival of the Kunas relate to the endogamous practices that have kept their population homogenous until the present (Kuna authorities prohibited mixing with foreigners).

Other Arrivals: African Slaves

The introduction of foreign slaves by the Spanish, that included both African and foreign indigenous, is described by Castellero Calvo (1995: 47) as the solution to the loss of local indigenous manpower caused by the combined effects of diseases, extermination policies and the export of the isthmus' indigenous to Peru. The Spanish Crown started introducing African slaves in the Americas as early as 1501. In a Royal Decree (Cédula Real) dated 16 September 1501, Nicolas de Ovando, Governor of Hispaniola, received instructions from Spain to introduce 'black slaves and other slaves that have been born under the control of Christians, our noblemen and naturals' (Ortiz 1952: 154).

The date of the arrival of the first African slaves to the isthmus is uncertain. What can be said is that Panama 'was the first in the continent where blacks were taken to, and although it is unknown if they came in 1511 or 1512, they were there in 1513' (Saco 1938: 177). Debates over the longevity of occupation of land in El

⁹ According to Reina Torres de Araúz, the Kunas were also known as the *bugue-bugue* during the colony.

Darién have in recent times been a part of the disputes over rights between *Colonial blacks* (as African descendants are referred to in historical and sociological literature) and indigenous peoples in the area.

Other central themes in Panamanian literature about black populations in the isthmus are the growth of their numerical importance and the way these populations participated in the local society, for example through *mestizaje* (interracial breeding), achieving the status of *libertos* (freed slaves) or escaping to other areas and becoming *cimarrones* (maroons).

In his study of the African presence in Panama, Omar Jaén Suárez (1980: 4) reports that around 1607, of the approximately 25,000 inhabitants of the isthmus, 20 per cent were slaves, and 15 per cent were free blacks, likely to have blended with indigenous. Jaén Suárez has noted that the slave trade was intense during the sixteenth century, and around 50,000 African slaves crossed Panama on their way to plantations in the tropical coast of South America. In the eighteenth century, 40,000 African slaves arrived in Panama, also in transit to the south. Many of these slaves were bought in Panama City to carry out domestic chores, and were baptised with the owner's surname (Jaén Suárez 1980: 5).

Armando Fortune (1977) also considers the subject of the incorporation of black elements in the early formation of Panamanian society. Fortune (1977: 30-31) proposes an interpretation of why *mestizaje* in the Americas was easier for Spanish and Portuguese than it was in North America, an argument that he later uses to forward the idea of a high degree of *mestizaje* in Panama. He argues that the composition of Iberians themselves, which had been influenced by Arabs, Muslims, and Berbers who dominated the Peninsula for eight centuries, meant that the Spanish did not have a racial purity to defend, and a slavery that tended to be domestic facilitated interracial exchange. Additionally, explains Fortune (1977: 32), in the first years of colonisation, Spanish migrants were mostly single men, while few white women came to the Americas.

Further analysing this *mestizaje*, Fortune (1977: 35) cites José Ramón Rodríguez Arce's (1939) assertion that it was not unusual for the Spanish to recognise parenthood of children born from interracial unions. Marriage between Spanish and indigenous was at first deterred, but later encouraged by the authorities as a measure to counteract adultery or the relaxation of sexual customs. Though less frequent, marriage between African women and Spanish men was also allowed. Mixing between African and indigenous slaves, however, was strongly opposed on the grounds that the African males oppressed their indigenous female partners, as is attested by Royal Decrees enacted between 1578 and 1586 (Fortune 1977: 46).

Celestino Andrés Araúz Montafante, Argelia Tello de Burgos and Alberto Figueroa Navarro (2006: 293) point out, however, that Colonial society, although mixed, was highly stratified, and this social stratification placed the Spanish in the highest ranks. The Spanish were a ruling minority privileged because of their ethnicity.

Jaén Suárez (1981: 57), on the other hand, uses data related to the proportions of slave and white populations to elaborate on the impact of *mestizaje* in this stratification. In 1575, 1,600 slaves served 800 whites, in 1607, 3,696 slaves served 1,267 Panama City whites, including the masters and their families, and in 1790, 1,676 slaves served 862 whites (Jaén Suárez 1981: 57). Jaén Suárez (1981: 59) argues, however, that the rule of this white minority diminished eventually, as the demographic weight of free *mulattos* and *mestizos* or *criollos* (born locally) forced the system to open some administrative posts to them.

This is a discussion I will return to when looking at the West Indian Museum of Panama (Chapter 9), for its centrality in the understanding of the two paths of black identity in twentieth century Panama. I will discuss how the issue of *mestizaje* as a form of assimilation has been used to make distinctions between Colonial blacks and West Indians, the political implications of the debate, and the way this affects the role of the West Indian Museum.

Creating the Boundaries: New Panama

Benedict Anderson (1983: 52) cites Gerhard Masur (1948) in proposing that a way of explaining the emergence of American states during the early eighteenth and late nineteenth centuries is that 'each of the new South American republics had been an administrative unit from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century'. In Panama, a similar type of argument has been put forward by Araúz Montafante (1991: 7-10), who analyses Spanish colonial institutions and the territorial units they created as a way of explaining the development of a Panamanian nationality during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In the case of Panama, the creation of the *Reino de Tierra Firme* is often invoked as precedent for the formation of a territory with unique characteristics. Following this argument, Araúz Montafante (1991: 7) explains how in 1538, the Royal *Audiencia* (a justice tribunal that also had administrative functions) of Panama or Tierra Firme was established. The corruption of the main *oidor* (listener), Francisco Pérez de Robles, made the Crown eliminate the Audiencia in 1542, and Panama became part of the Audiencia de los Confines of Guatemala and Nicaragua, created a year later. Panama was thereby under the jurisdiction of Guatemala, and the isthmians, in an early claim for the autonomy of Panama, complained that this affected their commercial relationships with the Viceroyalty of Peru. In 1563, the Audience of Panama was re-established and named *Reino de Tierra Firme*. This administrative region would survive for nearly two centuries, until constant conflicts between *oidores* and governors, and scandals of corruption linked to the commercial activities of the Silver Route, made the Crown finally suppress it in 1751 (Araúz Montafante 1991: 7).

Beside a territorial definition, administrative dispositions are also linked to other 'structural permanences' on the formation of Panama. It is argued that stratification of society was imprinted into the planning of cities from the start: Castellero Calvo (1994) explains that in the first city of Panama, blacks and mulattos were living in the peripheral neighbourhoods of Pierdevidas and Malambo, and white

inhabitants were granted lots that were placed according to rank. This hierarchical organisation of the city plan was present in urban legislation such as the *Ordenanzas del Descubrimiento* (Ordinances of the Discovery) of 1573 (Castillero Calvo 1994: 198).

This hierarchical organization of the city, and thus of society, would be amplified with the moving of the city to its new site in 1673. The moving of Panama City was caused by the destruction of the city by English buccaneer Henry Morgan on 28 January 1671, just 152 years after its foundation. The old site, besides being unhealthy, was very deficient in the way it could be protected from piracy. Panama la Nueva (New Panama), formally founded on 21 January 1673, was therefore designed with military considerations prevailing over civil ones. Castillero Calvo argues that the new defensive walls that surrounded New Panama became the visible barrier between the inner city elite and the dominated population segregated to live outside them (Castillero Calvo 1994: 206). Eduardo Tejeira Davis (2001: 29) also argues that from its beginnings, the city grew under a structure of sharp racial and economic divisions. The elite lived intramuros (inside the city walls), while a neighbourhood of principally black inhabitants lived extramuros (the outer section).

In spite of the significance of this debate for the discussion of the historical roots of class hierarchies in Panama, this particular item is not discussed in the permanent exhibitions of Panamanian museums. I will analyse this further in the case of the Panamá Viejo Monumental Complex and Visitor Centre (Chapter 8), the site of the first settlement of Panama City, and to a lesser extent in the case of the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal (Chapter 7), which is located in the area of the second settlement of the city.

Independence from Spain

Araúz Montafante, Tello de Burgos and Figueroa Navarro (2006: 478) explain how the creation of New Panama coincided with the decline of the Spanish Empire, at the end of the reign of Charles II and the War of Spanish Succession. A slow

reorganisation took place with the ascension of the House of the Bourbon to the throne (Treaty of Utrecht 1713-14). Trans-Atlantic traffic was liberalized, which led to the decay of the Portobello Fairs and finally their cancellation in 1739¹⁰. Tejeira Davis (2001) further adds that advances in navigation made the Cape Horn route easier, and Buenos Aires, which had become a viceregal capital in 1776, evolved into an important commercial port. Finally, the Spanish Crown decided to suspend the Seville-Portobello-Panama-Peru route and designated the Buenos Aires-Cape Horn route as the new main commercial route (Tejeira Davis 2001: 31). Araúz Montafante (1980: 20) cites as a key precedent for the independence movement in the isthmus the suppression of the Portobello Fairs, accompanied by the change of routes from the isthmus to Cape Horn.

In Panama, on 10 November 1821, the *Cabildo* (smaller unit that governed cities under the approval of the Royal Audiencia) of the rural town of Los Santos declared independence from Spain. On 28 November 1821, the independence was declared throughout the city of Panama. For Araúz Montafante (1980: 94), the cry for independence in Panama may have originated in the countryside and not in the capital city because of an antagonism between inland *criollos* and city *criollos*, with the first in far worse economic situation than the latter. According to Araúz Montafante (1980: 27-28), Panama City *criollos* wished to remain loyal to Spain, asking however for more freedom of trade¹¹. Araúz Montafante (1980) points out the idea of a ‘ruralisation of the economy’, triggered by large waves of internal migrations from the terminal cities of Portobello, Chagres and Panama to the interior of the country. Araúz Montafante speculates that with the ascent of *criollos* to administrative posts in

¹⁰ Goods coming from Peru were initially transferred to Spain through a connection between the terminal cities of Panama in the Pacific side and Nombre de Dios in the Atlantic side of the isthmus. Portobello, founded in 1597, later replaced Nombre de Dios. Large fairs for the trade of goods between local and Metropolis merchants were held in Portobello for 40 to 50 days, with the coming of galleons from Spain. Portobello remained the epicentre of the fairs of Tierra Firme until its destruction by buccaneer Edward Vernon in 1739. See Araúz Montafante, Tello de Burgos, and Figueroa Navarro 2006: 478.

¹¹ At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Governor of Panama authorized commerce with the British colony of Jamaica, previously carried out illegally, according to Mariano Arosemena (1868) ‘to silence (the) desire of independence from Spain’ (quoted in Castellero Calvo 1960: 21). Panama had begun direct commerce with Peru, as Cape Horn was no longer a viable route for the Crown since rebels had taken Buenos Aires. Spanish authorities had also granted ample freedom of commerce to isthmians in 1811. The Crown, however, suspended these privileges in 1814.

the *Cabildos* of these towns, conflicts with city authorities may have grown. With the elimination of Reino de Tierra Firme in 1751, the *Cabildos* had assumed the administration of the isthmus. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, these *Cabildos* began to include a large number of *criollo* members. Between 1810 and 1811, many *Cabildos* rebelled against the Spanish rule of Joseph Bonaparte and started the wave of independence movements in America (Montafante, Tello de Burgos and Figueroa Navarro 2006: 352-53). Ricaurte Soler (1978: 25) has also pointed to a rivalry between rural and city elites as motives underlying Latin American independence movements, arguing that the main antagonism behind the wars of independence in America was between *American Spanish* and *European Spanish*.

Castillero Calvo (2004), however, has pointed to the weaknesses of the idea of a 'ruralisation', demonstrating that during this period, the wealth of the region was still concentrated in Panama, and even though there had been migration to rural areas with the end of the Portobello Fairs, the transit economy had regained momentum around 1821.

Castillero Calvo (1960: 36) cites Mariano Arosemena's (1868) affirmation that with the suspension of commercial freedom, 'Panama began to understand the importance of its independence'. For Castillero Calvo, the economy of central interior settlements such as Los Santos and Natá had historically been dependent of the transit economy, and these cities felt the economic decay much harder. Therefore, Castillero Calvo (1971) argues, they jumped into action without considering the consequences that city *criollos* were trying to avoid (cited in Araúz Montafante 1980: 92). Yet their early cry would be consummated in Panama City, when commercial *criollos* bribed Spanish troops into supporting independence. The inland *criollos* were overshadowed by city *criollos*, which took possession of the new project of State. In other words, more than to a rise of a national consciousness in inland *criollo* groups, Castillero Calvo (1960: 36) attributes the independence to the merchant *criollos*' realisation that peninsular authorities had become a useless impediment that must be suppressed.

I will come back to this topic later in this chapter when speaking of the military regime and the changes it made in the Panamanian museum sector. I will also return to it in the analysis of the Museum of Nationality (Chapter 5), as it can help understand the choice made by the military government in the 1970s of assigning to the rural *criollos* the primary role in the independence movement.

Union with Colombia

The next turning point in the official accounts of the history of Panama is its voluntary union with its neighbour to the south, the Republic of Colombia, right after the 1821 independence and until separation in 1903. This union would later be known as the Great Colombia, and included the former *Captanía* (command) General of Venezuela, the Viceroyalty of New Granada and the Audiencia of Quito (see Araúz Montafante, Tello de Burgos and Figueroa Navarro 2006: 373).

In most of Latin America, the emancipation from Spain was accompanied by the replacement of Spanish institutions with more ‘modern’ and ‘democratic’ ones, amongst them, museums. Colombia was itself one of the first countries of Latin America to have a museum, the Museum of Natural History (today’s National Museum of Colombia).

For the new government of the Republic of Colombia, the goals of the creation of a museum were twofold. First, the new government wanted to reclaim the collection gathered during explorations by the Royal Botanical Expedition to the Nuevo Reino de Granada between 1783 and 1808. The material from the expedition, 6,849 plates and 590 ink drawings of botanical specimens, was taken to Spain in 1816 (and has since 1817 been kept at the Royal Botanic Garden in Madrid). Second, it would help gain international support and also help consolidate the new Republic of Colombia (Museo Nacional de Colombia 2008b).

In 1821, Simón Bolívar, President of the Republic of Colombia, sent Vice-President Francisco Antonio Zea on a tour in Europe. Zea had the mission to search for scientific and economical support, and international recognition of the new

republic. In May 1822, Zea visited Paris and met with the French naturalist and zoologist Baron Georges Cuvier to ask him for advice in hiring a scientific commission with the purpose of founding ‘an institution devoted to the study of nature and the advancement of agriculture, arts and commerce as sources of progress’ (Museo Nacional de Colombia 2008b). On this tour, Zea also met with Prussian naturalist Baron Alexander Von Humboldt and French mathematician François Arago. In a letter dated 29 June 1822, Von Humboldt wrote to Bolivar about the benefits of creating museums and other scientific institutions:

‘Fundador de la libertad y de la independencia de su bella patria, vuestra excelencia va a aumentar su gloria haciendo florecer las artes de la paz. Inmensos recursos van a ofrecerse por todas partes a la actividad nacional. Esta paz que vuestra excelencia y sus ejércitos han conquistado, no puede desaparecer, pues ya no hay enemigos exteriores y sí bellas instituciones sociales, y sabia legislación que preservarán la República de la mayor de las calamidades, las disensiones civiles.’

‘Founder of the freedom and independence of his beautiful country, his Excellency will heighten his glory by making the arts of peace flourish. Immense resources will be offered everywhere to national activity. This peace that his Excellency and his troops have conquered, cannot disappear, because there are no external enemies left, but there are beautiful social institutions, and wise legislation that will preserve the Republic from the greatest of calamities, civil dissension.’ (Museo Nacional de Colombia 2008a)

A law was passed in 1823 for the creation of the Museum of Natural History and the School of Mining, both inaugurated in Colombia in 1824. This model of museum, highly centred on the natural sciences and positivism, would be followed in Panama after separation, during the creation of the National Museum that I discuss later in this chapter.

The period of union to Colombia is also signalled as the moment when the United States started to become interested in Panama. Dr. J.H. Gibson, Representative to the Pennsylvania State House of Representatives from Philadelphia County between 1832 and 1834, stated that a free port in Panama, central point in the

Pacific Ocean, would activate world commerce, especially for the United States (cited in Rubio 1950a: 56).

Projects for the construction of a railroad through the isthmus began in 1835, when U.S. President Andrew Jackson sent Col. Charles Biddle as commissioner to investigate possible routes for inter-oceanic communication (Fessenden 1867: vii). Mr. Biddle, who was accompanied by Dr. Gibbon on the trip, explored the Chagres River and Cruces, a land trail that connected Panama City with the Village of Cruces by the Chagres River. Biddle later went to Bogota where he negotiated an agreement with the New Granada government for the possible construction of a railroad. Upon return to the United States in 1837, Biddle found no possibilities for funding the railroad project due to the Panic of New York, when New York City banks suspended specie payment. Biddle died soon after his return to the United States and never presented an official report of the trip (Fessenden 1867: viii-ix).

Early on, the U.S. gained an advantageous position to undertake the enterprise of trans-isthmian communication. In 1846, the government of New Granada signed with the U.S. a treaty on 'Peace, Friendship, Navigation and Commerce', the Mallarino-Bidlack Treaty (ratified in 1848). In this treaty, New Granada authorized the U.S. to intervene in the territory of Panama if free transit or New Granada's sovereignty was in danger, and granted the U.S. the right of way or transit through the isthmus by any existing means or any that could be opened in the future (Araúz Montafante and Kam Ríos [1975]: 70).

Key for historians in the framing of the period within the continuity of the story of transit, and instrumental in making of it a landmark in the relations between Panama and the United States, is the discovery of gold in California in 1848. I discuss the representation of this period, known as the Gold Rush, at the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal (Chapter 7).

With the Gold Rush, the United States could take advantage of the Mallarino-Bidlack treaty. Transit through the isthmus became vital for the United States because, as Camilo Cleves Martínez (2005: 7) points out, for many of the east coast

fortune seekers, crossing through Panama was safer than going through the great plains of North America. New Granada granted to The Panama Railroad Company (a U.S. syndicate headed by John Lloyd Stephens, William H. Aspinwall and Henry Chauncey) a concession to construct the Trans-Isthmian Railroad. Construction work began in May 1850. The concession was signed in Bogota as the Stephen-Paredes Contract (Araúz Montafante and Kam Ríos [1975]: 74). Panama became again a strategic hub in the region, enjoying a great boom during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Cleves Martínez (2005: 4) explains the migrations of workers in this period as prompted by the considerable decrease of population of the isthmus during the Spanish colonial period, which had as a consequence an insufficient number of native labourers for the railroad construction. Therefore, argues Cleves Martínez (2005: 3), the Company had to hire workers from abroad: Irish and Germans migrating in hope of better conditions after the potato famine, as well as Indians, English, and Austrians. Cleves Martínez points out, however, that many of these new migrants did not survive the tropical diseases and harsh conditions in Panama. In 1854, as workers died or escaped, the Company looked for other nationals, amongst them, Chinese workers. Cleves Martínez (2005: 14) cites Ramón Mon Pinzón's (1979) account of the Chinese migrations: for Mon Pinzón, the overcrowding of China, natural catastrophes, and the Opium war were the causes of migration. Migrations from China were also encouraged by British merchants who saw in the traffic of workers a way to maintain their businesses after the arrival of the Chinese Clippers (U.S. merchant ships which had started to compete with the British in the transport of oriental products). Around 705 Chinese workers were brought to Panama - mainly from the Province of Guangdong. Large numbers of these workers, however, also died from tropical diseases, and there was also a high rate of suicides (Fessenden 1867: 36). In the end, the Railroad Company had to ship almost all of the remaining two hundred Chinese workers to Jamaica, where a larger Chinese community existed, and exchange them for West Indian workers. Some of the Chinese stayed and later on brought their families to establish themselves in Panama furthering the Panamanian mix. This episode in particular is highlighted in the exhibition at the

Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal. What is hardly mentioned, however, is the arrival of West Indian workers during the period of the construction of the Trans-Isthmian Railroad. I will be discussing this in relation to both the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal (Chapter 7) and the West Indian Museum of Panama (Chapter 9).

The railroad was finished in 1855. In the midst of the Gold Rush (1855-85), Panama became a Federal State. It was in this period that the initial interest in creating a museum in Panama appeared, from an initiative by Don Manuel Valentín Bravo, Panamanian sub-director of the Normal School for Men (Méndez Pereira 1915: 288). Bravo issued a memorandum to the Legislative Assembly of Panama in 1878 asking for the creation of a museum in the isthmus, but this attempt failed (Camargo de Cooke 2003: 165). After the decline of the Gold Rush, however, and with the comeback of centralism in 1886, Panama became again a mere department, and there is no evidence that the project of a museum was rekindled during that century.

On 15 April 1856, a year after the instauration of the Federal State, a major clash between locals and foreigners known as *el incidente de la tajada de sandía* (the incident of the watermelon slice) took place. It began as a dispute between a Panamanian vendor and a U.S. fortune seeker who refused to pay a slice of watermelon, and ended as a battle between opposing factions of Panamanians and citizens of the United States. During the riots, the U.S. government invoked Article 35 of the Mallarino-Bidlack treaty and sent troops to the isthmus in order to maintain free transit and order, something that New Granada would deem a violation of their sovereignty. From then on, New Granada would distance itself from the United States and reject its advancements for the acquisition of a contract to build an inter-oceanic canal, preferring to grant the concession to the French.

In 1873, the government of New Granada signed a contract with French representatives for the construction of an inter-oceanic canal. The work was to be directed by Count Ferdinand De Lesseps, who had successfully completed the

construction of the Suez Canal. Construction was authorized on 20 March 1878, with the signing of the Salgar-Wise Agreement (Araúz Montafante and Kam Ríos [1975]: 84).

For the French Canal construction works, about 60,000 workers were brought into the country, although the total payroll never exceeded 19,000 at any given time. Around 43,000 workers came from the West Indies, particularly from Jamaica, but many returned to their places of origin after construction work stopped when the French enterprise went bankrupt in 1889 (Jaén Suárez 1980: 9). Others migrated to the Atlantic coast, especially to Bocas del Toro, where they became labourers in banana plantations (Linares 1986: 88). George Westerman (1956: 63) cites Gerstle Mack's (1944) account of the fate of the Chinese workers: those who had failed in their attempt to migrate to California instead came to Panama to work for the French Canal enterprise, but soon left the company to set up small shops and other enterprises. Sephardic Jews came in this period from Curacao and Saint Lucia, establishing a commercial network with the Caribbean, New York, London, Hamburg and Amsterdam (Jaén Suárez 1980: 10).

After the failure of the French enterprise, the United States tried again to obtain a concession for the construction of the canal, with the proposal of the Herrán-Hay Treaty. This treaty, however, would thereafter be rejected by the New Granada congress.

The railroad, the Gold Rush, and the incident of the watermelon slice are important points of articulation for the history of transit presented at the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal, an issue I will discuss in more detail in the analysis of this museum (Chapter 7).

I will close this historical background in Chapter 4 with the Republican period, the political conflicts of the last decades of the twentieth century, and the challenges of the new democratic period.

Chapter 4: Republican Panama, Political Conflict and the Challenge of Democracy

In this chapter, I continue with the historical background from the moment of the official birth of the Republic of Panama, the construction of the Panama Canal in the twentieth century, and the emergence of museums in the isthmus. I start with a history of changes during the early Republican Period up to the advent of the military regime, followed by the 1980s crisis and the U.S. invasion. I end with a consideration of the new democratic period, including the Canal turnover, the current investments in infrastructure in the country, that include museums, and challenges in issues such as poverty levels, inequality and the strengthening of democracy.

The emergence of one museum in particular will be noted in this historical chapter – the National Museum. This was the first museum in Panama, which was later on divided into a series of specialized regional museums.

The Birth of the Republic of Panama

Heated debates persist over the interpretation of the events that led to the separation of Panama from New Granada (today's Colombia) on 3 November 1903, when the Republic of Panama was born. Interpretations range from those attributing the secession to the denial of the Colombian congress to allow the United States to take over the construction of the Canal from the failed French enterprise, to those emphasizing the need of the Panamanian people to gain autonomy in the face of the deep economic crisis produced by Panama's marginal position as a distant province, ignored by the central government at New Granada, or those which interpret it as the crystallization of Panamanian national aspirations that had begun to manifest throughout the nineteenth century¹².

¹² For an extensive analysis of how the separation has been treated by historians, see Josef Opatrny's (1986) *El año 1903 en la historiografía panameña*.

In the nineteenth century, ‘the Panamanian nation’ became an increasingly central theme as the dissatisfaction of isthmians towards the administration of the centralist government of New Granada grew. A series of separatist and federalist movements took place, most of them proclaiming the uniqueness of Panama’s geography as a valid motive for the autonomy of the territory¹³. The most prominent theoretician of the Panamanian nation in this period is Justo Arosemena, champion of the creation of the short-lived Panamanian Federal State (1855-85). Arosemena based his proposal of a federal state in Panama to replace New Granada’s centralist control on the idea of the uniqueness of Panamanian geography and its importance as transit territory. This idea would be a major part of the government rhetoric and policies after the birth of the Republic in the early twentieth century.

To sustain his federalism and Panama’s need for autonomy, Arosemena identified two major forces in the formation of nations, ‘the spirit of domination’ and ‘the spirit of independence’. ‘The spirit of domination’ was at the core of large political structures such as monarchies, which had a de facto national unity sustained by violence, and tended to centralism. Federalism, on the contrary, was national unity based on rights, in ‘the spirit of independence’ (Soler 1971: 82).

For Arosemena, if it were not for the impact of Spanish colonization, Spanish American nationalities might have been based on autochthonous ethnicities. Colonisation made defining nation based on ethnicity complex. Therefore, as noted above, instead of ethnicity, Arosemena chose history and geography as the bases for Panamanian nationhood. Arosemena stated that Panama was historically individualized by its transit function and by its geographic position, which the Spanish Crown defined in the demarcation of the Royal Audiencia. Arosemena wrote in his *La Suerte del Istmo, Manuscritos originales*, 5, that Panama was geographically

¹³ See for example accounts by Panamanian Ricardo J. Alfaro (1960) and Colombian Eduardo Lemaitre (1972) of the 1840 separation. Both authors mention the ideas in vogue at the time of the need of separation as the natural consequence of the uniqueness of the isthmus’ geography.

‘Un país situado entre los dos océanos, i apartado de los colindantes por montañas y despoblados; un país tan distinto de todo otro por su localidad, necesidades i costumbres; un país extenso i riquísimo en las producciones de los tres reinos, está visiblemente destinado por la naturaleza para componer algún día un gran Estado.’

‘A country located between the two oceans, and separated from its neighbours by mountains and unpopulated lands; a country so different of any other for its location, necessities and customs; a country vast and rich in the production of the three kingdoms, ... visibly destined by nature to conform one day a great State.’ (Soler 1971: 92)

‘The geographical myth’, as Soler (1971: 104) calls it, building on Arosemena’s theories about the privileged position of the isthmus, would dominate conceptions of nationality during the early republican years up to the 1968 military coup. This geographic mantra would for a long time be the official response to the problem of cohesion. The need to deal with difference and to deal with the system of castes inherited from the Spanish colony was something to which the early republican government responded to with an insistence on the Canal and on the isthmus’s privileged geography as the central pillar of Panamanian society. The search to demonstrate the natural riches and uniqueness of the Isthmus of Panama to justify its sovereignty also shaped the way museums were conceived.

The Liberal government led by Manuel Amador Guerrero allocated funds in 1904 for the creation of a National Museum¹⁴. Law 52 of 20 May 1904 designated that 3.25 million pesos were to be invested in public infrastructure in several provinces. This infrastructure included the building of the National Library and National Museum (González Guzmán 1976).

Marcela Camargo de Cooke (2003: 165), Director of the Museum of the Panamanian Man in the 1970s, argues also that at the time of the separation from

¹⁴ The Liberal party was a group of merchants, intellectuals and bureaucrats that wanted changes in the political, social and economic system. They were inspired by the French liberal revolution, and were in opposition to the Conservative party, composed by the old colonial elite that searched to maintain the status quo (see Araúz Montafante, Tello de Burgos, and Figueroa Navarro 2006: 377).

New Granada, the new Panamanian government needed to give its institutions a national character. Camargo de Cooke links the birth of a museum in Panama to the liberals' project of consolidating a common Panamanian identity. She also points out that the Panamanian government was influenced by concepts of modernity and civilization tied to the U.S. and European institutions. Camargo de Cooke claims that Panamanian politicians felt the urge to replicate these institutions in order to belong to the modern world. As Jessica Evans (1999) notes, the creation of museums with national characters was widespread during this period:

'what we now recognize as the modern public museum ... was invented, between the mid-eighteenth to late nineteenth centuries in Europe, Australia and North America, for the purposes of celebrating and dramatizing the unity of the nation-state and to make visible to the public the prevailing ideas embodied by the concept of national culture.' (Evans 1999: 6)

The creation of the National Museum of Panama, however, can also be interpreted as the result of investments to expand the educational infrastructure at the beginning of the Republic, which emphasized the teaching of natural sciences, as some of the descriptions of the National Exhibition suggest¹⁵. The collection for the National Exhibition was the product of a contract in 1906 between the Panamanian government and naturalist Mr. H.D. Lupi, author of a treatise on agriculture in Panama and proponent of a scientific agricultural production that would turn Panama into a productive nation and make it less dependent on the Canal (Camargo de Cooke 2003: 166). Lupi was hired to travel around Panama collecting objects to build a natural science collection for the new museum. The collection would show Panamanians the richness of their natural resources, and would encourage the development of agriculture and industry. The National Museum, I argue, was more of

¹⁵ According to Article 2 of Law 8 of 23 October 1916, at the time of the relocation of the National Museum to the Palace of Arts in La Exposición, the museum would 'receive the contents of the National Exhibition, which consist in a collection of desiccated birds, mammals, desiccated reptiles, fish, insects, wood from the country, archaeological objects and plants' (Gaceta Oficial 1916).

an appropriation of the Colombian model of museum than the direct import of citizenry moulding institutions from Europe and North America.

The National Museum was inaugurated later in 1906 at the old building of the Arts & Crafts Institute (a High School) and by Law 22 of 1 June 1907 it was legally transformed into an institution for secondary education (González Guzmán 1976). It can therefore be argued that the educational function was the primary focus for the museum, and this museum was to be in charge of supporting the learning of natural sciences. This resulted in a lack of interest in archaeological and historical collections (Camargo de Cooke 2003: 166).

There might have been a conscious interest in the idea of nation later on, as legislation between 1909 and 1916 indicates growing interest in collecting objects of archaeological and historical value, and budgets were assigned for the acquisition of pieces of jewellery and ceramics from aboriginals of the American Continent, objects from the period of the Spanish domination, and national products (as stated by Article 5, Law 8 of 23 October 1916, see *Gaceta Oficial* 1916).

The Dule Revolution

Another initial action of the Panamanian government was the implementation of a policy of acculturation towards indigenous peoples in the isthmus. In 1904, the Convention in charge of the new legislation for the Republic signed a Project for a Law that ‘determined how the uncultured indigenous should be governed, so that they could be introduced to civilized life’ (*Anales de la Convención* 1904: 438). For the Kunas, who at the time of Panama’s separation from Colombia had accepted Panama’s authority with reluctance, this would be the beginning of a twenty-five-year

conflict with the Panamanian government, which would end with the Dule Revolution¹⁶.

The first action agreed upon between the Kunas and the Panamanian government was the establishment of a 'Normal School', where the objective was to train pupils to be teachers. According to James Howe (2004: 42), for the Kunas, this was a way to learn written Spanish for commercial purposes, yet for the Panamanian government, this was the beginning of the civilizing process of barbarian regions.

Around 1916, the government of Belisario Porras placed an *Intendencia* (regional office) in San Blas (the Panamanian name for Kuna Yala) and sent a Colonial Police to the area. Panamanian authorities began to intervene to change the local customs. The main targets for prohibition were the female dress, especially the use of nose rings, which they tried to prohibit, and the *chicha fuerte*, a strong alcoholic beverage that was used in Kuna ceremonies of puberty. The Colonial Police became a repressive force, and engaged in abusive practices against Kuna women. As a consequence, rebelliousness began to rise in Kuna Yala. The Panamanian government had also begun contracts with companies from the United States for the exploitation of banana and coconut, the latter a key crop in Kuna commercial activities (Howe 2004: 209). For Aiban Wagua (2007), the harassment perpetrated by the Colonial Police was founded on an ideology in which the 'uncivilized' indigenous was a load on the State, and as all societies should strive to replicate the Western ideal, any deviation was seen as a proof of primitivism that should be eliminated.

Richard Marsh, a U.S. adventurer and diplomat, is cited either as mediator or as promoter of the chain of events that led to the Dule Revolution in 1925, where the Kunas took arms against the Colonial Police and Intendencia. As described by Howe (2004: 264), in 1923, while looking for possibilities to establish rubber plantations El Darién, Marsh claimed to have met a race of White Indians.

¹⁶ In fact, some communities had attempted to remain united to Colombia. With the creation of the Comarca Tulenega in 1870 by the Colombian government, the Kunas had gained some autonomy, yet upon separation, the new Panamanian government did not recognize this Comarca (Valiente López 2002: 24)

Howe makes the following account of Marsh's 'discovery of the White Indians'. Marsh contacted scientists from Rochester University and from the Smithsonian Institution, and with financing from Lamont DuPont, set on an expedition in January 1924 to find the 'White Indians' (Howe 2004: 276). The expedition received some sensationalist press coverage in the United States, yet in Panama the press was quick to point out that there were no such White Indians, just albinos that were common amongst the Kunas (Howe 2004: 279). In spite of the numerous reports of the falsity of Marsh's discovery, he managed to travel back to New York with albino Kunas who he claimed were 'a branch of an ancient Palaeolithic type that gave origin to the first Nordic differentiation maybe some 15,000 years ago' (quoted in Howe 2004: 321). Saila (chief) Cimral Colman believed that the sending of a Kuna delegation with Marsh could be a way of getting help to fight the Panamanian government.

After subjecting the Kuna delegation to a series of studies in which the scientists from the American Museum of Natural History and the British Association for the Advancement of Science concluded that these were albinos, Marsh and the delegation travelled back to Panama. Marsh, however, continued looking for proofs, this time accompanied by Reginald Harris, director of the Laboratory of Biology of Cold Spring Harbour and author of articles in *Eugenical News* that stated that *mestizaje* was the cause of underdevelopment in South America (Howe: 2004: 330). While Harris was studying the albinos, Marsh became involved in the political movement against the abuses of the Intendencia and the Colonial Police promoted by the *sailas* (chiefs) Nele Kantule and Cimral Colman. On 12 February 1925, the Kunas issued a 'Declaration of Independence and Human Rights of the Tule People of San Blas and El Darién', which Marsh helped write down. This twenty-five-page manuscript had a summary of Kuna history and society, and a catalogue of the abuses of Panamanian authorities. According to Howe (2004: 347), Marsh influenced this declaration.

After a bloody battle in February 1925, the declaration of martial law in San Blas by the Panamanian government, and the intervention of the U.S. government

with the cruiser U.S.S. Cleveland in search to solve the conflict, the Panamanian government negotiated an agreement with the Kuna leaders where it guaranteed them the same rights and privileges that the rest of Panamanians had. Schools would not be imposed, and indigenous customs and uses would be protected. Five years later, in 1930, Kantule came to an agreement with president Florencio Armodio Arosemena on legislation to protect Kuna territories, first in the form of an indigenous reserve (Howe 2004: 396 and Herrera 2003: 192). The Kuna Yala Comarca was finally created by Law 16 of 19 February 1953 (Herrera 2003: 187)¹⁷.

In Chapter 10, I will review the Museum of the Kuna Nation as a contemporary response to official representations of indigenous groups in Panama. I will, however, also point out some of the silences present in this museum, such as the situation with other groups living around the Comarca Kuna Yala.

Further Migrations, *Panameñismo*, and the Institutionalization of Racism

While the new Republic was striving to define and establish its cultural shape, changes in the geography and demographics of the transit area continued. The Canal Zone forced Panama City to grow along the bay. The neighbourhoods of El Chorrillo, Marañón and Calidonia were created as temporary wooden barracks for Canal workers (Rubio 1950a: 91). The intramuros elite began to cross the city walls and move north to the new neighbourhoods of La Exposición, Bella Vista and La Cresta, and the city seemed to grow without formal urban planning. Permanent U.S. Army troops had begun arriving in the isthmus in 1911, and troop build-up had increased to approximately 5,000 soldiers in the Zone by the time the United States entered World War I on 6 April 1917 (Encore et al. 2000: 1-8).

¹⁷ A Comarca in Panama is a division of a territory that encompasses diverse populations. The division is made based on common historical antecedents, geography, or economic similarities (Morales 1995).

Omar Jaén Suárez (1974) has pointed out that the population of Panama almost doubled during the forty years between 1880 and 1920, the period encompassing the Canal construction by both the French and U.S. companies. For the U.S. Canal, between 1904 and 1914, the Panama Canal Company reported bringing 45,000 workers excluding the U.S. citizens. In 1913 the payroll went to over 56,654 employees, the highest number for the period between 1904 and 20, most of them non-Panamanians. He argues that during the period of the U.S. Canal construction, a definitive change was made from the colonial demographic regime to the contemporary one. The principal characteristic of the contemporary regime was the higher number of births over the number of deaths due to advances in medicine against tropical diseases (Jaén Suárez 1974: 90).

One of the largest groups of migrants in this period came from the West Indies (roughly 30,000, followed in numbers by 8,200 Spanish, 2,000 Italians, 1,500 Colombians, and 1,100 Greeks, see Rubio 1950a: 91). West Indian migrants had lived through colonialism, slavery and sugar plantations, with the difference of having Great Britain as their metropolis (Westerman 1980: 15). In the isthmus, they preserved their protestant religion and English as everyday language.

These issues will be returned to upon discussion of the West Indian Museum of Panama (Chapter 9), where I will also discuss the representation of the segregationist system the United States introduced in the territory of the Canal Zone, an area of 550 square miles that, by virtue of the Hay-Bunau Varilla Treaty, had become a U.S. enclave (see Priestley 1987: 37). While white U.S. and European citizens were paid under the 'Gold' roll, other nationals were relegated to the 'Silver' roll, receiving a quarter of the salary. Schools, restaurants, housing and other facilities were also segregated. The Panamanian government echoed this racism, and began closing its borders to 'undesirable migration' in this period, blocking especially the Chinese, Syrians, Turks and North Africans of Turk origin (for example, Law 6 of 1904, Law 28 of 1909 and Law 50 of 1913, see Westerman 1980: 64).

In 1926, the Panamanian government launched a new set of discriminatory immigration laws. These included Law 13 of 1926, which prohibited the immigration of Chinese, Japanese, Syrians, Turks, Indian-Orientals and Indian-Arians, Dravidians, blacks from the West Indies and blacks from Guyana, even if they had adopted non-prohibited nationalities (Pérez, Ghandi and Shahani 1976: 200). Decree 43 of 27 May 1931 was even more discriminatory, as it openly included racist prejudices. Indian migrants were considered ‘undesirable for racial and economic reasons’, while African blacks were considered ‘savages’ (Pérez, Ghandi and Shahani 1976: 201).

In 1939, upon launching his presidential candidacy for the 1940 elections, Arnulfo Arias Madrid, who had appeared in Panamanian political life with the tenant protests of 1925, announced the precepts of his *Panameñismo* (Panamanianism) doctrine:

‘Aquí en Panamá sólo debe existir, germinar y desarrollarse un solo credo, una sola doctrina, una sola fuerza directriz: nuestro Panameñismo. Panameñismo sano, sereno, basado en la investigación y en el estudio de nuestra flora, nuestra fauna, nuestra historia y nuestros componentes étnicos.’

‘Here in Panama, only one creed must exist, germinate and develop, only one doctrine, one directing force: our Panameñismo. Healthy and serene Panameñismo based in the investigation and study of our flora, our fauna, our history and our ethnic components.’ (Quoted in Pizzurno Gelós and Araúz Montafante 1996: 270)

Briefly after, around 1940, the U.S. government started works for the expansion of the Canal and a third set of locks. Panama began receiving a new set of migrants from Jamaica, Costa Rica, Colombia and El Salvador.

William Dawson, U.S. Ambassador in Panama, communicated to the State Department that rumours in the capital said Arias Madrid had fascist inclinations. Arias Madrid’s candidacy had full support from the government, and his opponent Ricardo J. Alfaro presented numerous complaints about harassment from the police, who backed Arias Madrid. The opposition began calling Arias Madrid ‘the *criollo*

Führer'. On Election Day, 2 June 1940, Arias Madrid was the sole candidate for presidency, with no opposition parties represented in the ballot. He won by 90,000 votes. Dr. Arnulfo Arias Madrid took office on 1 October 1940. Dawson described him as 'a man whose strength and determination make him apt to become a dictator. ... Doctor Arias Madrid hates blacks, is a man of soft manners, charming, a perfect society man' (quoted in Pizzurno Gelós and Araúz Montafante 1996: 276).

In his inaugural speech, Arias Madrid spoke about *Panameñismo* stating that

'Si es cierto, es que propugna el principio básico de Panamá para los panameños, no excluye la asimilación e incorporación de extranjeros deseables que sinceramente deseen contribuir al desarrollo y progreso del país ... para realizar su destino en toda su plenitud, Panamá necesita imperativamente mejorar sus actuales condiciones biológicas (derivadas de) un problema étnico grave, que se inició con la apertura del Canal de Panamá, cuando el gobierno norteamericano trajo grandes contingentes de elementos de color, extraños a nuestra cultura.'

'Truly, it promotes the basic principle of Panama for Panamanians, yet it does not exclude the assimilation and incorporation of desirable foreigners that sincerely wish to contribute to the country's progress and development ... to realize its destiny in total fullness, Panama needs imperatively to improve its actual biological conditions (derived from) a grave ethnic problem, that began with the opening of the Panama Canal, when the North American government brought large contingents of coloured elements, strange to our culture.' (Quoted in Pizzurno Gelós and Araúz Montafante 1996: 276)

Arias Madrid made racial discrimination constitutional in 1941. On 2 January 2 1941 a new National Constitution substituted the one from 1904. Article 23 stated that

'El Estado velará porque inmigren elementos sanos, trabajadores, adaptables a las condiciones de la vida nacional y capaces de contribuir al mejoramiento étnico, económico y demográfico del país. Son de inmigración prohibida: la raza negra cuyo idioma originario no sea el castellano, la raza amarilla y las razas originarias de la India, el Asia Menor y el Norte de África.'

'The State will pursue the immigration of healthy, working elements, that can adapt to the conditions of national life, and capable of contributing to the ethnic, economic and demographic improvement of the country. The following are prohibited migrants: black races whose original language is not Spanish, yellow races and races from India, Minor Asia and North Africa.' (Quoted in Pérez, Ghandi and Shahani 1976: 204)

This constitution also revoked the right of children born in Panama from prohibited migrants to have Panamanian nationality. Arias Madrid nationalized retail commerce that had been principally in hands of Chinese migrants. The Chinese were forced to sell their businesses on short notice, for ridiculous sums. Also in this period, the police attacked a colony of Swiss-Germans in Volcán, killing twelve, amongst them small children. The government never gave reasons for the attack (Pizzurno Gelós and Araúz Montafante 1996: 280-81).

On 7 October 1941, Arnulfo Arias flew from the Canal Zone to Havana to visit a mistress, under an alias and without notifying the government. Tipped by U.S. intelligence - Panama's only international airport at the time was located in the Canal Zone - adversaries inside the government took advantage of the occasion, and he was deposed on 9 October 1941. A project to reform the 1941 Constitution was put in motion in 1944, and ended on 1 March 1946 with the expedition of a new Constitution by a Constitutional Assembly (Pizzurno Gelós and Araúz Montafante 1996: 324). The 1946 Constitution consecrated the equality of rights for both nationals and foreigners. As of today, the period of Arnulfo Arias' presidency and issues concerning the discriminatory immigration laws of Panama are only treated at the West Indian Museum of Panama.

Growing Conflicts in the Canal Zone and the Torrijos Era

After World War II, nationalism and pro-sovereignty movements began to take force in Panama. Panamanian merchants resented U.S. control over the Zone and Canal

revenues, and Panamanian workers complained about the disparity of salaries under the gold roll-silver roll system (Encore et al. 2000: 6-6). In this system, U.S. citizens were paid with gold currency, while other nationals were paid with silver currency. The system included better accommodation and provisions for the gold roll employees, who were mostly white. Throughout most of the existence of the Canal Zone, the system was never completely removed, and it became equated with racial discrimination. In 1948, however, it adopted the more politically correct name of 'U.S. rate / local rate' (Kane 2004b: 40).

The event that is marked as the start of the end of the Canal Zone by Panamanian historians is known as the *Flag Riots* of 1964. During the 1960s, Panamanians began to press for the display of the national flag in the Canal Zone, to which U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower responded by agreeing to establish one site for dual-flag display. In 1963, after a meeting with Panama's president Roberto F. Chiari, U.S. President John F. Kennedy signed an executive order directing that the Panamanian flag accompany the U.S. flag whenever the latter was officially displayed in the Canal Zone, and the policy was scheduled for implementation on 2 January 1964 (Encore et al. 2000: 6-6). Canal Zone Governor Robert Fleming responded by ordering the elimination of several official flag sites, amongst them the ones in high schools. President Kennedy was assassinated in November 1963, and in Panama the situation exploded when, on the morning of 7 January 1964, a group of Zonian students raised the U.S. flag in front of Balboa High School, and ringed the flagpole to vigil it for 2 days. Students from the Instituto Nacional (National Institute), Panama's premier public high school, marched into the Zone on 9 January, with the intent of raising a Panamanian historic flag on the Balboa High School flagpole. The Panamanian flag was torn in the confusion, the Canal Zone police began to chase the Panamanian students, and riots started at the border of the Zone, lasting three days. According to conflicting reports, between twenty to twenty-five Panamanians including children and four U.S. military personnel were killed, over four hundred Panamanian civilians wounded, and property losses exceeded 2 million

U.S. dollars (Encore et al. 2000: 6-7). On the second day of the events and for the first time in its history, Panama officially broke off relations with the United States.

In February 1965, the government of Marcos Robles began negotiations with the U.S. government presided over by Lyndon B. Johnson. Both subscribed a Joint Declaration, which stated amongst other things that the sovereignty of Panama over the Canal Zone would be recognized, and that employees of the Canal would be helped and treated with fairness (Pizzurno Gelós and Araúz Montafante 1996: 499).

At the time, the United States became interested in building a level Canal through El Darién with the use of nuclear technology. The project for a Robles-Johnson treaty began to be negotiated in conjunction with two other aspects, that of the replacement of the 1903 treaty, which had conceded the operation of the Canal to the United States in perpetuity, and that of the length of the permanence of U.S. military bases and status of U.S. armed forces in Panama. The Robles-Johnson treaty project, also known as the ‘Three in One’ treaties, encountered strong opposition from Panamanian public opinion causing the National Assembly to reject it.

Both the *Flag Riots* and the ‘Three in One’ treaties are represented at the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal from the point of view of the Panamanian struggle for sovereignty. Missing, however, are the voices of Zonian and U.S. representatives, an issue that I will come back to when discussing this case (Chapter 7). Missing also is the representation of the events following the riots, such as the instauration of a military dictatorship a few years after these and after the attempted treaty.

Amidst negotiations for the Robles-Johnson treaty, Panama held elections in 1967. The candidates were once again Dr. Arnulfo Arias Madrid, Antonio González Revilla, and Engineer David Samudio, who had the government’s support. Samudio was the candidate of *Alianza del Pueblo* (People’s Alliance), Arias Madrid was the candidate of *Unión Nacional* (National Union), and González Revilla was the candidate of *Democracia Cristiana* (Christian Democrats) (Pizzurno Gelós and Araúz Montafante 1996: 508).

Arias Madrid was declared the winner of elections that were marked by violence and accusations of fraud against *Alianza del Pueblo*. On 1 October 1968, Arias Madrid took office as president of Panama, promising to lead a government of 'national union' that would end the reigning corruption and pave the way for a new Panama. A week and a half later, on 11 October 1968, the Guardia Nacional (National Guard) ousted Arias, and initiated the downward spiral that would culminate with the U.S. invasion in 1989. Arias, who had promised to respect the hierarchy of the National Guard, broke the pact and started a large restructuring of the Guard. To preserve the Guard's interests, Lt. Colonel Omar Torrijos Herrera and Major Boris Martínez commanded the first coup of a military force against a civilian government in Panamanian republican history (Pizzurno Gelós and Araúz Montafante 1996: 523).

The military justified itself by declaring that Arias Madrid was trying to install a dictatorship, and promised a return to constitutional rule. In the meantime, the Guard began a series of populist measures that would gain support for the coup. Amongst them were the freezing of prices on food and other goods until 31 January 1969, the freezing of renting prices, the legalization of the permanence of squatting families in boroughs surrounding the historic site of Panamá Viejo, and the freezing of prices on medicines (Pizzurno Gelós and Araúz Montafante 1996: 529). Parallel to this, the military began a policy of repression against the opposition, which were labelled communists. The military appointed a Provisional Government Junta that would arrange new elections. The National Guard, however, would prove to be very reluctant to abandon power, and soon began calling itself *El Gobierno Revolucionario* (The Revolutionary Government).

During Omar Torrijos's control, the military regime transformed the political and economic structure of the country by initiating massive coverage of social security services and expanding public education. The Constitution was changed in 1972, and now included a chapter on Historic Patrimony. For the reform to the

Constitution, the military recurred to a novel institution, the Assembly of Corregimiento Representatives, which replaced the National Assembly¹⁸. The new assembly, also known as the *Poder Popular* (Power of the People), was composed by 505 members selected by the military without the participation of political parties, which had been eliminated by the military. The new Constitution proclaimed Omar Torrijos the ‘Maximum Leader of the Panamanian Revolution’, and conceded him unlimited power for six years, although, to keep a façade of constitutionality, Demetrio B. Lakas was appointed president for the same period (Pizzurno Gelós and Araúz Montafante 1996: 541).

Political changes were soon felt at the National Museum. As part of a national restructuring program initiated in 1970, the Institute of Culture and Sports INCUDE was created. This Institute included the Direction of Historical Patrimony, which would be in charge of the safeguarding, the *puesta en valor* (valuing) and the dissemination, at educational and mass levels, of the Historical Patrimony of the Nation. For this purpose, it would administer museums and historic sites, and would supervise all Archaeological, Historical, Ethno-historical, Anthropological, Folkloric, Linguistic, Paleontological and Art History investigations in Panama. The Direction of Historical Patrimony would consider possible revenues from tourism for the planning of new museums, and it would also develop legislation to protect archaeological pieces, which at the time were being looted and illegally sold in the United States.

This was followed by a period known as *la siembra de museos* or ‘the planting of museums’ – a time which saw the inauguration of a large number of specialized *national museums* all across the country. Amongst them were the Museum of the Panamanian Man, the Museum of Natural Science, the Museum of Colonial Religious Art, The History Museum, the Nationality Museum and the Belisario

¹⁸ Corregimiento in Panama is a division of a district.

Porrás Museum (Torres de Araúz 1983e: 153)¹⁹. In 1975, a decision was made to redistribute the collection of the National Museum amongst these new specialized national museums²⁰.

The military began to adapt to their needs the idea of nation that had been in use during the early republican years, linking Panamanianness to the isthmuses' geography. Dr. Reina Torres de Araúz (1983a: 167), the recently appointed Director of the National Museum, presented a new conception of 'National Culture' as 'the product of history, and formed by the national ethnicities, and Nation (as) a conglomerate founded in geography and supported by the political entity of State'.

The new conception of National Culture expanded the previous justifications for Panamanian nationhood, mostly based on its the geographic transit function, to include ethno-histories, in particular folklore with its myths and symbolisms, and the Pre-Columbian components that up to that point had been treated as exotic relics. In her writings about National Culture, Torres de Araúz wrote that it was the masses, not the elite, who were the creators of the original culture. The culture of the masses was later compiled systematically by academics for the purpose of transmitting it through schools and universities (Torres de Araúz 1983a: 54). This culture, she argued, was under constant development, which meant that folkloric productions had to be continuously supported and encouraged by the State. Instead of choosing for example the indigenous groups alone as the source of Panamanianness, Torres de Araúz argued for a nationality coming from the Hispanic-Indigenous group, not a static separate group but a racially and culturally hybrid group. These were to be the predominant element of National Culture (Torres de Araúz 1983a: 166-67).

¹⁹ In this dissertation, I am not analysing the History Museum. The first reason for not including this museum in the selected cases is the small size of its exhibition. This museum presents in one room Pre-Columbian history, Colonial history, Union to Colombia and Republican history up to the signature of the Canal treaties in 1977. Other cases in this investigation, such as the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal, the Museum of Nationality, the MARTA and the Panamá Viejo Visitor Centre, allow me to discuss representations of the same historical periods exhibited at the History Museum in greater depth. The second reason for not including this museum is the fact that it has not undergone any major changes since its creation during the military dictatorship, for which it would not be a useful case to analyse the impact of changing political and economic contexts.

²⁰While the military regime was in power, 9 museums were inaugurated, among them the Nationality Museum and the History Museum, along with projects for the construction of the Canal Museum (Gonzales 1976).

In the study *Cultural policy in the Republic of Panama*, prepared for UNESCO by the Instituto Nacional de Cultura (INAC) (National Institute of Culture) in 1978, the agenda underlying the reforms done by the military in the cultural sector was made clear. One of the main theses of the study was that it was the rural population who had preserved national cultural expressions in the face of the cultural invasion of the United States. To counteract these external cultural influences, efforts should be made to consolidate an autonomous national identity, of which folklore was the most authentic expression. More than a return to the past or a refuge in tradition, a strengthening of folkloric expressions was viewed as a search for historical roots, and folklore was seen as the strongest aesthetic outcome of national cultural values (National Institute of Culture 1978: 17).

Culture was defined in this study as social and historical, endowed with the preservation and synthesizing of the collective experience of people, and provider of standards of conduct (National Institute of Culture 1978: 18). Through culture, the individual identified itself with the community, and an interference or cultural penetration from power centres or elites associated with these centres could cause the collapse and division of the community. Previously in the study, 'the elites' had been associated with the United States or Europe, and accused of being the principal promoters of the attitude of regarding the indigenous as culturally inferior (National Institute of Culture 1978: 16). Within the new concept of National Culture, the role of indigenous groups was to be valued and integrated into mainstream Panamanian identity.

The new policy differed substantially from what had been exercised previously with regards to indigenous peoples. In the 1972 Constitution, Chapter IV on National Culture declared that the State had to 'recognize and respect the ethnic identity of national indigenous communities, and ... carry out programmes to develop the material, social and spiritual values of each of their cultures' (quoted in National Institute of Culture 1978: 25).

The military was basing its permanence in power also by populist appeals, which included labelling the previous constitutional governments as parts of the elite. The elite groups that the military attempted to demonize were the *criollo* merchants inhabiting the transit zone that had taken the independence movement of 1821 from the hands of the rural *criollos*. At the same time that the military was promoting itself as a unifying force, which would finally include popular and indigenous cultures, groups contesting the legitimacy of the dictatorship were labelled as Americanized elites, agents of the foreign enemies of the nation. I will look at this further in the analysis of the Museum of Nationality (Chapter 5).

An interesting aspect of the National Institute of Culture (1978: 19) study is also the way it justified the political use of culture: 'If culture is divorced from politics, it becomes a mere ornament, since it loses its power to hold society together'. Culture was to be evaluated in accordance with its utility to society, and the past should be adapted to the historical demands of the community. In a sense, this was a continuation of the early republican government's trust in mass education and cultural institutions as effective political instruments of indoctrination. The major change was from the emphasis in natural sciences and verifiable empirical knowledge of the early republican project to a focus on folklore and popular culture as the sources for the liberty of the people.

From the analysis of this cultural policy document, it can be concluded that the creation of the Museum of Nationality and the Museum of the Panamanian Man were key components of a process of self-awareness and furthering of a national identity during the military regime. This can in turn be framed as part of the Revolutionary Government's international campaign for the recognition of Panamanian sovereignty over the Canal Zone.

In 1977, Torrijos negotiated the signing of new Canal Treaties with U.S. President James Carter, which set the deadline for the military presence of the United States in the country to noon of 31 December 1999. The signature ceremony on 7 September 1977 was attended by well known Latin American dictators, amongst

them Paraguay's Alfredo Stroessner, Nicaragua's Anastasio Somoza and Chile's Augusto Pinochet. Omar Torrijos declared in his speech to President Carter that the new treaty did not count with the total approval of Panamanians, because during the twenty-three year period agreed upon for turnover,

'permanecen en este tiempo bases militares que convierten a mi país en un posible objetivo estratégico de represalia. Y porque estamos pactando un Tratado de Neutralidad que nos coloca bajo el paraguas defensivo del Pentágono, pacto éste que de no ser administrado juiciosamente por las futuras generaciones, puede convertirse en un instrumento de permanente intervención'.

'military bases stay and turn my country into a possible target for revenge actions. And because we are signing a Neutrality Treaty that puts us under the defensive umbrella of the Pentagon, a treaty that if administered unwisely by future generations, can become an instrument of permanent intervention.' (Quoted in Pizzurno Gelós and Araúz Montafante 1996: 572)

Although the Assembly of Corregimiento Representatives offered Torrijos the presidency in 1978, he declined and appointed Aristides Royo instead. Nevertheless, Torrijos remained the controlling power behind the puppet presidents, until his sudden death in a plane accident on 31 July 1981. By this time, the country was submerged in an economic crisis. Elections were planned for 1984, and the military signed in secret the 'Torrijos Plan', where they decided the order of succession within the Guard (Pizzurno Gelós and Araúz Montafante 1996: 594). Manuel Antonio Noriega soon got his competitors out of the way, and became the Commander in Chief of the National Guard. On 29 September 1983, the National Guard was transformed into the Panamanian Defence Forces. These events, and the following period of Noriega's dictatorship, are at the moment absent from all current permanent exhibitions in Panamanian museums.

The 1980s Crisis

In the 1984 elections, the candidates were Nicolás Ardito Barletta, supported by the military in a union called UNADE, Dr. Arnulfo Arias Madrid for the opposition union ADO, the ex-General Rubén Darío Paredes, who had been forced into an early retirement by Noriega, running for *Partido Nacionalista Popular* PNP (Popular Nationalist Party), and Carlos Iván Zúñiga running for Partido Acción Popular PAPO (Popular Action Party). Nicolás Ardito Barletta was declared the winner of elections that had been clearly won by Arnulfo Arias Madrid. Ardito Barletta received a country in economic ruin, hugely indebted to the IMF and the World Bank. Amidst the economic crisis and Barletta's efforts to calm the country's creditors, street protests rose, and so did military repression.

Meanwhile, Noriega's regime had fostered the development of a well-hidden criminal economy that operated as a parallel source of income for the military and their allies, providing revenues from drugs and money laundering. Towards the end of the military dictatorship, a new wave of Chinese migrants arrived at the isthmus, in the hope of migrating to the United States. The smuggling of Chinese became an enormous business, with revenues of up to 200 million U.S. dollars for Noriega's regime (Mon Pinzón 1979: 167).

The military dictatorship, at that time supported by the United States, perpetrated the assassination and torture of more than a hundred Panamanians and forced into exile at least another hundred dissidents (A. Zárate 2003: 15). Noriega also began playing a double role in Central America under the supervision of the CIA. While the Contadora group conducted diplomatic efforts to achieve peace in the region, Noriega supplied the Nicaraguan Contras and other guerrillas in the region with weapons and ammunition (Pizzurno Gelós and Araúz Montafante 1996: 602).

On 6 June 1987, the recently retired Colonel Roberto Díaz Herrera, resentful of Noriega's violation of the 'Torrijos Plan' of succession that would turn him into the chief of the military after Noriega, decided to denounce the regime. He revealed details of the electoral fraud, accused Noriega of planning Torrijos's death, declared

that Torrijos had received 12 million U.S. dollars from the Shah of Iran so that Panama would give the exiled Iranian leader asylum, and blamed Noriega for the assassination by decapitation of opposition leader Dr. Hugo Spadafora (Pizzurno Gelós and Araúz Montafante 1996: 618).

On the night of 9 June 1987, the *Cruzada Civilista* (Civic Crusade) was created and began organizing actions of civil disobedience. The Crusade called for a general strike. In response, the military suspended constitutional rights and declared a state of emergency in the country. On 10 July, the Civic Crusade called for a massive demonstration that was violently repressed by the ‘Dobermans’, the military’s special riot control unit. That day, later known as *El Viernes Negro* (Black Friday), left six hundred people injured and another six hundred detained, many of whom were later tortured and raped.

U.S. President Ronald Reagan began a series of sanctions against the military regime. Yet these sanctions did little to overthrow Noriega, and severely damaged Panama’s economy.

On 5 February 1988, General Manuel Antonio Noriega was accused of drug trafficking by federal juries in Tampa and Miami. In 1989, as part of the War against Drugs, the United States of America invaded Panama to capture Noriega and end his military narco-dictatorship.

On 19 December, President George H. W. Bush and the Pentagon decided to use force against Panama. Bush declared that the operation was necessary to safeguard the lives of U.S. citizens in Panama, defend democracy and human rights, combat drug trafficking, and secure the functioning of the Canal as established by the Torrijos-Carter Treaties (New York Times 1989).

The Neutrality Treaty that had been signed in conjunction with the 1977 Canal Treaties extended the power of the United States to intervene in Panamanian affairs in perpetuity if they considered that the Canal was at risk. This was the legal

framework that the United States would use to justify the right to intervene militarily in Panama in 1989.

Operation Just Cause was justified by the United States as necessary to secure the functioning of the Canal and re-establish democracy in the country. Although described as a surgical manoeuvre, the action led to civilian deaths whose estimated numbers range from 400 to 4,000 during the two weeks of armed activities in the largest U.S. military operation after the Vietnam War. For some commentators, the action was not intended only to rid Panama of the dictatorship, but served also to reinforce U.S. authority over the region right at the end of the Cold War, as well as use Panama as practice field for weapons and strategies that would shortly after be used in the Gulf War (Cajar Páez 2003: 22).

Urban populations were greatly affected by the 1989 invasion, becoming the ‘collateral cost’ of the democratization of the country. As pointed out in 1995 by a UN Technical Assistance Mission to Panama, the bombardments during the Invasion caused the displacement of 20,000 persons, and the most stricken district was El Chorrillo, an area of the city with high poverty levels, where several blocks of apartments were completely destroyed. El Chorrillo had been since Canal construction days a series of wooden barracks. These easily caught fire under the U.S. attack. According to the Technical Mission, the displaced were segregated to USAID unfinished dwellings, far away from communications and basic services, or were sent back to live in El Chorrillo's new low-standard multi-family buildings constructed hastily by the Panamanian government in replacement of their lost homes (Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1995). As stated by respondents in a 2005 survey in El Chorrillo conducted by the author in collaboration with the film collective *La Pecera*, after the invasion, crime and drug trafficking increased, and living conditions in the neighbourhood worsened.

The New Democratic Period

In 1994, Ernesto Pérez Balladares of the PRD was elected president. During his period, Balladares implemented neoliberal policies that included the privatizing of major ports, phone systems, railroads, electric power distribution and new highway construction (Conniff 2001: 177). INTEL, the national telecommunications institute, was turned into a split ownership between the Panamanian government and British-owned Cable & Wireless. Hutchinson Whampoa, a Hong Kong firm, took over the two canal ports, Balboa on the Pacific side and Cristobal on the Atlantic. The railroad went to the hands of Kansas City Southern, and toll highways to the Mexican company PICSA. The Taiwanese shipping company Evergreen won a concession to operate the former naval base at Coco Solo as a container port (Conniff 2001: 177). In the analysis of the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal (Chapter 7), I relate these events to the emergence of the museum and further analyze it in the context of the turnover of the Canal in the year 2000.

Recent debates in Panama take up the proposal for a third set of Canal locks that in official estimates would cost around 5,250 million U.S. dollars (Autoridad del Canal de Panamá 2006: 11). The government promoted the expansion of the Canal as a source of employment that could ‘push Panama into the first world’²¹. Critics to the proposal requested that it be accompanied with a National Development Plan (see, for example, Saldaña 2006). Public debate also circled around the Canal expansion project's ideological continuation of the dual structure of Panamanian economy that favours the international service sector over the agricultural or industrial sectors (see, for example, ‘Opinión’ 2006). This dual economy has been blamed with creating and perpetuating the division between privileged and underprivileged populations, nurturing the two social spheres of Panamanian society: one living under high standards in the Canal and city areas, the other living in abject poverty in the urban rings and the countryside. In 2003, after a five-year survey program that measured

²¹ As declared by President Martín Torrijos upon sanctioning the Law that approves the expansion of the Canal, submitted to a national referendum in October 2006.

household consumption in order to determine national poverty levels, the Ministry of Economy and Finances indicated that poverty levels in the country had undergone little change in spite of the turnover of the Canal (Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas 2005).

Since the Canal's turnover, however, the Panamanian government has been investing in measures to address the country's social and economic problems, for example by launching programs in culture and technology such as the National Office for Innovation, Science and Technology created by Law 13 of 15 April 1997, the E-Panama Commission created by the Executive Decree 72 of 2002, and the Office of the Presidency for Government Innovation, created by the Executive Decree 134 of 2004. Initiatives also include the creation of new museums, amongst them the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal, the Biodiversity Museum, and the renewal of the Reina Torres de Araúz Anthropological Museum (MARTA). I will be looking at some of these new projects later in this thesis.

This account of Panama's history provides a necessary backdrop for a description of the museums and their representations in the chapters to follow. I will start Part II: *Cases* in Chapter 5, with the analysis of Museum of Nationality. This was the first museum created under the extensive restructuring of the museum sector that the military government began in the 1970s.

Part II: **Cases**

Chapter 5: The Museum of Nationality

The Museum of Nationality tells the story behind the early cry for independence from Spain on 10 November 1821. The cry for independence is portrayed in this museum as the first solid demonstration of a sense of nationhood in Panama. To examine how the Museum of Nationality represents Panamanianness, I will look at the elements composing the rural *criollo* culture that the museum displays.

I will examine how some parts of the rural *criollo* history and culture are omitted or barely suggested, while others are emphasized. I will propose some historical readings about elements of the display, and analyse how the Museum of Nationality was created to shape what should be accepted as ‘truly’ Panamanian in opposition to what was established as foreign or even dangerous to the nation’s cultural integrity. I will further argue that with the creation of the Museum of Nationality, the military regime selected a specific group, the rural *criollos*, to represent the majority of Panamanians.

In the frame of the creation of the museum during the military regime, I return to the debate introduced in Chapter 3 concerning the diverging points of view about the role of rural *criollos* versus that of urban *criollos* in the independence movement. I will argue that the selection of rural *criollo* culture, a mix of indigenous, African and Spanish elements, responded to the need of the military to get Panamanians to coalesce around them in the process of negotiation of the turnover of the Canal from U.S. control. I will further argue that the selection had to do with gaining the support of groups that had been traditionally excluded from power so that the military could legitimise its permanence as head of the Panamanian government.

I will add a contemporary perspective to this debate by connecting it to the current situation of rural populations from the Azuero peninsula and their migration to the capital. I will argue that today the cultural institutions of the Panamanian government mostly incorporate the elements of rural *criollo* culture as adornments to the official national culture, and downplay the complex reality of internal migrations

from the countryside to the city or to indigenous Comarcas, a phenomenon that has triggered grave economic and social conflicts.

For the analysis of this case, I draw from visits to the museum in 2007, historical texts, and Internet material. To begin the analysis, I provide in the following section a brief history of the location and of the emergence of the museum.

La Villa de Los Santos

The Museum of Nationality is located in the former residence of the Villalaz family in La Villa de Los Santos, ‘the Town of the Saints’, in Central Panama. Oral tradition says this is the house where the first cry for the independence of Panama from Spain was made. The museum faces the town’s central plaza, where the Church of Saint Anastasio, a national monument, is also located.

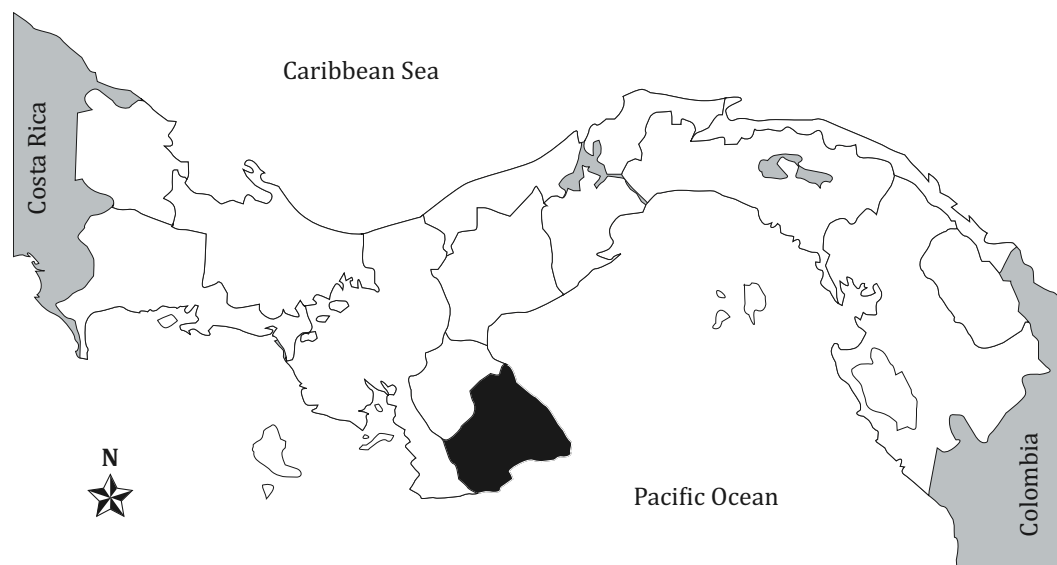


Figure 5. The Province of Los Santos

At the origin of La Villa de Los Santos is a story of migration: pushed by the need to find new horizons after the suspension of the *encomiendas* system, Spanish colonizers migrated from the neighbouring Natá and founded it in 1569²². Around 1585, La Villa de Los Santos became the second largest settlement in Reino de Tierra Firme, only surpassed by Panama City. It also became one of the most important centres in the Azuero Peninsula, a prosperous agricultural and cattle region during the sixteenth century.

La Villa de Los Santos is also a place where the process of mix between indigenous peoples and Spanish colonizers started early on, fostered by its proximity to the ‘pueblos de indios’ or indigenous towns, settlements established and controlled by the colonizers at the end of the *encomiendas* to serve as advance posts from which to colonize other areas. The mix, what would later on be the core of rural *criollo* culture, affected everything from religion to music, dance and food; the presence of African slaves added further elements.

In what regards to religion, Catholicism came to the isthmus with the Spanish, but it was appropriated and transformed. For Dominicans and Jesuits, for whom the Conquest was not a material endeavour but a search for souls, Catholicism had to be made appealing, and this meant adapting for the new situation the way their message was transmitted. For example, the celebration of Corpus Christi (the Body of God), a Catholic tradition from the Middle Ages that is still celebrated in La Villa de Los Santos, was used to substitute the indigenous celebration of the God of Corn.

Angel Revilla Argüeso (1987: 195) points out that Dominican friars in particular played an important role in the process of religious mix by teaching Spanish to children of indigenous families that had been sent to the *pueblos de indios*. The isolated situation of these towns would make the indigenous lose contact with their religious leaders (Sukias amongst the Ngöbés, Neles amongst the Kunas),

²² *Encomiendas* were grants of land and indigenous labourers held by an *encomendero*, the Spanish colonizer, who in exchange of the coerced labour of the indigenous was obliged to support the Church and priests for their instruction, as well as serve in the military in times of emergency (see Lippy, Coquette and Poole 1992: 37)

another way of forcing them to stop practicing their customs and adopt the Spanish ways. Revilla Argüeso (1987: 196), however, asks whether or not it was possible that the indigenous kept a dual religiosity, as did the Jews in Spain during this period. He further points out that the theoretical and practical problems of evangelization fostered the development of diverse hierarchies of religion practices in Panama: the official ecclesiastic evangelization, the tolerated practices of saint-bearers and other unofficial evangelization assistants, and the non-tolerated practices of healers and witches (Revilla Argüeso 1987: 197). Nevertheless, there were also traces of religious mix amongst those who escaped reclusion into the *pueblos de indios*. For example, the Neles preached to the Kunas that the Christian God was fighting with their own God, sending them smallpox and other diseases. They also preached that the evils undergone by the Kunas were the fault of the Christian God and that Hell was only for the Spanish because Heaven was reserved for the Kunas (Revilla Argüeso 1987: 196).

In relation to music and poetry, Manuel Zárate and Dora Pérez de Zárate (1952) have examined the way the Spanish *décima* was adapted in Panama and became the dominant expression of rural poetry and song. These investigators propose that the Spanish *décima* (a poetic structure consisting of ten verses that had become popular during the sixteenth century) arrived to the isthmus as a form of popular entertainment, and flourished amongst the *Mestizos* and *criollos* (Zárate and Pérez de Zárate 1952: 22). The *décimas* began to be accompanied by drums, incorporating in this way the African element. Currently, the area where the *décima* is most widely practiced is the Azuero Peninsula.

Regarding food, Omar Jaén Suárez (1978: 178-79) points out that Spanish colonization transformed the agricultural regime of Panama especially by the introduction of crops brought by the Spanish (rice, bananas, sugar cane and mango), and by African slaves (yam), and with the import of cattle and horses from the Spanish peninsula. Although in the sixteenth century the Spanish colonizers tried to introduce agricultural techniques such as irrigation, ploughing and manure, the predominant practice became 'slash and burn' agriculture, a combination of the

traditions of indigenous and African slaves. This was an itinerant system where land was put to production for one to two years, let to rest for a period of between three to fifteen years, and ‘prepared’ after the resting period by burning the forest that had grown on the land. Jaén Suárez (1978: 181-83) attributes the prevalence of this system to a lack of labourers and a surplus in production due to the small size of the market, and to the large amount of land that could be used. He adds that this centuries-long practice led to the degradation of land, which became prone to erosion. Agriculture in the region would afterwards be partially replaced by cattle farms.

Emergence of the Museum and Current Exhibition

Actions for the promotion of popular culture and folklore in Panama started with the First Congress of Folklorology in 1973, conducted in Guararé, also in the Province of Los Santos (Pereira de Padilla and Segura 1983a: 57). A year after, in 1974, the government founded the National Folklore Group. This group had as its mission to perform and cultivate the dances, costumes and traditions stemming from the rural *criollo* culture of central Panama. The Nele Kantule Dance Ensemble of the Kunas, and the Black Congos of Colón Group made up of descendants of colonial African populations, joined the National Folklore Group shortly after. In *Cultural Policy in the Republic of Panama*, the National Folklore Group was defined as ‘one of the most effective means of overcoming dependence in Panama, defending national sovereignty and asserting the country’s identity’ (National Institute of Culture 1978: 31).

At the same time, the Revolutionary Government launched an ambitious plan to increase agricultural and industrial production. This large investment plan included the Project of Rural Development of Tonosí for which the AID (the U.S. Agency for International Development) gave 20 million U.S. dollars, the Project of Integrated Rural Development of Renacimiento that was financed through the Inter-American Development Bank (23.7 million U.S. dollars), and a milk production project financed by the World Bank (Pizzurno Gelós and Araúz Montafante 1996: 550-51). According to Pizzurno Gelós and Araúz Montafante (1996: 560), in the long run, the

outcome of these projects would unfortunately be an enormous international debt, partly produced by the increasing corruption of the military.



Figure 6. *The Museum of Nationality*. Photo by Roberto Sánchez (2007)

The Museum of Nationality was also created in 1974. The most significant aspect of the creation of the Museum of Nationality, I have argued, was the official designation of a particular group, the rural *criollos*, as the authentic manifestation of nationality. General Omar Torrijos ([1999]: 158), leader of the military, declared that the Azuero Peninsula was the reserve of nationality and folklore. Behind the selection, I argue, was a campaign to justify the permanence of the military in power, utilizing class struggle as one of their leitmotifs. During the early years of the military regime, popular culture was declared the shield against the oppression from Panamanian elites and U.S. intervention (see the analysis of *Cultural Policy in the Republic of Panama* in Chapter 3). Against the previous elitism and corruption, the military offered to open the government to the people and to include popular expressions as constitutive of Panamanianness. To set the example, General Torrijos

called himself *el indio Omar* (the Indian Omar), and his public image was that of the everyday man that truly felt and understood the problems of Panamanians.

After the end of the military regime, the museum underwent little changes, until in 2005 the Direction of Historical Patrimony of the National Institute of Culture decided to renew the exhibition. In the new arrangement, the general structure of the exhibition was preserved, but textual explanations were reformulated.

The first gallery of the exhibition is a preamble about the country's first inhabitants, mixed with a story about the abuses of Spanish colonizers. The second gallery brings us two centuries forward to the moment before the cry for independence. The third gallery recreates the moment of the declaration of independence. The fourth and fifth galleries show us the culture inherited from the Spanish: religious objects, musical instruments, books, and a colonial kitchen. I will now take a closer look at each one of these galleries to analyse how the various objects incorporate indigenous, African or Spanish elements.

In the first gallery, a panel describes the populations of Cerro Juan Díaz through extracts from texts by Cooke et al. The extracts chosen underline the dark aspects of colonization: one text points out 'the terrible demographic collapse of the initial years of the Conquest', while another text in the same gallery declares baldly 'the Spanish Conquest was very destructive'²³.

As seen in Chapter 3, recent research conducted in Panama about Pre-Columbian populations emphasizes the negative impact of Spanish colonisation on indigenous populations. Cooke (1991: 5), for example, has written that the Spanish colonization was a disaster for indigenous populations. Cooke et al. (2003) use Paleoecological data to support the thesis that Spanish colonisation led to a huge

²³ Field notes by the author, 2007. The original texts are: 'Luego del terrible colapso demográfico de los años iniciales de la Conquista, los sobrevivientes quedaron dispersos en varias zonas' and 'la conquista española fue muy destructiva.'

decline in indigenous populations, which is suggested by the recuperation of forests in areas that were used for agriculture by the indigenous²⁴.

Other examples scholars give to support this story of oppression include the entries into land, *entradas a tierra*, the practices of Spanish colonizers of going into indigenous territories to murder these populations (see Chapter 3). The *entradas a tierra* are given great prominence in the second gallery of the Museum of Nationality, where the story of the dog of Vasco Núñez de Balboa, which was used to murder and eat rebel indigenous, is highlighted (this is also done, albeit less prominently, at the Panamá Viejo Visitor Centre). A display of the weapons of the colonisers further emphasizes this story of violence.

Next in the exhibition is the *Salón del Consenso* (Hall of Consensus), the room where the Declaration of Independence was signed. As I pointed out in Chapter 3, Celestino Araúz Montafante (1991: 20) uses the idea of the ‘ruralisation of the economy’ to highlight the importance of rural *criollos* and *Cabildos* in the independence movement. According to Araúz Montafante (1991), after the decay of the Portobello Fairs (main fairs for the exchange of goods between traders from Spanish America and Spain), the isthmus entered a period of deep economic depression. Large numbers of migrants moved from the terminal cities (Portobello, Chagres and Panama) to the interior of the country in search for new means of survival. During the eighteenth century, elite *criollo* families also migrated from the capital to the countryside, moving some of the power out of the transit zone. The new rural centres of power felt the economic decay harder than in the capital, and therefore gained independence earlier than their capital city counterparts.

I have, however, also noted how Alfredo Castellero Calvo has strong counterarguments to this widely repeated thesis. Castellero Calvo (1971) denies that there was any such ruralisation. In his view, during this period the wealth of the

²⁴ The recuperation of these forests coincides with the arrival of Spanish colonizers. Since Spanish colonization was restricted to the transit zone, the pasturelands and the savannas, the phenomenon of forest recovery can be interpreted as a sign of the termination of human inhabitancy of these areas (see Cooke et al. 2003: 12, 3).

region was still concentrated in Panama City, and even though with the end of the Portobello Fairs there had undoubtedly been migration to rural areas, the transit economy had regained momentum around 1821. In opposition to the thesis of ruralisation, that proposed a rise of a national consciousness in inland *criollo* groups, Castellero Calvo (1971) argues that independence from Spain was only made possible when merchant *criollos* realised that their fortune depended on suppressing Spanish authorities (see Chapter 3).

The Museum of Nationality avoids the debates about the struggle between inland and capital city *criollos* altogether. The story presented roughly follows the thesis of ruralisation, complementing it with a portrayal of a victimized yet heroic population that united against the evil Spanish.

The last two parts of the exhibition are dedicated to the heritage of Spanish colonization, including Catholicism, music and literature, and food. The display centres on the European origin of Panamanian rural *criollo* traditions such as Easter and the celebration of Corpus Christi. Little is said about indigenous or African influences.

Contemporary Debates

Given Panama's diversity, it is pertinent to ask whether the Museum of Nationality can maintain the claim that the Hispanic-Indigenous culture is the essence of Panamanianness. To be raised also is the question on whether one of the elements (Spanish) is given prominence over the others (indigenous and African), and with what consequences.

Urgent issues affect the local community that the museum serves, the rural populations of Los Santos and of the Azuero Peninsula. In the second gallery of the Museum of Nationality, there is a brief mention to one of the ongoing problems that rural populations face. A small text dedicates the exhibition at the Museum of Nationality to the migrants from Los Santos region. This is a message that can easily pass unnoticed but that is charged with meaning for those who know about the

difficult situation of many *campesinos* (farmers) from Azuero. Each year, *campesino* families from the Azuero Peninsula move to the capital city or to El Darién in search for jobs or land for their cattle.

The official position about *campesinos* has historically been of intolerance and stigmatization. For example, Reina Torres de Araúz harshly criticized the migration of *campesinos* from the Azuero Peninsula to El Darién, because for her, these colonizers were the carriers of a culture of land devastation: the *campesinos* destroyed the natural environment, slashing down the forest to a greater extent than was needed for their cattle (González Guzmán 69).

Perhaps at this moment the museum has a stronger role to play for the rural communities of the Los Santos region than for the larger ‘national’ audience. In fact, when looking at activities held at the museum, the largest attendance is during the celebration of the Corpus Christi and the Festival de la Mejorana, when the museum attracts audiences from nearby towns. The question of which audiences are being addressed, or should be given priority, is one that will resurface throughout this thesis.

In the following chapter, I will continue with the analysis of official representations of Panamanianness with the case of the Reina Torres de Araúz Anthropological Museum MARTA. This museum was inaugurated shortly after the Museum of Nationality. I will look at how Panamanianness, especially in relation to the indigenous component, was represented in this museum at the time of its creation, and point out changes in this representation, following political change.

Chapter 6: **The Reina Torres de Araúz Anthropological Museum (MARTA)**

In 1976, only two years after the creation of the Museum of Nationality, the military government founded the Museum of the Panamanian Man. In 1987, this museum was renamed as the Reina Torres de Araúz Anthropological Museum, to honour the recently deceased Dr. Reina Torres de Araúz, a Panamanian anthropologist who had been Director of the National Museum (1969-70), Director of Historic Patrimony (1970-80), and Vice-President of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee (1980). In 2006 the museum was once again renamed, and also relocated, this time obtaining the nickname of the MARTA, as it is best known today. The changes in name, however, are the most superficial signs of more profound transformations, which I will review in this chapter.

The transformations undergone by the MARTA in its 32 years of existence not only encompass its name, but also its location, its form of administration (or at least, attempts of change in this area), and perhaps most importantly, the way the museum speaks about Panamanianness. A look at this museum will help identify some of the factors that affect how the story of Panama's indigenous peoples is negotiated. In this chapter, I will argue that at the old MARTA, the inclusion of indigenous groups in the story of the nation broke with the previous official tendency to represent (and treat) them as remnants of the past. This will be contrasted with the abrupt change of direction of the new MARTA, which shows a comeback to older, 'safer' models where the complex situation of contemporary indigenous communities is hidden behind the much more comfortable story of splendour of the distant Pre-Columbian past.

I will argue that the institutional emphasis in archaeology as main theme of the exhibition at the current MARTA, as it currently stands, adds to the story of lost glory that impedes a better understanding of diversity in Panama and the contemporary challenges the country faces. This is partly because the exhibition does not directly

address the problems with the aura of adventure that predates popular interpretations of archaeology in Panama.

For this analysis of the establishment of the MARTA and its current exhibition, I draw on interviews made in 2006 with Guillermina De Gracia, at the time sub-director of Historic Patrimony, texts and Internet material, interviews in 2007 with architect Alfredo Boza of Cambefort & Boza, designers of the building of the new MARTA, and a series of visits to the museum between 2006 and 2007. I begin the analysis by providing in the following section an overview of the emergence of the museum.

Emergence of the Museum of the Panamanian Man

When in 1970 the military government created the National Institute of Culture and Sports INCUDE, and appointed Reina Torres de Araúz as director, a large restructuring of the cultural sector and the elaboration of legislation on historic patrimony began. With Torres de Araúz as Vice-President of the commission to reform the 1946 National Constitution in 1972, the restructuring was imprinted in the constitutional reforms, which included new legislation for the protection of historic patrimony. The restructuring continued in 1974, with the division of the INCUDE and creation of the National Institute of Culture and the Direction of Historical Patrimony. In the same year, the Nationality Museum was inaugurated in Los Santos, and works were started for the Museum of the Panamanian Man. Thus began the period later known as *la siembra de museos* or the ‘planting of museums’ due to the sudden doubling of the number of museums in the country.

Up to this point, the situation of museums in Panama had been precarious, and the interest of the Panamanian government in historical patrimony and archaeological or anthropological work had been scarce. This, however, had not been the case for foreign archaeologists and collectors, who between the First and Second World Wars became increasingly engaged in explorations in Panama. Cooke and Sánchez (2004) point out that during this period, as noted previously, excavations were out of control,

often performed by investigators who took the products of their research abroad. Amongst them were the 1925-26 excavations by U.S. investigator Alpheus Hyatt Verrill in El Caño, where numerous funerary pieces were extracted and taken to the Museum of the American Indian in New York, the 1930-33 University of Harvard excavations at the property of the Conte Family, and excavations also at *Sitio Conte* (the Conte property) in 1940 by Alden Mason, administrator of the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania. Most of the artefacts found in these explorations were sent to the museums that had hired these investigators (Cooke and Sánchez 2004: 9).

Cooke and Sánchez (2004: 13) argue that the way investigators labelled their findings in *Sitio Conte* as extraordinary riches and treasures helped popularize in Panama the idea that archaeology was about finding objects of monetary value. At the same time, the Panamanian government allowed all kinds of amateurs to perform excavations, and often silently approved the illegal selling of pieces. Archaeology became progressively to be seen as a lucrative activity. The view of this discipline as ‘treasure finding’ fuelled the unscrupulous practice of *huaquería*, the illegal practice of searching for *huacas* (Pre-Columbian burial sites) to loot objects that can have a commercial value (Cooke and Sánchez 2004: 68). For Cooke and Sánchez (2004: 47), foreign investigators condoned *huaquería* either because they themselves practiced a sort of ‘*huaquería* with diploma’ when sending pieces from their excavations to their respective museums, or because they kept exchange relations with Panamanian *huaqueros* (people conducting illegal excavations) for the same purpose.

Previous to the restructuring led by Torres de Araúz that was aimed at strengthening the protection of patrimony, Alejandro Méndez, Director of the National Museum from 1925, had tried to control the illegal excavations and *huaquería* by promoting legislation and establishing collaborations with the foreign investigators (Cooke and Sánchez 2004: 13)²⁵. The problem, however, had continued and became aggravated during the 1950s, when a group of amateur archaeologists,

²⁵ For example Decree 50 of 27 June 1925 that regulated excavations in archaeological sites and exploitation of historic monuments (Camargo de Cooke 2003: 369-377) and the acquisition in 1947 of the large monolithic stone sculptures of Barriles found near the Barú volcano in Chiriqui that became part of the collection of the National Museum.

U.S. residents of the Canal Zone, founded *The Archaeological Society of Panama*, which was authorized to make excavations throughout the country. The group mostly looted mortuary sites and sold the pieces to either private collectors in Panama or to foreign museums such as the Museum of the American Indian in New York and the Ethnographic Museum in Hamburg, with the silent approval of the National Museum (Cooke and Sánchez 2004: 18).

When in 1969 Torres de Araúz replaced Méndez as the Director of the National Museum, firm action was taken to end *huaquería* with the stopping of the activities of the Archaeological Society of Panama. At the same time, Torres de Araúz began to remodel the whole structure of the cultural patrimony sector, especially the National Museum. For her, the National Museum had become a museum of ‘everything of the nation’, and this created a series of problems in terms of a physical space large enough to host all exhibitions, as well as a lack of clarity of what the museum was about (Torres de Araúz 1983c: 303). The National Museum was moved to the Historic District of Panama City and later to La Casa del Maestro (the House of the Teacher) in the borough of La Exposición in 1939, where it would stay until 1975, when it was finally dismantled and transformed into the series of specialized national museums.

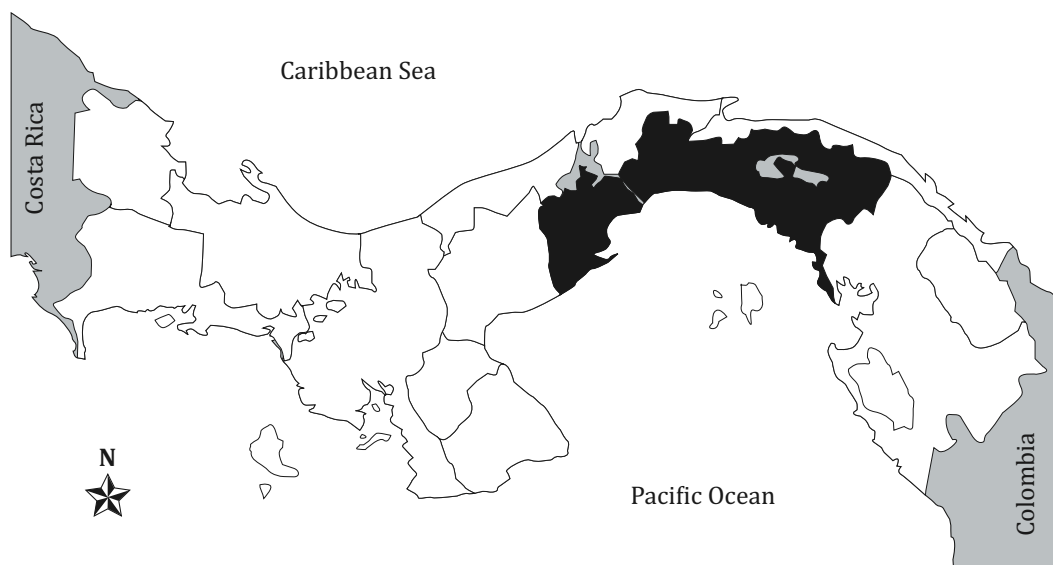


Figure 7. The Province of Panama, where the MARTA, the Panamá Viejo Monumental Complex and Visitor Centre, the West Indian Museum of Panama and the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal are located.

Developments in Panama in the cultural sector had been affected by international developments concerning museums. The 1970s were a very significant decade for museums in general, as ‘New Museology’ gained momentum. *Ecomuseums* came to revolutionize former practice, and a definition for museums and their activities was agreed upon at ICOM (Fernández 2004: 11). The term *New Museology* officially originated from the 1971 ICOM Ninth International Conference in Grenoble, France, where the concept of *Ecomuseum* was proposed. In the 1972 UNESCO/ICOM meeting in Santiago, Chile, the concept of *Integral Museum* was developed to criticize the traditional top-down approach of museums, calling for the opening of museums to a broader participation of different social sectors (see Chapter 2). These events had repercussions in Panama partly through the work of Mexican museologist Felipe Lacouture, who participated in the design of the program for Panamanian Museums and acted as UNESCO consultant during the creation of the Museum of the Panamanian Man, along with Panamanian Marcela Camargo de Cooke²⁶.

Lacouture developed a plan for museums in Panama that was taken into practice by Reina Torres de Araúz and Marcela Camargo de Cooke with the creation of the Museum of the Panamanian Man. Torres de Araúz convinced Gen. Omar Torrijos of the historic importance of the old railroad station, and the advantage of turning this building, located in the heart of the city at Plaza 5 de Mayo, into a new icon for Panamanians, to be called *El Museo del Hombre Panameño* (The Museum of the Panamanian Man). In Reina Torres de Araúz words,

‘La inauguración del Museo del Hombre Panameño significa un importante hito en nuestra jornada. Es el producto de muchos esfuerzos y es la objetivación de una antigua ambición: dotar a nuestra Patria de un Museo donde el Panameño pudiera encontrarse a sí mismo, en la rica diversidad de razas y culturas que componen su nacionalidad.’

²⁶ Lacouture was closely linked to the work of ICOM/UNESCO’s International Movement for a New Museology (Mouvement International pour une Nouvelle Muséologie, MINOM).

'The inauguration of the Museum of the Panamanian Man is a great milestone in our journey. It is the product of many efforts and is the objectification of an old ambition: to provide our Fatherland with a Museum where the Panamanian could find himself, in the rich diversity of ethnicities and cultures that compose his nationality.' (Quoted in Pereira de Padilla and Segura 1983c: 54)

This museum was intended to address the Panamanian multi-cultural character, digging into colonial history and tracing its repercussions, particularly with regards to indigenous groups. Most importantly, the new museum was to break with the tradition of situating indigenous peoples in a glamorised distant past, injecting new life to the collection it would inherit from the National Museum.

Marcela Camargo de Cooke (1980: 369), former Director of the Museum of the Panamanian Man, points out that this museum explicitly aimed at raising interest amongst Panamanians in their culture and in knowing their homeland, in order to strengthen the National Culture. This was of particular importance for the military regime, engaged at the time in the negotiation of the Panama Canal Treaties. In an article about Gen. Omar Torrijos's ideas of National Culture, Reina Torres de Araúz (1981a: 221) pointed out that for him, National Culture was not a backdrop, but a source for new achievements and findings, especially for the permanency of freedom and sovereignty in the country. As with the Museum of Nationality, the Museum of the Panamanian Man was to be a tool for Gen. Omar Torrijo's Revolutionary Government's attempts to articulate a national identity that would legitimate Panama's diplomatic efforts for sovereignty in the Canal Zone.

In the next section I take a closer look at the way National Culture was articulated in the first exhibition at the Museum of the Panamanian Man.

The Exhibition

The first gallery was the Synthesis Gallery, whose purpose was to gather the different elements that form Panamanian National Culture and show the contributions of recent

immigrant groups (Torres de Araúz 1983b: 136). There was a panorama of the geological formation of the isthmus, the earliest traces of man in the territory, the indigenous cultures of Panama, and the arrival of new human groups at the time of the Spanish colonisation. Contemporary indigenous groups were included with the use of objects, photographs and documents about the Chocoes, Teribes, Kunas and Bokotas (Horna 1980). The Chinese, Hebraic and Hindu Societies were also portrayed, with objects, photographs and historical documents these Societies donated.

Perhaps the most important addition this gallery made to the well-established historical-geographic explanation of Panamanianness, which emphasized the isthmus's role as inter-oceanic and inter-continental route, was to give a more diverse face to the country. Panama, to this point tacitly owned by the elite of Spanish descent, was now the property of all Panamanians, including the indigenous, blacks, Chinese and other migrants who had chosen the isthmus as their home.

The second gallery, the Contact Gallery, started the historical explanation of the development of Panama's diversity. It began at Pre-Columbian times, with ceramics, photographs, and illustrations describing the various cultural areas of Panama and its first inhabitants (for cultural areas, see Chapter 3). This was followed by the story of the contact between Spanish colonizers and indigenous peoples, explaining the *mestizaje*, the development of inland customs, and representing the mulatto cultures of the Atlantic side of the country. The story of contact ended with the more recent arrivals, portrayed by a model of housing for West Indians during the construction of the Canal.

The third gallery, the Gold Gallery, was dedicated to jewellery and treasures from Pre-Columbian cultures. The design of this gallery reinforced the 'lost glory' story about Pre-Columbian Panama, as it was a highly protected section of the museum.

The story of lost splendour, however, was reframed with the inclusion of more recent issues at the Ethnography Gallery, the fourth gallery. This was an exhibition of

open-air scenes of ethnography and folklore, with a focus on contemporary indigenous groups. The reconstructions of these scenes were based on written documents and existing photographs, and the exhibition team was assisted by the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia de México (INAH) (the Mexican Institute of Anthropology and History) to construct the mannequins for these open-air reconstructions. A large amount of the research material for this section had been the product of Torres de Araúz own work with indigenous groups previous to her appointment as Director of the National Museum.

The last gallery was dedicated to temporary exhibitions. At the time of the opening of the museum, this gallery hosted a show on National Visual Arts. Paintings and sculptures of contemporary artists depicted the Panamanian population through scenes of folk and urban life, portraits, statues and abstract compositions.

Torres de Araúz was especially concerned with the situation of indigenous groups and the threat of a dislocation of the State, citing the example of the Dule Revolution by the Kunas in 1925. During the Constitutional Assembly of 1972, Reina Torres de Araúz made reference to the reasons behind the Dule Revolution to oppose a clause that established a ‘scientific method of cultural change for the indigenous groups’, arguing that she did not see the necessity of treating the indigenous as different or less Panamanian and subjecting them to a ‘scientific change’ (quoted in Pereira de Padilla and Segura 1983b: 333-34). This was present in the museum especially at the Synthesis Gallery, where indigenous groups were treated as part of the Panamanian mix.

In the new version of this museum, known as the MARTA, I argue that there is a return to a view of indigenous peoples as remnants of the past. In the next section I look at the changes undergone by this museum in the last two decades.

From Museum of the Panamanian Man to MARTA

The Museum of the Panamanian Man changed its name to the Anthropological Museum Reina Torres de Araúz (MARTA) in 1987. In this year, the political and

economic crisis broke out in full, as has been discussed in Chapter 4. Gen. Manuel Noriega's dictatorship and drug trafficking and the U.S. embargo had produced a spiral of financial and moral decay in the country. This was felt in all sectors of society, with the National University closed for extended periods, street protests that ended with the arrests and torture of participants, and the close down of independent press. During the 1989 U.S. invasion, the Museum of the Panamanian Man was looted. Ceramic, gold and silver pieces were stolen from its deposit room, yet the assaulters were not able to reach the Gold Gallery (Camargo de Cooke 2003: 172).

The years of corruption and stealing from public funds during the military regime took its toll on the cultural sector. By 1997, due to financial difficulties, the Reina Torres de Araúz Anthropological Museum was closed down, supposedly for renewal. Contributing to the financial crisis of the museum was the National Institute of Culture's administrative system, still in place today, which created a series of bureaucratic loops that meant that the money the museum collected was transferred to a common fund and returned only partially to the museums much later. In 1998, a year after closedown, an attempt was made to tackle the economic problem by creating a Patronato (a mixed private-public form of management) for the MARTA. This ended in public controversy, as it was claimed that concessions made to this Patronato were disproportionate because they annulled some points of Law 14 of 5 May 1982, which regulates cultural patrimony. The point of conflict was that the Direction of Historical Patrimony and its board of specialists would be excluded from managing the collection of the MARTA. In the new structure, the Presidency would be endowed with the authority to grant excavation permits and would be in charge of the loan of pieces. The Presidency, however, did not have a Department or board of specialists for this task other than the Direction of Historical Patrimony. Rafael Ruiloba, Director of the National Institute of Culture, filed a lawsuit arguing that specialists should be the ones making decisions over the collection. The Patronato was dissolved, and the MARTA returned to be administered by the Direction of Historical Patrimony (Camargo de Cooke 2003: 182).

The museum reopened partially in 1999 with an exhibition of the Barriles sculptures, the same Pre-Columbian pieces that Alejandro Méndez had once negotiated for the National Museum from the hands of foreign explorers. In September 2002, the Gold Gallery was reopened, but in 2003 most of this collection was stolen, although it was recovered almost entirely later on. After this, the museum was once again closed for the following 3 years.

Finally, in 2006, Vivian de Torrijos, first lady of the Republic, decided that the museum should be relocated to a recently finished museum building in Curundú. Sebastián Paniza Paredes (2006: 23), former Director of Historic Patrimony, was quick to point out that it was difficult to understand the decision to dismantle a museum on which so much effort had been invested, to transfer it to a building that was designed for other purposes. In the next section, I follow the relocation of the MARTA and the way this has affected the exhibition and its representation of Panamanianness.

The New MARTA

The building that houses the MARTA is an eclectic brick and cement structure located in the corner of a 13 hectares piece of land in one of the reverted areas of the former Canal Zone. The museum occupies 1.3 hectares with a value of 3.9 million U.S. dollars that the Autoridad del Canal Interoceánico (ARI) (the Inter-Oceanic Regional Authority) donated to Ruby Moscoso, first lady during Mireya Moscoso's presidency (1999-2004). Taiwan financed the building through a donation of 6 million U.S. dollars - Panama is one of the 23 countries that still maintain diplomatic relations with the Republic of China (Taiwan) instead of with the People's Republic of China (see Bilbao 2004).

Rainforest that was once restrained by wire fences during the U.S. military presence in Panama grows now freely at a side of the building. This could be seen as the natural way to connect the museum to the Metropolitan Park, a protected

rainforest area on the other side of the road. The green surroundings, however, are the product of a short budget and political changes, not the will of the designers.



Figure 8. The new MARTA. Photo by Roberto Sánchez (2007)

Cambefort & Boza Architects, a Panamanian firm, originally planned this as a museum for children. Architect Alfredo Boza (2007), co-owner of the firm, explained that the design included recreational and sports areas that would connect to the museum via a light train. Boza pointed out that Taiwan's donation, however, was spent entirely on the museum building, and the development of additional areas could not be executed, neither was there money for the creation of the exhibition. With the change of presidency in 2004, the original project of a children's museum was finally abandoned. The building stood as an empty shell until 2006, when Vivian de Torrijos, first lady under Martín Torrijos's presidency (2004-09) decided that it would become the new MARTA.



Figure 9. First Hall at the MARTA. Photo by Roberto Sánchez (2007)

Inside the museum, the exhibition starts in a narrow red hall with the biography of Reina Torres de Araúz, Panamanian anthropologist and first Director of Historic Patrimony, whom the museum honours. Torres de Araúz's story is narrated by photos and objects from her field work: a photo of her with General Omar Torrijos sitting in the forests of El Darién, her passport, her audio recorder, her diplomas. There is an inscription by a side of her desk, part of a speech during a graduation at the University of Panama, which reads:

'Un pequeño país, pero de rica y profunda historia, esa es nuestra Patria. Y nosotros, de todas las razas, de diversas culturas, hemos aprendido a sentirnos panameños y actuar como tales, en función de la educación.'

'A small country, yet of rich and profound history, that is our Fatherland. And we, of all races, of diverse cultures, have learned to feel Panamanians and to act as such, through our education'²⁷.

²⁷ Field notes by the author, 2006.

The text implies the constructedness of Panamanian nationhood, as Panamanians learn to feel or are educated to become part of this Fatherland in spite of their diverse backgrounds. Being Panamanian is therefore not defined as belonging to an ethnicity: being Panamanian is rather a way of being that is made apparent by acts.



Figure 10. Reina Torres de Araúz's passport. Photo by Kamilla Bergsnev (2006)

As we abandon the red area with these words, we enter a large hangar-like structure, composed by three open levels that connect through a series of ramps and stairs. Patches of glass walls extend vertically at both sides of the exhibition block, letting natural light inside. Boza (2007) explained that this was an important component of the design, planned to enhance efficient energy use of the building when conceived of as a museum for children. This type of light, however, works against the 'Jewellery in Panama' section at the first level, as natural light diffuses the

artificial illumination needed for the tiny pieces of gold jewellery and ceramics spread in boutique-like glass cabinets.



Figure 11. Display cabinet at the MARTA. Photo by Kamilla Bergsnev (2006)

Texts explain that this jewellery is not only valuable for its aesthetic qualities, but also as a clue to the multiple aspects of life during Pre-Columbian times. Interesting also are the notes on how the Spanish tried to get as much gold as possible, and that the indigenous regarded as absurd the Conquerors' practices of melting gold jewellery into bars.

The only link to contemporary indigenous peoples is found in this level. A small photograph of a Kuna woman wearing a nose ring signals ethnic affiliation between contemporary Kunas and Pre-Columbian indigenous peoples. The accompanying text, however, is careful to point out that links between the two populations cannot be confirmed, as it explains that it is not possible to ascertain that

Pre-Columbian nose rings had a function similar to contemporary use amongst the Kunas.

The second level contains stone sculptures from the Barriles site. The magnificent pieces are made smaller by the excessive height of the building's ceiling. Text for this level includes a map of the original location of the pieces.



Figure 12. Barriles sculptures at the MARTA. Photo by Roberto Sánchez (2007)

The third level is used at the moment for temporary exhibitions. At the time of my first visit, the temporary exhibition in place was a collection of still life paintings of religious content, by Panamanian painter Sheila Lichacz. During my next visit, the museum was to open an exhibition about Star Wars, with Chewbacca (Peter Mayhew) as the main guest.

The museum does not currently have its own website, nor does it use any new technologies in the exhibition. It has a single page description that is part of the

website of the National Institute of Culture. It is also noted in the website of Red Camus (Central American Network of Museums)²⁸.

Currently, the MARTA is defined as a museum about the Pre-Columbian history of Panama up to the arrival of the Spanish (Instituto Nacional de Cultura 2008). The new exhibition does not include any of the questions on colonial history or the current situation of the country's indigenous groups highlighted by the former exhibition, and has also left out the sections dealing with the multi-cultural composition of Panamanian society.

As described above, central to the exhibition of the old MARTA were the collections of Pre-Columbian artefacts, and the indigenous played a prominent role in a narrative where colonisation was not the beginning but a turning point in Panama's past, that counteracted the prevailing idea that the indigenous are peoples without history. The new MARTA has abandoned this story altogether. A possible explanation for this shift is that officials perceive a difficulty in representing an idea of the nation that includes indigenous ethnicity. Guillermina De Gracia (2006), sub-director of Historic Patrimony, cites the prevalent racism and discrimination towards contemporary indigenous communities as the cause of lack of public support for the museum. De Gracia points out that it is very difficult to transmit to the Panamanian public the idea that their ancestors and their culture are linked to indigenous peoples. She has also declared that the Panamanian public does not care if the collections of Pre-Columbian indigenous artefacts are lost, 'because Panamanians don't feel indigenous' (cited in Arrocha 2007).

Richard Cooke (1991: 3) has also pointed out that schoolbooks in Panama tend to treat Pre-Columbian history as if it was detached from the history of the nation, praising the beauty of indigenous artefacts while banishing the links between these pieces and the contemporary indigenous communities that make up 8 per cent of the

²⁸ REDCAMUS was created in 2003 as a project to help develop technical expertise and a network for the museums of the Central American region. The project is supported by the Swedish Historical Museum through the Swedish Agency for International Development and includes authorities from the Cultural Sector of Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama.

Panamanian population. The new MARTA reinforces this approach, ignoring the extensive work Reina Torres de Araúz did on indigenous groups of El Darién and her writings on a National Culture that would include the indigenous component²⁹.

In this and the previous chapter, I have looked at representations of Panamanianness at museums that aim at presenting a unified story about Panama and the different groups that inhabit it. In the following chapter, I analyse a museum that uses a similar approach to the issue of Panamanianness, in the sense that it tries to present a unified version of the history of the isthmus as passageway. This will be the case of the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal.

²⁹ For example, publications such as *La Mujer Cuna, Darién: etnología de una región histórica* (1957), *Panamá Indígena* (1981), and the numerous field trips during the proposal of a new Canal through El Darién, the eastern rainforest region of Panama.

Chapter 7: The Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal

For the twenty-first century Panamanian, the isthmus without a Canal is an impossible image. The Panama Canal has become the conceptual point of departure and arrival in the project of Panamanianness: to be an isthmian is somehow essentially attached to the transit zone and to an economy centred on international service. It is as if the land had from times immemorial been divided *Pro Mundi Beneficio*, ‘for the benefit of the world’, as the national coat of arms declares. Yet for all the resources put over the years into making of the Canal a foundational part of national identity, the role this work of engineering might play in the development of the country is still an open question.

Once called the ‘Eight Wonder of the World’ (Encore et al. 2000: 3-6), the Canal is an icon whose meaning for older generations of Panamanians is associated with colonialism and the struggle for sovereignty. For the newer generations, the tensions around the Canal resurfaced with particular strength during the 2006 referendum about its expansion. In debates around the expansion, the Canal embodied all that simultaneously divides and unites Panamanian society, be it wealth, ethnicity or political affiliations. The Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal is inescapably entangled in these debates, and the main challenge it faces may be in how to make a former symbol of division into a new path to unity and in how to address the question of what the Canal and its history represent for Panama today.

In this chapter, the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal is viewed in relation to current and past debates surrounding the Canal, and within the economic and political contexts affecting the museum. I start with an introduction to the physical characteristics of the museum and its location, and follow this with an analysis of its exhibition that will take us outside of the museum walls and into the political and economic context around it. I finish the chapter back at the museum, summarizing how the expanded understanding of the context may help us better view the current situation of the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal and its contemporary challenges.

For this chapter, I draw on interviews in 2006 with Angeles Ramos Baquero, Director of the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal, texts and Internet material, and visits to the museum between 2006 and 2007. I begin the analysis, as in previous chapters, with a section dedicated to the location of the museum.



Figure 13. The Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal. Photo by Bruno Sánchez (2007)

San Felipe

The Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal is housed in a large building, the former Grand Hotel property of George Loeb, constructed between 1874 and 1875. The

building was sold to the Compagnie Universelle du Canal Interocéanique in 1881, and was the company's headquarters until 1904, the year when a huge financial scandal led to the bankruptcy of the French enterprise. The building went later to U.S. hands and became the office of the Isthmian Canal Commission until 1910 (Rodriguez 1997: 51). The Panamanian government used it afterwards for a diversity of offices, including the National Post, the Supreme Court, and the National Archives (Zentner 1975: 61).

This museum is located in Plaza Catedral, in the borough of San Felipe, also known as the *Casco Viejo* (Old Quarter), the city's Historic District. Plaza Catedral was the centre of the colonial chessboard trace of New Panama, and used to be the vital axis of the city (Zentner 1975: 59). Around the plaza, a series of buildings speak of Panama's colonial past: one is the ruins of the Jesuit Convent, which also housed the Universidad Javierana (the first university of the isthmus), a second is the Municipal Palace, built in Renaissance style, which replaced the colonial *Cabildo* and currently houses the History Museum and the offices of the Panamanian Academy of History. The National Institute of Culture, the Presidency of the Republic and the Ministry of Government are also located in this borough. Architectonic remains dating from the foundation of New Panama in 1673 after the old city was destroyed in 1671 (see Chapter 3) are mixed in San Felipe with Colombian, French and Caribbean influences. More recently, the area has been reshaped by the developments during and after the construction of the Canal (Tejeira Davis 2001: 21).

San Felipe has been the subject of several restoration projects since the 1970s. The first project was the Instituto Panameño de Turismo (IPAT) (Panamanian Institute of Tourism) 'Restoration Project of the Historical Monuments of the Old Quarter' (1972-75), which ran under the direction of Mexican architect Carlos Flores Marini as part of technical assistance provided by the Organization of American States OEA. This was followed by Law 91 of 22 December 1976, which declared the site a *Conjunto Monumental Histórico* (Historic District), along with the Panamá

Viejo Monumental Complex, and the ruins of San Felipe de Portobello on the Atlantic Coast³⁰. The second project was the ‘Plan of Action for the Old Quarter’ (1990), a short term project conducted by the Ad-Hoc Presidential Commission, directed by Panamanian architect Jorge Riba (the commission included the Ministers of Public Works and Housing, Directors of the National Institute of Culture and the Panamanian Institute of Tourism, and the Mayor of the District of Panama). The third project, ‘Revitalisation Plan’ (1995) was funded by the Inter-American Development Bank and managed by Panamanian architect Eduardo Tejeira Davis (Spadafora 2001: 180-82). These projects concentrated mainly on the rehabilitation of decayed structures and urban planning regulations.

The 1995 Revitalisation Plan included, amongst other things, the creation of the Canal Museum, and this plan was mentioned as precedent on the dossier presented to UNESCO for the inclusion of the site on the World Heritage List. The idea of requesting the inclusion of the site in the World Heritage List was originally put forward by the Bolivarian Society of Panama in the mid 1990s. The society was specifically interested in requesting the inclusion of the *Salón Bolívar* (Bolívar Hall), located in San Felipe, which was the place where the 1826 Amphycion Congress met. UNESCO’s technical consultant, Mexican architect and restorer Alberto Gonzáles Pozo, recommended the inclusion of the Old Quarter and Panamá Viejo in the application (Spadafora and Tejeira 2001: 168). The Old Quarter and Salón Bolívar were included in UNESCO’s World Heritage List in 6 December 1997, while Panamá Viejo, which had been removed from the 1997 application due to uncertainties about factors affecting its surroundings, was included in the list in 2003.

Important for the 1997 decision was the fact that ‘Panama was the first European settlement on the Pacific Coast of America, in 1519’ and ‘Salón Bolívar is

³⁰ Article 1 of Law 91 defines Historic Districts as following: ‘Para los efectos de esta Ley, son Conjuntos Monumentales Históricos las ciudades y todo grupo de construcciones y de espacio cuya cohesión y valor desde el punto de vista ecológico, arqueológico, arquitectónico, histórico, estético o socio-cultural, constituyen testimonio del pasado de la Nación Panameña.’ ‘To the effects of this Law, Historic Districts are all cities and all groups of constructions and space whose cohesion and value from an ecological, archaeological, architectural, historic, aesthetic or socio-cultural point of view, constitute a testimony of the past of the Panamanian Nation’ (Gaceta Oficial 1977).

of outstanding historical importance, as the venue for Simón Bolívar's visionary attempt in 1826 to create a Pan-American congress, more than a century before such institutions became a reality' (World Heritage Committee 1997: 47). After the inclusion of the site, between 1998 and 2000, the United Nations Development Programme UNDP and UNESCO supported the High Level Commission for the Restoration of the Historic District, which led to the creation of the current 'Master Plan for Rehabilitation and Restoration' (Spadafora and Tejeira 2001: 7).

As pointed out in Chapter 3, during Spanish rule, the borough had been divided into *intramuros* and *extramuros*, with sharp class and race divisions of who lived inside and outside the city walls. Alfredo Castellero Calvo (1994: 188) has pointed out that New Panama marked the birth of an elitist city, where the upper classes of Old Panama could implement new criteria of urban hierarchy. This included the creation of the city wall that was both to protect against foreign enemies as well as against the internal enemies represented by the growing coloured underclass. Castellero Calvo (1994: 188-207) further points out that the new city provided the opportunity to express opulence for the now well established powerful classes through the expanded width of the facades of their new houses.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, the upper class inhabitants had begun an exodus further east along the bay of Panama, and the borough started to be inhabited by working class families and migrants from the interior of the country. These came to live mostly in *casas de inquilinato* (tenement houses) owned by the migrating elites who further strengthened their economic power from the earnings of this rental business (Uribe 2004: 180). In time, these elites abandoned the rental business, especially with the freezing of prices and other populist measures adopted by governments since the tenement strikes of 1925. Lack of interest or resources from both owners and tenants led to the decay of the area, a decay that was also aggravated by San Felipe's isolation while it was surrounded by the Canal Zone. Yet the ongoing renovation, with its package of financial incentives, has had as collateral effect the creation of an attractive market for real estate speculation and for an increasing gentrification of the area, with companies who buy the decrepit properties at a very

small cost, restore them, and rent them out or resell them at high prices. In some cases, investors have bought properties without conducting the required renewal actions, waiting for the price to go up to resell.

Emergence of the Museum

In 1997, the year of the inauguration of the museum, Panama was getting ready for the turnover of the Canal from U.S. control, set for noon of 31 December 1999. During these preceding years, international news agencies began discussing the uncertainties for investors related to the ability of Panama to handle the operation of the Canal after turnover. In U.S. media, reports also highlighted the contracts made by the Panamanian government with the Hong Kong based company Hutchinson Whampoa for the operation of the Port of Balboa on the Pacific side and the Port of Cristobal on the Atlantic side for twenty-five years, with the possibility to renew the contract for another twenty-five years. Jim Lehrer (1999), speaking in the U.S. PBS channel in the days prior to the turnover ceremony, summarized some of the discussion that went on: ‘some conservatives believe the U.S. should have retained control of the canal. They believe that the Hong Kong Company charged with running the canal's ports has links to China's army. They fear that China will station weapons and spies along the canal’.

To tackle concerns about the turnover, President Ernesto Pérez Balladares organized the *Universal Congress about the Panama Canal*, to be held in Panama City from 7 to 10 September 1997. The congress would ensure the international community that after turnover the Canal would remain safe and operational (Boyd 1997: [5]). The attendants included members of the shipping industry, of commerce chambers, of import/export companies, bankers, insurers, ambassadors, and representatives of other bodies associated to international transport commerce. The European Union and the Republic of China in Taiwan provided funds for the event (see Boyd 1997: [2]), the latter fact producing the withdrawal of the People’s Republic of China from attending the congress.

The congress was planned to echo two main historical events that would insert the turnover into a historical narrative of continuity. A historical resonance was made to the 1879 *Congrès international d'études du Canal Interocéanique*, where delegates from all over the world met in Paris to discuss various projects for a canal across the Central American isthmus. A second resonance was to the approval of the international community of Panama's claims of sovereignty over the Canal, with the 1997 congress being held at the date of the twentieth anniversary of the signature of the Canal Treaties, signed on 7 September 1977. These historical resonances were central to the message the Panamanian government wanted to transmit to the waterway's main clients, which was that 'a third world country can efficiently administer a work with profound roots in the history of inter-oceanic commerce, and that, truly, it belongs as much to the same countries that went to Paris in 1879 as it does to the new ones that will come to Panama in 1997' (A. Araúz 1997: 41)³¹. I argue that the creation of the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal, inaugurated within the frame of this congress, was also fundamental to the effort of presenting the turnover as part of a necessary historical transition. Thus, upon inauguration, this museum functioned primarily as an instrument of diplomacy.

The project of a museum about the Canal had been discussed as a possible way of prolonging the congress into the future by way of the creation of an investigation centre about the Canal (A. Araúz 1997: 43). Amado Araúz (1997) noted that his wife, Reina Torres de Araúz, had proposed a project for a museum about the Panama Canal to UNESCO in 1980. The project included creating a centre to gather documents spread in archives in France, the United States, and Colombia. Amado Araúz (1997: 43) foresaw that the centre could become a joint venture between these four countries.

In 1996, a year before inauguration, the Patronato of the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal, a non-profit entity that would be in charge of administering the

³¹ Original in Spanish: 'que un país del 'tercer mundo' podrá administrar con eficiencia una obra de profundas raíces en la historia comercial interoceánica y que, en realidad, pertenece tanto a los mismos países que fueron a París en 1879 como a los nuevos que vendrán a Panamá en 1997.'

museum, was created. Like the Patronato Panamá Viejo, this was a mixed regime organization with actors from the public and private sectors. The Patronato of the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal counted on the support and assistance from the Panamanian government, from the Panama Canal Authority, from the European Community, and from other members of the private sector. The Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal was inaugurated on 9 September 1997 as part of the activities of the *Universal Congress*, and was an important tool for the creation of an image of credibility for the new administration of the Canal and the capacity of Panamanians to take over its management. Angeles Ramos Baquero, Director of the museum, stated at the time that ‘this museum is important because it's the first time we have an exhibition that tells the story of the Panama Canal from the perspective of Panamanians ... It also demonstrates that we Panamanians are capable of meeting the challenge of administering the canal after 1999’ (quoted in Luxner 1998).

The Exhibition

I argue that the exhibition at the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal is aimed at creating awe around the Canal as an engineering achievement. Key actors in the story are white male explorers, buccaneers, diplomats, engineers, and administrators. In fact, the first object the visitor meets upon entering the central hall that leads to the exhibitions is a monumental piece of glasswork, part of a large nautical lighthouse, which with its complex design works as a synthesis of the technical excellence of the Canal³².

The exhibition itself starts with a brief overview of Pre-Columbian Panama with objects on loan from the MARTA, displayed in a glass cabinet on the side of the entrance to the first hall. In this hall, the story continues chronologically with the Spanish Conquest. Panama’s function under the structure created by the Spanish metropolis is explained, along with how the country came to be the main passing

³² The lighthouse has also been adopted as a symbol by the Panama Canal Authority for its monthly publication on the Canal’s affairs, entitled *El Faro*.

point of merchandises from the south to Spain. The isthmus' function as the American Imperial Route par excellence is brought to the forefront. After this beginning, a series of iterations reaffirm the message of the historical function of the isthmus as passage. Some of the darker passages of this trade are included in the exhibition: a panel describes slave trade and the exploitation of aboriginal workers at the South American mines, illustrated by the inhuman conditions of the transport of people in the slave ships. Nothing is said, however, of the slaves coming from the African continent.

The theme of passage is continued with the story of the Gold Rush (see Chapter 3), and the transport of people from the east coast of the United States to California. Present, yet muted, in this section is an episode that has been called the first major clash between locals and foreigners, the incident of *La Tajada de Sandía*. This event is summarized in a small panel hanging above view level. What is not made explicit is that the story of transit and the idea that the isthmus was accepted more as a bridge than as a home, or rather, that it almost did not belong to anyone, is deeply challenged by the rise of clear definitions of 'us' and 'them', of stories of the disrespectful foreigner versus the suffering local or vice versa. Since tension over ownership has been a recurrent issue in many of the debates concerning the Canal, the toning down is significant. The section on the Gold Rush culminates with the story of the construction of the Trans-Isthmian Railroad, which again provides a perspective of the sombre aspects of international trade with the depiction of the situation of Chinese workers. There is scarce mention of other groups of migrants working at the railroad construction, such as those coming from the West Indies.

The next section introduces the French attempts to build the Canal, and focuses at first on the grand plans illustrated by maps showing an ideal city that would replace the wild rainforest of El Darién and become the centre of the transport network between the Pacific and Atlantic ports of the proposed Canal. Ferdinand de Lesseps, Director of the Suez Canal construction and leader of the French plan to construct a level Canal in Panama, is a main character in this section. Another major figure is Philippe Buneau Varilla, a French engineer who arrived at the isthmus for

the construction of the French Canal. Buneau-Varilla is portrayed as the instigator of the idea that the Canal should be built in Panama, and the principal responsible for manipulating the opinion of the U.S. Congress by sending postcards with a stamp of a Volcano erupting in Nicaragua to show them the insecurity of building the Canal there. Buneau-Varilla is often represented in Panamanian debates about the Canal as a villain, responsible for the sell-out of the country, while scarce mention is made of the Panamanian government that sanctioned the treaty afterwards.

Another section in this floor, one of the few bilingual sections in the exhibition, is dedicated to the Roosevelt Medal, a recognition of the work of the employees of the Panama Canal Construction that was only awarded to U.S. citizens. The key figure, Theodor Roosevelt, is presented in a bust that was donated by Hillary Clinton. The importance given to this display contrasts to how other workers of the Canal, especially the diggers, get represented. The only mention the human workforce that dug the Canal gets on this floor is a blurred photograph that reads ‘and they also helped build the Canal’. The museum has, however, hosted temporary gatherings that attempt to highlight the contributions of the black community, including those of the West Indian community during the construction of the Canal, such as the 2002 *Conferencia Magistral: El Aporte Cultural de la Etnia Negra en Panamá* (Master Conference: Contributions of the Black Ethnicity in Panama), organized by the Comité Nacional del Centenario (National Centennial Committee) and the Project of Academic Forums about the Centennial (Proyecto de Foros Académicos del Centenario), and funded by Fundación Emily Motta (Wilson 2003).

After the Roosevelt Medal Hall, the exhibition, which was otherwise rich in explanatory texts, becomes somewhat silent. The Biodiversity Hall presents large panels with photo reproductions of Panamanian rainforest, describing briefly its function for the Panama Canal. In my visit in 2006, this section was followed by a series of panels speaking of the dangers of deforestation of the Canal basin perpetrated by *campesinos* and their cattle farms. Later in that year, during the referendum for the expansion of the Canal, *campesino* groups that would possibly be displaced and relocated by the project campaigned against the expansion. In my last

visit in December 2007, after the expansion of the Canal had been approved, these panels had been removed and in their place were panels for a temporary exhibition about the 30th anniversary of the Canal Treaties, signed on 7 September 1977.

Diversity is reframed in a different manner in the next section, dedicated to Panama's human diversity. The national motto 'the land divided, the world united' provides the frame for the reiteration of the transit function of the isthmus as a pillar of its multiculturalism. The floor ends with large panels with photos of the signature of the Canal Treaties, a chronology of events in the Canal, and a last hall where the ceremony of the turnover is presented through a video of President Mireya Moscoso's speech at the Panama Canal Administration Building on the day of turnover.

On the second floor, added later, a more personal tone is adopted. The everyday aspects of life in the Canal Zone during construction are portrayed, with a section about the role of women, a diorama of a Zonian engineer's household, and episodes of life in the Canal Zone in the early years. Changes in the economic and urban infrastructure of Panama produced by the construction works of the Canal are discussed. Political issues that surrounded the signature of the 1977 treaties are addressed in a long documentary made by Máximo Ochy and Irna Ruíz (2004) and produced by the museum, which has interviews, amongst others, with President Marcos Robles, in office at the time of the negotiations of the so-called 'Three in One Treaties'. In this video, Robles explains the negotiation process of this set of treaties, and argues that in fact, the 1977 treaties negotiated by the military regime were very similar to the 'Three in One Treaties' that had been rejected earlier.

This floor is a useful counterpoint to the grand story initially presented. Questions around the impact on the composition of Panamanian society with the massive arrivals caused by construction works are addressed. A question that is not raised, however, is the impact of the preference given to east-west communications, the centrepiece of the logic that led to the construction of the Panama Canal, over communicating the north with the south.

Contemporary Debates

Although quotidian aspects of life during the construction of the Canal are represented at the second floor, and some of the political controversies surrounding the negotiation of the Canal treaties are included, contemporary debates remain muted. One of them is the current situation of the former Canal Zone. The Canal Zone, which the museum presents at the moment in its early decades, is closely related to changes in the boroughs surrounding the Historic District. As Eduardo Tejeira Davis (2004: 214) indicates, these areas were signs of the dependence between what happened in the Canal Zone and in Panama City. The passing in the U.S. Congress of the Panama Canal Act (24 August 1912), which created a government in the Canal Zone, and Decree 5 of 5 December 1912, which declared the Canal Zone essential for the operation of the Canal and ordered its takeover by the U.S., propelled the migration of workers and inhabitants to the area surrounding the Historic District. These workers had been expelled from the Zone because they were not considered useful for the operation of the Canal (Tejeira Davis 2004: 205). Tejeira Davis comments that ‘despite territorial separation, a large North American influence was evident in Panama, mainly because the Panamanian economy was dependent on the U. S. at all levels, beginning with its currency. In addition, Washington saw the Republic of Panama as a protectorate, a condition kept explicit until the 1930s. Canal Zone authorities also held specific prerogatives in the capital. For many years, the Zonian Health Office controlled construction permits, water supply, and garbage disposal’ (Tejeira Davis 2004: 212). The museum presents how changes at the Canal Zone produced changes in Panama City’s physical infrastructure, yet does not address issues concerning migrations from the Zone.

Instead, the museum concentrates on the political debate about sovereignty in the Canal Zone, choosing to portray the incident of 9 January 1964. This event involved the crossing of the physical barrier between the Zone and Panama City by Panamanian high-schools students who attempted to fly the Panamanian flag at the Balboa high-school, where students were protesting against taking down the U.S. flag. The event caused the breakup of diplomatic relations between Panama and the

United States, and later on was referred to as a precedent to the first negotiations of a treaty to substitute the Hay-Bunau Varilla treaty with the 'Three in One Treaties'.

Ramos Baquero (2006) has acknowledged that former inhabitants of the Canal Zone have made clear their discontent with the way the museum presents their story. Some of these groups have created their own Panama Canal Museums, one with a physical structure in Miami and others only in virtual locations (see, for example, *Canalmuseum.com*, *PanamaCanalMuseum.org*, *CZimages.com*). Neither these museums nor the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal, however, address contemporary challenges of the Zone or the more sombre aspects of the U.S. military presence in Panama, as for example the controversy over the cleaning of ammunition polluting the military areas of the Canal Zone, and the controversies over the incorporation of this piece of land to the rest of the country, not only in what regards to urban planning, but also in relation to the heritage, rights, and responsibilities of the previous and the more recent inhabitants.

Another episode that is silenced at the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal is the story of the 1989 invasion and Noriega's regime. When asked about the silence over the invasion in the museum's exhibition, Ramos Baquero (2006) commented that as the aim of this museum was to uplift the Panamanian spirit, which she said was almost destroyed by the corruption of the Noriega regime, it was incompatible with the museum's mission to depict this period.

As true as it may be that a productive debate on the country's history of conflict cannot solely be the responsibility of this museum, recent critiques from museum theorists (noted also in Chapter 2) point to an increasing call for action on their part in opening up spaces for such discussions. Moore argues that

'... there is a tendency for museums to become obsessed with the past, the present and the future; at the moment museums seem to have tipped this too far in favour of preserving the past for the future, by-passing the present. For what is the value of museums if they do not have and impact on the world now? If museums do not tackle the key issues that face us – war, poverty, ethnic tension and the like – then there may be no future for museums or ourselves. This is not to say that museums can radically change the world – but they can and must have some impact, to be of any benefit here and now.' (Moore 1997: 31)

El Chorrillo, an area that the Oficina del Casco Antiguo is trying to turn into a buffering zone for the Historic District and that is one of the poorest and most violent boroughs of Panama City, was the hardest hit by the 1989 invasion. At the time of the inauguration of the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal, Reinier Rodríguez, assistant curator of the exhibition and later on director of the National Institute of Culture, expressed the desire of the museum to remain attentive of its surrounding community:

'En cuanto a la misión pública del Museo, se ha enfocado en mantener un constante diálogo entre este y la comunidad, principalmente al encontrarse ubicado en un sector de la ciudad que necesita drásticos cambios socioculturales.'

'In regards to the public mission of the Museum, it has focused on keeping a constant dialog between it and the community, especially since it is located in a sector of the city that needs drastic social and cultural changes.' (Rodríguez 1997: 56)

The absence of the episode of the invasion, I argue, indicates that the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal is more oriented towards its national and international audiences than towards its local community. This is also evidenced by the temporary exhibitions the museum has held, which I argue also point to an international orientation. For example, in 2001, during the celebration of ICOMs international day of museums with the subject of 'Museums Building Communities', the programme of the museum, developed with support from the Panama Canal Authority, created a temporary exhibition for Panamanian high school students that was a virtual tour of

the great museums of the world (the Louvre Museum, the Hermitage, the Warhol Museum, the Prado, the National Gallery in London, and the Vatican Museum). Ramos Baquero voiced her concern over the few opportunities Panamanian students had for travelling, a problem that the exhibition was attempting to address with the possibilities of virtual travel that new technology provided (Autoridad del Canal de Panamá 2001: 9).

Another example is the 2005 exhibition entitled *The Darién Adventure*, an exhibition that commemorated the 300th anniversary of Scotland's failed attempt in 1698 to establish a colony in El Darién, at the east side of the isthmus of Panama. This exhibition was the travelling version of a 1999 exhibition compiled by the National Archives of Scotland and the National Library of Scotland (National Library of Scotland, National Archives of Scotland and Museo del Canal Interoceánico 2005: 1). For the version exhibited in Panama, Juan David Morgan, President of the *Patronato del Museo del Canal Interoceánico* (the museum's board), provided an introduction that presented an idealized picture of European colonialism:

'After its discovery, America fulfilled that promise of abundance and adventures and further brightened the illusions of the European people, who were eager to find new frontiers and commercial routes. Thus, the isthmus of Panama became the Promised Land, where rivers flowed with milk and nothing was impossible, as would become evident centuries later with the construction of the Panama Canal (...) The exhibition we inaugurate today masterfully portrays the human drama behind this story, which began with the most bright-eyed illusions, only to conclude with the most painful of disappointments. Step by step, it details the most utopian dream and the most absolute adversity, and upon journeying through it, we once again recreate the emotions and aspirations of this brave group who came to these lands looking for a place to begin a more prosperous life.' (Morgan 2005: 2)

The event was reframed as a sign of the Scottish pioneering spirit that could nevertheless not defeat the power of England and Spain, and it was also brought to contemporary relevance by tying it to Scotland's interests in the Canal. Jack McConnell (2005: 4), First Minister of Scotland, wrote in the exhibition catalogue

that '[m]any Scots, and those of Scots descent, live and work in modern day Panama. Companies and investors based in Scotland look with much interest at the exciting prospects for growth and investment in Panama, not least in the ports and maritime sectors'.

The question remains of whom is the museum trying to reach. Issues concerning the surrounding community of San Felipe and the connected borough of El Chorrillo have not found their way to the exhibition. Migrant workers have secondary roles in the story presented. From the previous analysis, I argue that the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal, in trying to present a unified story of the Canal, and by extension, of Panmanianness as attached to transit, is creating an essentialised version that leaves little room for the inclusion of alternative voices or contemporary debates. From a look at the emergence of the museum, I argue that it has been conceived as a diplomatic envoy for the new image of Panama. In this way, the task of including contemporary debates may be postponed because of the perceived needs of international audiences, especially the Canal's international clients.

In the next chapter, dedicated to the Panamá Viejo Visitor Centre, I continue with some of the issues raised during the analysis of the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal about the relationship between local and international audiences. I will expand in particular on the issues surrounding local communities and international stakeholders with regards to Panamá La Vieja's inclusion in the World Heritage List.

Chapter 8: The Panamá Viejo Visitor Centre

In this chapter I look at the site of the Panamá La Vieja Monumental Complex and in particular at its interpretive museum, the Panamá Viejo Visitor Centre. The ruins of Panamá La Vieja, the remains of the first settlement of the city of Panama founded in 1519 (see Chapter 3), are going through a process of revitalization that is administered by the Patronato Panamá Viejo, a non-profit organization of mixed regime with members from the private sector (Kiwaniis Club of Panama and Banistmo Bank) and the government (Panamanian Institute of Tourism and National Institute of Culture). Since the beginning of the twentieth century, these ruins have attracted the attention of government and private stakeholders either as possible sources of revenues from tourism, as symbols of nationhood, or as rich sites for archaeological investigations. With the creation of the Patronato Panamá Viejo, however, the ‘tourist attraction’ view of the site that had so far dominated government plans has begun to be combined with a more systematic program of archaeological investigations.

I start the chapter by discussing the links between the recent inclusion of Panamá La Vieja as part of UNESCO’s World Heritage List and changes at the site that affect its surrounding communities (Panamá Viejo, Villa del Rey, Puente del Rey and Coco del Mar). I will then examine the exhibition at museum of the site, the Panamá Viejo Visitor Centre, and discuss how the findings of the restoration project are presented, pointing out, however, that contemporary debates related to the surrounding communities are currently silenced.

For this analysis, I am supported by visits in 2006 and 2007 to the Visitor Centre, texts, documentation available through the museum’s website and documentation concerning UNESCO’s World Heritage List. I begin the analysis in the following section with an overview of the history of the area of Panamá La Vieja.

Panamá La Vieja

As noted in Chapter 3, buccaneer Henry Morgan destroyed the first settlement of the city of Panama in 1671. After destruction, a decision was made to move the city to the safer 'site of Ancon'. The resettlement included using stones and material available at the old site to build the new city. The site was officially abandoned for the next three centuries. According to Eduardo Tejeira Davis (2003), however, in the last decades of the nineteenth century there is evidence that the area was inhabited, containing lots that were used for agriculture.

During the first years of the Republic, the Panamanian government reclaimed the ruins of Panamá La Vieja. In 1912, the site was ceded to the Municipality of Panama, who would be in charge of preserving the then declared 'public monument worthy of investigation' (Article 4, Law 12 of 19 October 1912). For Tejeira Davis, this was due to the necessity of the new Panamanian government to prove that Panama had its own independent character long before its union to Colombia, for which the government resorted to Spanish colonial history (cited in Vega Abad 2003b). A different interpretation is provided by Patricia Pizzurno Gelós (2007), who links the passing of Law 12 and the transformation of Panamá La Vieja into a monument with the increase in foreign tourism during the years of the construction of the Panama Canal. For Pizzurno Gelós (2007: 7), tourists from the United States coming to see the construction works expanded their visits to include the ruins of Panamá La Vieja, and Law 12 represented the mechanism the government tried to implement to profit from the situation.

Eventually, the renewed official interest in the area had direct consequences for its residents. In 1918, populations occupying the area of Panamá La Vieja were evicted, and the site was returned to the custody of the Executive Power to be treated as monument (Law 9 of 3 November 1918 cited in Rubio 1950b: 66). Panamá La Vieja was later declared a National Historic Monument by Law 68 of 11 June 1941 (Rubio 1950b: 35, 79).

In spite of the evictions, the site was reoccupied a few decades later. During creation of the campus of the University of Panama between 1947 and 1948, the government evicted the illegal residents of lots that were being expropriated for the University campus. These populations then moved to Panamá La Vieja (Vega Abad 2003a). In 1949, as a measure to regulate the situation of these populations, the government officially created the first borough of Panamá Viejo (Law 1 of 1949). The legal background that was invoked for the creation of this borough was Law 22 of 1941, where the concept of ‘Family Patrimony’ had been established. This concept, originally thought as relating to poor *campesino* families, was created to insure that specific families would have enough land for their subsistence (Vega Abad 2003a). When the law was refitted to the case of residents of Panamá Viejo, many of whom were migrants from rural areas, these families were allowed to build houses but the land remained government property. During the 1950s-60s, the borough of Panamá Viejo kept expanding to the east, and other boroughs around Panamá La Vieja, such as Puente del Rey and Villa del Rey, started to consolidate (Vega Abad 2003a). In 1969, during the military regime, the government rescinded ownership of these lands, and transferred them to the Ministerio de Desarrollo Agropecuario (Ministry of Agricultural Development), where they were sold as individual lots (Vega Abad 2003a).

In the 1950s, the site went through another significant change. In 1953, at the 50th anniversary of the Republic, Avenida Cincuentenario, a road crossing through the middle of the monumental complex, was inaugurated. This avenue replaced two roads, one built between 1911 and 1912 to connect Río Abajo, a borough on the northeast of the ruins of Panamá La Vieja, with the ruins of the Cathedral Tower, and a second, a dirt road built later on to connect the Cathedral Tower with Coco del Mar, a borough on the west of the ruins (Vega Abad 2003c). According to Tejeira Davis, Avenida Cincuentenario was meant to facilitate the visit to the ruins for Panamanian families, who would be able to enjoy the sight from the comfort of their cars (cited in Vega Abad 2003c).

In the 1960s, the government built a large military barrack in the vicinity of the ruins of the Cathedral Tower (Riba 1968: 52). The site of Panamá La Vieja also began to be studied during this period by foreign archaeologists (see Rovira 2008: [1]). In the 1970s, the ‘tourist attraction’ view of the site surfaced again in official plans. Between 1973 and 1976, the Panamanian Institute of Tourism hired Mexican architect Carlos Flores Marini to make a plan for the ‘valuing’ of the site of Panamá La Vieja and in particular for its development as tourist attraction (Rovira 2008: [1]). In 1976, Law 91 assigned the management of the site to the Panamanian Institute of Tourism. This law also declared the site a ‘historic monumental complex’, redefined its limits, prohibited human occupancy of the area, and prohibited any activities that were contrary to its preservation (Arango 2006: 6). In 1982, the administration of the site was transferred to the Direction of Historical Patrimony (Arango 2006: 6). In 1995, the administration changed again, this time to a mixed regime: government and private sectors joined to form the Patronato Panamá Viejo (PPV). This non-profit organization was created ‘to deal with the decay of the historic site of Panamá La Vieja, to conduct the *puesta en valor*, ‘valuing’ of the site, and to develop its potential as a historical and archaeological park’ (Patronato Panamá Viejo 1998).

In 1995, Alberto Gonzáles Pozo recommended the addition of Panamá La Vieja and the city’s Old Cask (the Historic District) in the application for the inclusion of Salón Bolívar as part of the World Heritage List (see Chapter 7). At that time, it was recommended that Panamá La Vieja be removed from the application because it could endanger the acceptance of the Historic District and Salon Bolivar. As part of a new effort to include the site in the World Heritage List, the Patronato Panamá Viejo hired the Puerto Rican firm Law Environmental Caribe to create a Master Plan for the management of the site. In the study made by Law Environmental Caribe, the ‘touristic attraction’ view was referred to as ‘wishful thinking’ on the part of government officials, because the statistics of the study showed that the majority of people visiting the area were not international tourists, but Panamanian students, whose numbers kept a more or less constant growth (Law Environmental Caribe 1999). The results of this study indicated that the tourism oriented management proposed by former planners for this site was unrealistic. It would require a huge

expenditure on international promotion, which could not necessarily lead to making this site a popular international attraction. With the completion of the Master Plan in 1999, new principles replaced the tourism-oriented approach to the site. Amongst these were conservation, authenticity, dissemination, training, community participation and sustainability (Arango 2006: 9). Some of these principles, however, were also requirements for the inclusion of the site in the World Heritage List. In the next section, I discuss the implications the inclusion in the list has for the management of the site of Panamá La Vieja.

World Heritage and the Management of Panamá La Vieja

In 2003, the site of Panamá La Vieja was included in the World Heritage List as part of the already accepted site of Salón Bolívar and Historic District of Panama. The denomination was thereby changed to *Archaeological Site of Panamá Viejo and the Historic District of Panamá* (World Heritage Committee 2003: 116). An important aspect of the acceptance of the Historic District as part of the World Heritage List in 1997 had been that it preserved intact its street pattern (World Heritage Committee 1997: 47). In the Management Plan of Panamá La Vieja, which ultimately led to the inclusion of the site as an extension of the Historic District in the World Heritage List, the recovery of the original street pattern was a primary goal. It was also an important measure to meet the criteria of authenticity central for its continued permanence in the list. As a result, changes undergone during the 1950s-60s, such as the construction of Avenida Cincuentenario, became main challenges for the Patronato Panamá Viejo.

The Convention is clear when stating that ‘properties’ have to be of ‘outstanding universal value’, and this entails their importance beyond national or regional boundaries (World Heritage Committee 2005: 46). Panamá La Vieja was accepted as of ‘outstanding universal value’ under criteria ii, iv and vi of the World Heritage Convention (World Heritage Committee 2003: 215). Criteria ii and iv in particular emphasize the architectural characteristics of sites: criterion ii speaks of properties that are examples of developments in architecture or town-planning design,

while criterion iv speaks of an architectural ensemble representative of ‘a significant stage in human history’. Criterion vi, that the property is associated with living traditions or beliefs of ‘outstanding universal significance’, has to be applied in conjunction with other criteria (World Heritage Committee 2005: 52).

For the previous acceptance of the Historic District and Salón Bolívar, a member of the committee expressed reservations when criterion vi was invoked as part of the acceptance of the nomination. Furthermore, in the case of Historic Towns, the category under which the Historic District falls, the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* state that criterion vi (the role a Historic Town may have played in the past) is insufficient for inscription. The property has to show the ‘spatial organization, structure, materials, forms and functions of a group of buildings’ that ‘reflect the civilization or succession of civilizations which have prompted the nomination of the property’ (World Heritage Committee 2008: 88). This makes of the recovery of the street pattern in Panamá La Vieja a must for its permanence in the World Heritage List.

The 1999 Master Plan included the closing of Avenida Cincuentenario, the principal artery of the Panamá Viejo community, where a number of businesses run. The closing of Avenida Cincuentenario would facilitate the recovery of the original street pattern. In addition, closing this avenue would eliminate the damage to the ruins provoked by the vibrations coming from heavy traffic (in 2005 figures, at least 60,000 vehicles transited through it daily, see Benjamin 2005). The mostly adult and low-income residents of Panamá Viejo, however, have complained that the deviation of the avenue would negatively affect them if it were to pass through their neighbourhood (Benjamin 2005).

The measures taken to give legal status to surrounding communities in preceding decades and their current illegal expansion represent loss of land and structures for the archaeological park. The Patronato Panamá Viejo, however, has to assess the impact the full implementation of its Master Plan will have upon the livelihood of these communities. The criteria upon which the site was included in the

World Heritage List, I argue, can signify that measures to dampen the impact on surrounding communities can become secondary to those needed to insure the site's authenticity and integrity as required by the World Heritage Committee.

According to a study completed for the Patronato Panamá Viejo in September 2005, the surrounding communities feared that the intervention of the Patronato Panamá Viejo would finally lead to their eviction from the area. Some of the fear derives from the possibility to turn surrounding communities into part of the site's buffering zone. Arango has declared, however, that this measure would be taken to impose limits to the height of new constructions around the historical park, not to evict families (cited in Benjamin 2005). In particular in the area of Coco del Mar, there has been an increase in high-rise constructions that can threaten the authenticity and integrity of the site under UNESCO's criteria. Another factor that affects the relationship between the Patronato Panamá Viejo and its surrounding communities has to do with the expectations these communities have about economic profit from the project. The Patronato is looked at as a source for employment, yet it does not have the capacity or the need to employ a large number of members of the community, since the Master Plan only includes a handful of manual workers for the conservation of the site (Law Environmental Caribe 1999).

The topic of the relationship between World Heritage Sites and communities in Central America has also been discussed at UNESCO's meetings in the region. At a Regional Expert Meeting on 'Cultural Landscapes in Central America' in 2000, participants pointed out that the World Heritage List was 'mainly focused on tangible heritage', yet for the case of Central America and Mexico there was a need to deepen the relationship between intangible and tangible heritage (World Heritage Committee 2000: 20). It was pointed out that 'the participation of the local communities is essential for both the identification and the process of nomination as well as for management, use and development of cultural landscapes as tourist destinations. ... it is necessary to develop application mechanisms for the integration of the communities in tourism activities for generating economical benefits and for the recovery of the cultural and natural heritage' (World Heritage Committee 2000: 20).

Actions taken by the Patronato Panamá Viejo show a concern with the impact the project has upon surrounding communities. Amongst these actions have been meetings to discuss plans for the relocation of Avenida Cincuentenario and workshops with young people from the community of Panamá Viejo to stage plays about the Colonial Period at the ruins (Proaño Wexman 2007).

Other actions include the Archaeological Project of the site of Panamá La Vieja, through which the Patronato Panamá Viejo is trying to reach the wider national community. For Beatriz Rovira, former Director of the Archaeological Project, the denomination of heritage of the site has allowed investigations beyond the colonial period, in this way enlarging the value of Panamá La Vieja by incorporating the Pre-Columbian period to its historical discourse (cited in Chong 2006). The results from investigations of the Archaeological Project are shown at the Visitor Centre of Panamá La Vieja, at the Patronato Panamá Viejo's website through a section about the Archaeological Register, and through the scholarly publication *Canto Rodado*, published once a year by the Patronato Panamá Viejo. Cooke and Sánchez (2004) have argued that the lack of effort from the government to promote specialized training in this discipline is a main cause for the erosion of the potential of archaeology to help Panamanians interpret the past in meaningful ways. Currently, these authors argue, what prevails is a sort of Indiana-Jones version of what happened in the isthmus before the colony, a view that banishes all possibilities to shed light on the present by studying the past. Rovira (2001: 6) has stated that the public dissemination of archaeological findings and of the work done at the site of Panamá La Vieja can help counteract the looting of archaeological resources. In the next section, closing this chapter, I review the exhibition at the museum of the site, the Panamá Viejo Visitor Centre.

The Exhibition

Amongst the goals of the 1999 Master Plan was the creation of attraction points at the site of Panamá La Vieja (Patronato Panamá Viejo 2006: 89). One of these attraction points is the Visitor Centre located at the western border of the complex. In this

interpretive museum, inaugurated in 2004, the results of archaeological research are the main subject. These are combined with an emphasis on the birth of the city of Panama within the commercial network of the Spanish Empire.



Figure 14. The Panamá Viejo Visitor Centre. Photo by Bruno Sánchez (2008)



Figure 15. Entrance corridor at the Panamá Viejo Visitor Centre. Photo by Bruno Sánchez (2008)

The exhibition starts in the second level of the building at a corridor with photographs of the Cathedral Tower, of archaeological research, and videos about the physical characteristics of the site. These images serve as cue to the character of ‘archaeological site’ of Panamá La Vieja.



Figure 16. Panel explaining methods of collection of the Panamá La Vieja Archaeological Project. Photo by Bruno Sánchez (2008)

Following is the first hall, with a series of panels about the excavations that produced the collection on display. The panels present a numbered array of photographs of the methodology used at the site, such as field reticulation procedures and treatment of pieces. In these panels, emphasis is made in the way objects acquire value through investigation. The text reads that ‘objects acquire scientific value if they are extracted registering the information about the place and conditions in which they were found’³³. Rovira (2001: 6) has pointed out that this type of presentation has

³³ Field notes by the author, 2007.

as additional goal to counteract looting attitudes towards archaeological resources. I have noted earlier some of the issues surrounding the practice of *huaquería* in Panama (see Chapter 6). Other panels situate the pieces in a temporal context, in relation to findings in distant locations, and also as part of a network of exchanges in the historical regions of the Isthmus of Panama.

Panama is presented in its character as an indigenous fishermen town through drawings of likely uses of the different objects on display and the possible form of Pre-Columbian housing. This is complemented by quotes from descriptions by Spanish chroniclers. The accompanying text points to the biases that are part of such chronicles and their exoticizing view of the 'New World'. The hall ends in a display of an indigenous burial. The display of human remains in Panama has not yet become a contested topic in academic debate, neither has it been addressed in official policies.

The next section is dedicated to the beginning of the transit function of the Isthmus of Panama and the foundation of Panamá La Vieja. The impact the arrival of Spanish colonizers had upon indigenous populations is briefly mentioned through images of Vasco Nunez de Balboa's *entradas a tierra*, expeditions to loot indigenous villages and capture slaves (see Chapter 3). In this hall, however, the main focus is on archaeological findings that help reconstruct the quotidian aspects of the life of Spanish colonizers in Panamá La Vieja.

Down at the first level of the building, the exhibition continues with the story of piracy in the Caribbean. The tone of the exhibition changes, being, I argue, oriented towards young audiences through the use of comic-like drawings to portray pirate ships and buccaneers. Texts such as 'to assault Panama, Henry Morgan commanded the largest pirate expedition ever seen in the Caribbean' create suspense and lead the visitor to the drama of the destruction of the city. The effect is enhanced by the display of canons and large photographs of rainforest as background to the portrait of buccaneer Henry Morgan.

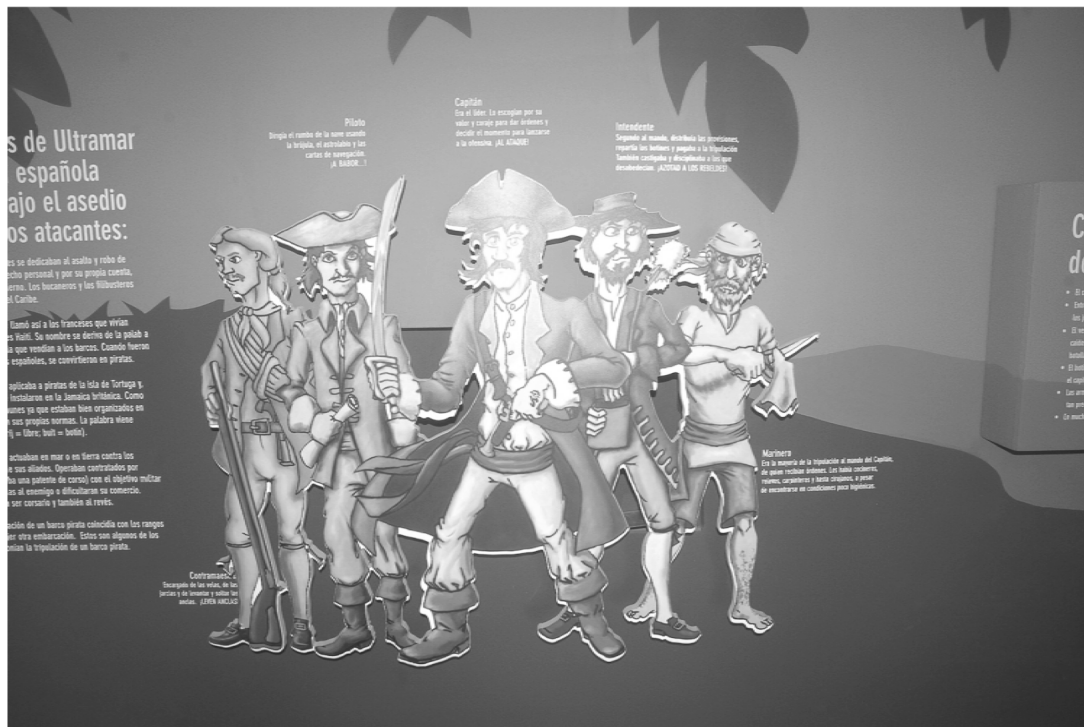


Figure 17. Comic-like figures of pirates. Photo by Bruno Sánchez (2008)

The section on piracy also helps link the site to other two World Heritage sites in the territory of Panama, the castle of San Lorenzo and the fortress of Portobello in the Atlantic side of Panama. These sites have been in the World Heritage List since 1980, included as examples of the military system developed in the Caribbean by the Spanish Empire. The connection between Panamá La Vieja and the Historic District is also emphasized in this hall by an explanation of architectural changes provoked by the destruction of the city, which provided the new settlement with a military character.

At the end of the hall, panels present the revitalization project of Panamá La Vieja and its character of World Heritage site, and a series of photographs return to the theme of archaeology with which the exhibition began. This is complemented by images of school children in the area of Panamá La Vieja and a timeline with aerial photographs of changes in the area of the ruins from 1953 to 2002.

One item that stands in contrast to the efforts to separate archaeology from ‘treasure finding’ made at the exhibition is present in the Centre’s store, where the company REPROSA, which is not affiliated to the Patronato Panamá Viejo, sells reproductions of Pre-Columbian pieces. Images of a strong semi-naked indigenous man and his female companion cover the front of a promotional leaflet entitled ‘Treasures of Panama’, which offers reproductions of golden pieces for sale. This, I argue, erodes the message against this type of simplistic view of Pre-Columbian Panama that has been presented at the exhibition.

Muted at the exhibition remains the existence of areas around Panamá La Vieja where black and indigenous slaves lived during the existence of this settlement. Alfredo Castellero Calvo (1994) has pointed out that the resettlement of the city of Panama made it possible for the Spanish elite to create physical social hierarchies through the construction of the city walls, with the clear demarcation of class boundaries between inner and outer residents. These hierarchies, according to Castellero Calvo, were already present in the spatial arrangement of the old city. This way of linking the old city to the latter settlement is silenced at the exhibition, although the Patronato Panamá Viejo published Castellero Calvo’s (2006) *Sociedad, Economía y Cultura Material*, a book about the material life of Panamá La Vieja, which touches upon these issues. Equally silenced remain the challenges the inclusion of Panamá La Vieja in the World Heritage List presents for its surrounding communities.

For Panamá La Vieja, inclusion in the World Heritage List has been vital for its financial viability. As has been pointed out, the requisites of the World Heritage List lean towards material heritage and communities surrounding such sites can even become obstacles for the project. This need not be the case, and there is evidence of efforts from the Patronato Panamá Viejo to form links with these communities.

In the next chapter, I discuss examples in which minorities search for spaces to manage their own representations of identity and history in Panama. I start with a return to the representation of the history of the Canal, this time in a museum that

aims at differentiating the contribution that a specific group has made to this work of engineering, and furthermore, to Panamanianness. This will be the case of the West Indian Museum of Panama.

Chapter 9: The West Indian Museum of Panama

In this and the following chapter, I discuss cases of alternative representations of nationhood and history in Panama by minorities such as the West Indians and the Kunas. I start in this chapter with the West Indian Museum of Panama, a museum created in 1980 to address the lack of visibility of the story of West Indians in Panama, and to help revitalize an area of Panama City that was at the time going through rapid decay³⁴. The museum tells the story of the construction of the Panama Canal, of the railroad, and of inter-oceanic passage from the point of view of migrant workers from the West Indies. This museum was also created as an important element of the renewal plan of El Marañón.

The debates around this museum concern black identity and Panamanianness, and the visibilization or differentiation of groups of West Indian descent in Panama. Within the specific project of increasing the visibility of the West Indian community, there are issues around the museum concerning some of the positions of the stakeholders at the *Sociedad de Amigos del Museo Afroantillano de Panamá* SAMAAP (Society of Friends of the West Indian Museum of Panama). From the analysis of the society's publications and member's declarations in other media, I argue that these positions have shifted away from the previous 'essentialisation' of black communities in El Darién and the Atlantic Coast (both to the east and the west of the isthmus) that was an attempt to clearly differentiate the West Indian from the Colonial black, towards a middle point where differences are muted in favour of a common project for the acknowledgement of black ethnicity's participation in the national context.

³⁴ I use the translation of Museo Afroantillano de Panamá as the West Indian Museum of Panama because this is the denomination used by the *Sociedad de Amigos del Museo Afroantillano de Panamá* (SAMAAP) (Society of Friends of the West Indian Museum of Panama) in their official website and printed magazine. George Westerman describes Philip Sherlock's conception of the West Indies: 'a territory that roughly comprised modern Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, and Leeward and Windward Islands, which underwent colonization, slave trade, and sugar cane plantation, maintained links with Great Britain as metropolis, and although belonging geographically to the American Continent, was historically part of Europe and Africa' (quoted in Westerman 1980: 15). Nicholas Pastides (2007: 280) has, however, pointed out that the term *West Indian*, which was the name derived from Christopher Columbus's misconceptions of the location of the region, is currently being replaced in scholarly publications with *Caribbean*, derived from *Carib*, the name of the island aboriginal inhabitants.

The analysis starts with an overview of the issues surrounding the location of this museum, and continues with a look at its emergence and its current exhibition. This is followed by a discussion of some of the issues that are muted or silenced at the exhibition, such as the conflicts around Afro-Panamanianness that marked the last half of the twentieth century.

For the analysis of this museum, I draw on interviews in 2007 with Romualda Lombardo, chief in charge of the West Indian Museum of Panama, and with Anthony McLean, member of the SAMAAP, texts from the SAMAAP website and publications as well as Internet material from other websites related to the Afro-Panamanian network, and visits to the museum between 2006 and 2007. As in the previous analyses, I begin with a brief history of the location of the museum.

El Marañón

The borough of El Marañón dates from the period of the construction of the Trans-Isthmian Railroad, between 1850 and 1855 (see Chapter 3). It was formed by the building of wooden barracks, *casas de inquilinato* that mainly housed migrant workers who could not afford the high costs of other areas of Panama City. These were overcrowded tenement houses that in some cases housed entire families in a single room, and often did not have a private bathroom. These tenement houses were the product of the unregulated growth of the city, which kept expanding with the arrival of migrants attracted by the promise of work in the Canal, a situation from which the rising rental elite profited.

During Arnulfo Arias' presidency, the first actions were taken to begin to plan the growth of the city, with the hiring of Austrian architect Karl Brunner as government consultant in 1941 (Riba 1968: 19). Brunner wrote a proposal for the area: the *Informe sobre el Desarrollo Urbano y el Plano Regulador en la Ciudad de Panamá* (Report about Urban Development and Regulatory Plan in the City of Panama). As a remedy for the unhealthy conditions of housing in parts of the city, amongst them El Marañón, Brunner proposed an 'urban renewal'. This government-

controlled urban renewal would include condemning buildings in bad conditions (as long as there was replacement housing for their inhabitants), buying the lots through damage awards, and using public funds to clean the sites (Riba 1968: 21).

Though little action was taken at the time, urban planning remained a government concern, and Brunner's report was followed in 1944 by the recommendations to the Panamanian government by David R. Williams of the Institute of Foreign Affairs in Washington, who rekindled the idea of 'urban renewal'. This time, renewal meant the demolition of slum areas of El Marañón, El Chorrillo, Calidonia, and parts of Santa Ana (Riba 1968: 24). The recommendations concerning urban renewal made by Williams would not be carried out fully until the tabling of the 1971 *Plan de Renovación Urbana* (Plan of Urban Renewal), when the Instituto de Vivienda y Urbanismo (IVU) (Institute of Housing and Urbanism), later Ministerio de Vivienda (MIVI) (Ministry of Housing), began the demolition of the area of El Marañón.

West Indians had lived in the area of El Marañón since the beginning of the twentieth century, and during the 1950s-60s, new arrivals of Antilleans had moved there from the Canal Zone as a result of downsizing measures taken by Canal Zone authorities (Priestley 2004: 53)³⁵. Yet with the creation of the international banking centre and the moving of the city centre further east along the bay of Panama from Plaza Cinco de Mayo and Avenida Central to Via España, land in El Marañón began to be targeted by urban planners, who saw the potential for an increase in land value. In the end, El Marañón's 'urban renewal' (or rather its demolition) meant the relocation of most of its residents, some of which migrated to the United States (especially to New York) due to work and family links formed at the Canal Zone (Priestley 2004: 53).

³⁵ Priestley (2004: 65) prefers the term Antilleans to West Indians because it includes migrants from the Dutch and French speaking Caribbean, excluding the Bahamas.

As part of the renewal plan, however, the MIVI offered the recently created Direction of Historical Patrimony the opportunity to take over a property of historical value in the area. Reina Torres de Araúz chose the chapel of the Christian Mission Church, built by migrants from Barbados in 1910 in land ceded in 1909 by the Railroad Company.

Emergence of the Museum and Current Exhibition

The West Indian Museum of Panama was one of Reina Torres de Araúz's last works. Its inauguration coincided with the celebration of the Second International Congress of Black Ethnicities of the Americas in Panama City in 1980. This congress was part of a series of three meetings that took place between 1977 and 1982 in Colombia, Panama and Brazil, which served to promote the creation of investigation centres on black ethnicity in the region and called for the inclusion of their history in the different official national histories (Tamayo 1995).



Figure 18. The West Indian Museum of Panama. Photo by Roberto Sánchez (2007)

The creation of this museum echoed the recommendations from these meetings. Already in 1978 a research proposal prepared by the Direction of Historical Patrimony cited as one of its goals that the museum should become a collection of socio-cultural material and part of a planned Centre for West Indian Culture of Panama. It would also be a research centre for the analysis of cultural, political, economic and social aspects of West Indian culture that could highlight their role in the Panamanian nation. The goal also was to publish material that would allow further understanding of the West Indian group as part of the makeup of Panama (Conte Guardia 1978). The budget for the museum, however, was limited by the constraints imposed through the centralized structure of the National Institute of Culture. The proposed Research Centre for West Indian Culture therefore remained only a paper project.

In 1981, fearing the eventual decay of the museum because of these budget constraints, members of the West Indian community created the Society of Friends of the West Indian Museum of Panama (SAMAAP) to ensure that the museum at least would continue to function. In time, the SAMAAP, which has a membership that is not limited to the West Indian community, has become responsible for most of the physical maintenance of the museum, although curatorial decisions are still taken by the employees of the National Institute of Culture (Lombardo 2007). Thus, at the moment, the museum has two different sets of stakeholders collaborating in separate areas. While the SAMAAP produces the publications about black ethnicity available at the museum's entrance counter, provides funds for the periodic maintenance of the wooden building, organizes a host of public activities at the museum, and attempts to collect funds to build a community centre on part of the museum's lot, the National Institute of Culture keeps control of the revenues coming from visits, is responsible for the exhibition, and holds property and decision-making power over the uses of the lot where the museum is located (A. McLean 2007).

The exhibition is designed as a circular flow through the open interior of the Church. The museum is divided into thematic areas that loosely follow a chronological arrangement. In contrast to the blurry image of a mass of workers at the

Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal (see Chapter 7), the panels at the West Indian Museum of Panama are filled with stories about individual workers and families. At the start, a diorama about the French Canal and the Railroad construction is followed by comparisons of the number of West Indian, European, Chinese, and Latin American migrants that came to participate in the construction works. The numbers give way to biographies and photographs of West Indians, especially women, in everyday activities. One example is the portrait of Josefina del Carmen Meneses, a seamstress. A second is the photograph of the Methodist Women Sewing Circle. Accompanying panels read ‘lavanderas, planchadoras, ellas mandan en el mercado’ (laundresses, ironing ladies, they are the bosses in the market)³⁶.

This is followed by an exhibition of musical instruments and two dioramas about the lifestyle of West Indian migrants during the period of Canal construction, one of a house, with a bedroom and a kitchen, and a second about religious life.



Figure 19. Dioramas at the West Indian Museum of Panama. Photo by Roberto Sánchez (2007)

³⁶ Field notes by the author, 2007.

The display continues with a panel on Sydney Young and his independent newspaper, the *Panama Tribune*. This English language paper, founded in 1928, featured news and debates about discrimination not only in Panama, but also in the United States, England, the Caribbean and in European colonies in Africa.

One of the last panels is dedicated to the gold roll / silver roll. Two images of U.S. Canal Zone Postal Service employees, one of a white U.S. worker and the other of a West Indian worker, are compared. The explanatory text points out that in 1946, while the white U.S. worker, employed on the gold roll, earned 150 U.S. dollars a month plus benefits, the West Indian worker on the silver roll earned 80 U.S. dollars a month for doing the same job.

What is not pointed out, however, is that the gold roll / silver roll system, though officially a way to differentiate between skilled and unskilled workers and later an unofficial way to differentiate between U.S. and other workers, was above all a race-based discriminatory system that also affected African American employees. Patrice Brown (1997) argues that after instructions had been issued in 1906 to remove all 'coloured' workers except the U.S. workers from the gold roll, and place them on the silver roll, the authorities in the Canal Zone found themselves entangled in issues of race regarding their African American employees. Eventually Canal authorities stopped hiring African Americans, and went as far as to recommend those already working in the Canal Zone to use silver roll schools, postal and other services to avoid harassment, as these were the ones reserved for their race (Brown 1997). The gold roll / silver roll issue has been predominantly attached to injustices inflicted upon the West Indian community but, in reality, it was a system that affected a much wider range of people. This is, as mentioned above, not presented at the West Indian Museum of Panama.

The exhibition ends by emphasizing achievements of the West Indian community in Panamanian society with contemporary images of athletes, scholars, and the Canal. There are issues, however, surrounding the emphasis on the achievements of West Indians that are not mentioned at this exhibition, related to past

enmities between members of the West Indian and Colonial black communities. In the following section, I discuss some of these debates and point out current changes.

Debates Around the Museum: Between Highlighting and Downplaying the Afro in Panamanianness

In the 1970s, a heated debate took place following Juan Materno Vásquez's publications on the question of Panamanianness. Vásquez, then Minister of Government and Justice, claimed that the West Indian community was anti-patriotic because its members did not 'feel' Panamanian and, on the contrary, they claimed the recognition of their dances, language, and values derived from British, North American or African models (Vásquez 1981: 361). In response to Vásquez's claims, Melva Lowe (later Director of SAMAAP and Head of the Department of English at the University of Panama) engaged in a defence of the West Indian's use of English, arguing that it was both a necessity and an advantage given the conditions in the Canal Zone. Priestley (2004: 54) argues that in this decade, both U.S. and Panama based Antillean-Panamanians 'questioned the traditional concept of the monocultural and monolingual nation-state, proposing instead a more inclusive concept of the nation-state, where blacks, Antilleans, and indigenous peoples would have a place'.

Renée Alexander Craft (2008: 130) argues that the animosity of Panamanians towards West Indians was related to the segregationist policies of the Canal Zone government, which grouped Panamanians and West Indians in the same category of non-whites, and relegated them to the lower wages of the silver roll³⁷. Alexander Craft (2008: 131) also interprets the rejection of the English language as part of the nationalist movement for sovereignty in the Canal Zone, and argues that the new national paradigm, of which the Spanish language was a central part, fuelled the enmities between the West Indian and Afro-Colonial communities. The segregationist

³⁷ For an explanation of the gold roll-silver roll system, see Chapter 4.

practices facilitated the emergence of tensions between Colonial blacks as nationals versus West Indians as immigrants (Alexander Craft 2008: 127).

I argue, however, that some members of the West Indian community also promoted a differentiation that could foster resentment. Hugo Wood-Lyder, former Minister of Health and member of the SAMAAP, made claims that focused on a difference that implied the superiority of West Indians over Colonial blacks. For him, ‘Spanish-speaking blacks have a tendency to reject themselves ... they want to be like whites, knowing they are rejected ... The Caribbean black has a sense of oneness. The black Latin has nowhere to go, they have no self-esteem’ (quoted in Kane 2004a: 48). In this type of position, the Colonial black descendant becomes an assimilated individual who has lost contact with his or her roots through the adoption of the Spanish language and Panamanian traditions, while the West Indian is the image of the hard working individual, oppressed and denied of his or her linguistic and religious identity.

George Westerman (1980) also echoed the ‘hard working migrant’ versus ‘the lazy natives’ story. In his descriptions of the situation that prompted the migrations for the Canal works, Westerman asserted that

‘Durante ese período el Istmo estaba poco habitado, era un país improductivo, caracterizado por grandes aguaceros durante la mayor parte del año, con la fama de ser uno de los lugares más inhóspitos del mundo entero, que no ofrecía mano de obra calificada y con muy pocos obreros no especializados que fueran eficientes en su trabajo.’

‘During this period, the isthmus had few inhabitants, was an unproductive country, characterized by abundant rainfall during most of the year, famed for being one of the most inhospitable places in the world, that did not have qualified workers and had very few unqualified workers who could be efficient in their jobs.’ (Westerman 1980: 29)

Scholars such as Gerardo Maloney (1989) avoided these comparisons, and looked for the reasons for migration elsewhere. Maloney (1989: 12) linked the West Indian workers urge to migrate to the situation created by the *latifundio* practices of

the large English sugar plantations that with the end of slavery limited the access of now free black populations to this type of industry.

Other current efforts to drift away from the previous divisive positions have been promoted by members of the SAMAAP, whose activities have reached far beyond the museum's walls. Members of the SAMAAP were involved in the passing, under President Mireya Moscoso's administration, of Law 9 of 30 May 2000 that instituted the Black Ethnicity Day. They were also part of the Special Committee for the Establishment of a Government Policy for the Full Inclusion of the Panamanian Black Ethnicity (Executive Decree 124 of 27 May 2005), whose precedent was the 'Declaration and Program of Action' of the *Second World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance* held in Durban in 2001.

For Alexander Craft (2008: 139), efforts such as the Black Ethnicity Day and the celebration in 2006 of the First Afro-Panamanian Festival mark the recognition of both West Indian and Colonial black communities in a 'shared global space within an hegemonic system of oppression based in part on discourses of race'. She argues that a reason for the current reconciliatory moves may be related to the turnover of the Canal Zone:

'West Indian hostility regarding their second-class treatment by the United States blended but did not harmonize with Afro-Colonial angst on the same subject. Just as the US intervention largely splintered Panameño blackness, its withdrawal has helped heal it. Even with the success of revolutionary movements, including the negritude and black power moments and greater West Indian integration into Panameño culture, a national coming-together of the two Africandescended populations would perhaps not be possible or successful without the dismantling of the Canal Zone.' (Alexander Craft 2008: 140)

The activities of the SAMAAP and associated stakeholders have crossed physical boundaries through their online networking. Aside of in SAMAAPs own website (*Samaap.com*), the activities of SAMAAP are disseminated through websites

such as *Etnia Negra de Panama* (*DiadelaEtnia.homestead.com*), managed by SAMAAP member Anthony McLean, which provides alternative timelines of the history of Panama, detailed biographies of members of the West Indian community, and information of the various efforts of SAMAAP and other associations to expand the reach of the Afro-Panamanian community's work against discrimination. Similarly, through *PanamaCouncilNY.com*, The Panama City Council of New York, which attempts to gather around it Panamanian Diasporas in the United States (New York has the largest concentration), also promotes the activities of the SAMAAP and functions as research centre on issues of black ethnicity in Panama.

Although the SAMAAP might be proposing the coalescence of black minorities and the Panamanian society in general around a project against discrimination and in favour of a more inclusive society, these concerns have not been made explicit at the permanent exhibition at the West Indian Museum of Panama. As I have argued, the centralized administrative structure of INAC may be a cause for the gap between what is presented at the museum and the current work done by SAMAAP.

In the next chapter, I will look at the Museum of the Kuna Nation and at how the Congreso General Kuna is appropriating the idea of museum to create alternatives to the official representations of indigenous communities. The Museum of the Kuna Nation is an example of the active participation of the local community in the decision-making process of the museum, in a structure that greatly differs from what is practiced in government museums. This will be the closing chapter of the analytical component.

Chapter 10: The Museum of the Kuna Nation

Although the indigenous peoples of Panama are far from being the remnants of long vanished historical entities, official museums continue to portray them this way. In this sense, the creation of the Museum of the Kuna Nation in 2005 is a milestone for the Kuna community and for other indigenous peoples in Panama, because it symbolizes an increased control over the way they are represented.

Contemporary indigenous communities in Panama stand as exogenous to the nation in government museum such as the MARTA and the Museum of Nationality, which mostly incorporate the indigenous as historical, asserting, I argue, a sense of discontinuity between those who were in the territory before and those who inhabit it today. By contrast, in the Museum of the Kuna Nation, the nation is legitimised by ethnicity and an immemorial past attached to the long inhabitancy of land. The alternative representation that this museum presents, however, comes with its own tradeoffs. The story of the nation as legitimized by ancestral occupancy of land has silences about other groups living in the area, such as the descendants of Colonial blacks and the more recent *campesino* migrants from the Azuero Peninsula.

Although I was not able to visit this museum, I have chosen to include the Museum of the Kuna Nation, and support my analysis through an interview in 2007 with its principal coordinator, Anelio Merry, along with other texts provided by him and material available at the website of the Congreso General Kuna (Kuna General Congress). I find the inclusion of this museum necessary because it is a counterpoint to the representations of indigenous peoples on display at the government museums that I have previously analysed. In contrast to other indigenous peoples that have concentrated their efforts in eco-tourism projects (for example, the Wekso project by the Naso in Bocas del Toro), the Kunas have articulated a heritage policy that uses museums to addresses the question of nationhood, and indirectly challenge the project of a single Panamanian nationhood, proposing instead a plurinational society. In addition, the museum's administrative organization also provides a contrast to government museum's top-down administrative approach. The Museum of the Kuna

Nation aims to be a 'community museum', calling for the participation of the local community in the decision-making process of the museum.

The impossibility to travel to Kuna Yala, however, means that I will need to keep my discussion short. I will therefore focus on what the museum may represent in relation to the strengthening of autonomy for the Kuna community. In the following section, I begin the analysis with an overview of the location.

The Comarca Kuna Yala

I have previously described the negative impact attributed to Spanish colonisation upon indigenous populations in the Isthmus of Panama, and also provided a background for the 1925 Dule Revolution, a confrontation between Kuna communities and the Panamanian government that led to the creation of the Comarca Kuna Yala, a continental and insular territory in the Atlantic coast of Panama (see Chapter 3). The Dule Revolution has led the way to important achievements towards political autonomy and rights over land not only for the Kunas, but for other indigenous communities as well: as of 2008, a quarter of Panamanian territory belongs legally to indigenous communities in a regime of Comarcas (territorial divisions based on common historical antecedents, geography, or economic similarities).

As discussed in Chapter 3, Francisco Herrera (2003) has argued, however, that contemporary relationships between the Panamanian government and indigenous peoples in Panama are similar to those developed during the Spanish colony. The Spanish, unable to exterminate or dominate the Kunas and Ngöbés in the Caribbean side of the isthmus, and considering the small significance the region had for the transit economy, left it mostly non-colonized. Herrera (2003: 188) further argues that Panamanian politicians, on the other hand, do not have strong economic interests in areas other than the transit zone, and have therefore been very pragmatic in the way they have let indigenous communities achieve land rights.

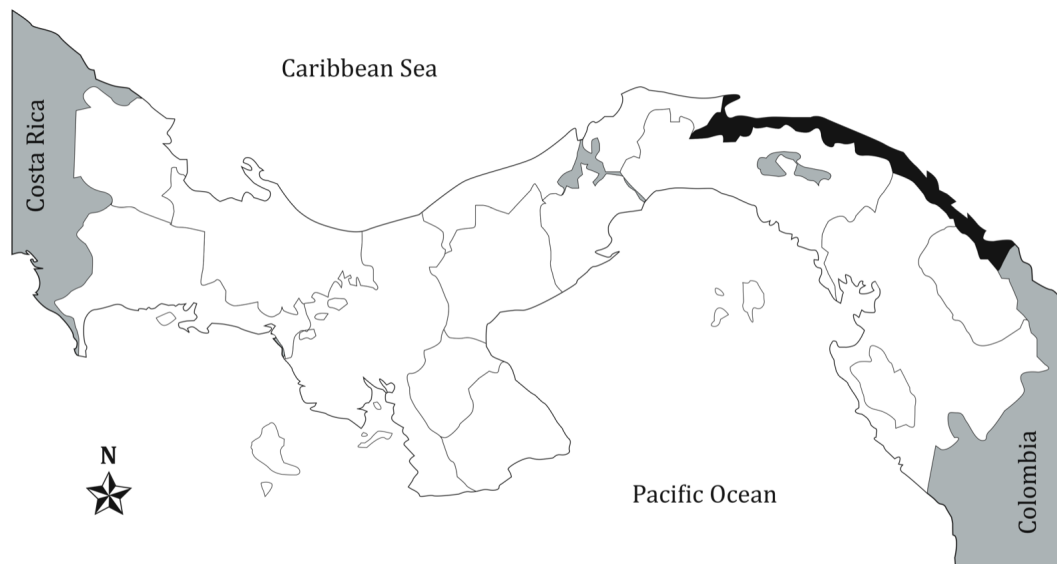


Figure 20. The Comarca Kuna Yala

The achievement of land rights and the creation of the Comarca Kuna Yala, however, have been key for the Kunas, for whom land is inextricably linked with autonomy and self-determination. As explained at the *Encuentro de pueblos indígenas de Abia Yala* in 1993, autonomy for the Kunas implies:

“Ser hombre o ser mujer” capaz de “ser fuerza y autoridad” en la propia casa. ... Y la “casa” no se limita a una choza, sino que nos lleva indefectiblemente a una tierra. ... Sin “casa” no puedo educar a mis hijos, sin tierra no puedo decidir de acuerdo a lo que yo quiero, sino de acuerdo a aquel que me deja vivir en su casa ... Desde este aspecto, nuestros ancianos nos hablan de autonomía como la vida que vivimos de acuerdo a nuestros valores, sin que un otro nos presione a cambiarla por estar en tierra ajena.’

“To be a man or to be a woman” able to “be force and authority” in their own house. (...) And the “house” is not just a shack, it relates indefectibly to a piece of land. ... Without a “house” I can’t raise my children, without land I can’t decide according to what I want, but according to what is decided by the person who let me live in their house ... From this point of view, our elders speak to us about autonomy as the life we live according to our values, without somebody else pressing us to change it because we are in other people’s land.’
(Congreso General Kuna 1994: 47)

Yet for the Kuna community, autonomy is not only achieved by the ownership of land, and autonomy does not mean isolation. Autonomy should include the possibility to freely communicate with others outside of the logic of commiseration (Congreso General Kuna 1994: 48). For this type of communication to be possible, consciousness about history and about cultural manifestations is key.

The creation of the Museum of the Kuna Nation can therefore be understood as part of the strategy for the consolidation of the autonomy of the Comarca Kuna Yala, the strengthening of self-determination, and the breaking of a paradigm where indigenous peoples are treated with commiseration instead of respect.

Emergence of the Museum and Exhibition

In 1978, at the Fifth National Symposium of Anthropology, Archaeology and Ethno-history of Panama, Antonio Reuter Orán and Pelucio Chiari of the Centre for Kuna Studies made the following appeal to the audience:

'Distinguidos caballeros que me escucháis atentamente: los cambios que hemos venido sufriendo las comunidades indígenas, sistemáticamente por las sociedades nacionales, degenerando muchas veces en forma violenta nuestras identidades llevando estructuras ya caducas de una sociedad. Ruégoles a nombre de mi pueblo y de todos aquellos que han mantenido viva la llama de su autenticidad ... que no nos miren como a un museo viviente o mero campo de investigación donde unos cuantos vivan a costa de nuestras culturas.'

'Honourable gentlemen that hear me attentively: the changes systematically (imposed) by the national society that we the indigenous communities have been suffering, often violently degrade our identities. I ask of you in the name of my people and of all those that have kept alive the flame of their authenticity ... that you do not look at us as a living museum or mere field of investigation where a few can profit from our cultures.' (Reuter Orán and Chiari 1974: 105)

This declaration bears witness to the concerns the Kunas had about the approaches of Panamanian authorities and scholars towards indigenous peoples. It

would not be long before the Congreso General Kuna started considering a project to strengthen research and representations that came from inside the community.

Projects for the creation of museums in the Comarca Kuna Yala date from the 1990s, when the Congreso General Kuna proposed the community of Uer-uerdup as the site for a new museum. The project was meant to become a way to disseminate knowledge about Kuna culture, including history, mythology, symbolism and spiritual aspects. The idea was to ‘show a living image of the Kuna society’ (Merry 2007a).

To tackle the lack of economic means that were preventing the project from getting started, the community began talks with the Anthropological Museum of Gothenburg, Sweden, as well as participated in the making of an exhibition entitled ‘the art of being Kuna’, organized and developed by the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History in 1997, and exhibited at the National Museum of the American Indian in the United States between 1998 and 1999. Collaboration aimed at creating the museum project at Uer-uerdup was established between the National Museum of the American Indian and the Congreso General Kuna, and in 2000, the Department of Community Services at the National Museum of the American Indian granted funds for the development process. At the same time the Congreso General Kuna received an invitation from the Union of Community Museums in Oaxaca, Mexico, to participate in an international conference of Community Museums entitled ‘Strengthening the Links’ (Merry 2007a). As a result of attendance at this conference, the Culture Congress of Kuna Yala joined for the first time the Latin American Movement for Community Museums.

This conference led to the creation of the Office for Community Museums of the Americas. Amongst the first activities of the Office were a series of workshops on the subject of community participation and community museums. One of these workshops was held in the Comarca Kuna Yala, with support from UNESCOs Mexico Office, the Department of Community Services of the National Museum of the American Indian and the Union of Community Museums of Oaxaca, Mexico.

These series of workshops greatly modified the initial museum project, and meant a departure from traditional conceptions of museums and the adoption of the 'community museum' model. In the previous model, Uer-uerdup was selected on the basis of its tourist appeal. The collaboration with the Office for Community Museums of the Americas changed this and led to a conception in which the primary goal of establishing museums in Kuna Yala would be to use them to strengthen, develop and rescue the values of the Kuna people. The sites for the museums were changed, choosing instead Ustupu, Niadup and Gaigirgordup. In 2003, the Inter American Foundation (IAF) donated funds to complete a series of community museums in Kuna Yala. In 2004, the first community museum of Kuna Yala, the Museum of Olomaili, was pre-inaugurated in Ustupu, an island towards the western end of the Comarca. In 2005, the Museum of the Kuna Nation was inaugurated on the island of Gaigirgordup, Isla Porvenir, the administrative capital of Kuna Yala, located at the eastern end of the Comarca.

Regarding the concept of 'community museum', Cuauhtémoc Camarena and Teresa Morales (2006: 322) of the Union of Community Museums of Oaxaca point out that these are 'one of the multiple strategies communities have developed to resist imposition and strengthen their own culture in the context of globalization; and ... local community museums have become a vehicle for international and global connections'. Camarena and Morales (2006: 326-27) explain the adoption of the term community by saying that in Mexico, although authorities have used the concept of 'indigenous community' to recognize community rights but not indigenous rights, it has been the preferred term for indigenous peoples to define themselves. Furthermore, 'community' calls upon its members to develop action and to struggle against cultural impositions, a process in which 'community museums' become important instruments (Camarena and Morales 2006: 327).

Camarena and Morales synthesize the idea of community museums this way:

'The community museum is a platform for a wide variety of actions that respond to the community needs. The museum can develop effective ways to engage and educate children and young people, strengthening their bonds to community culture and offering new skills for creative expression. The museum can contribute to the revitalization of a great variety of cultural traditions, including dance, music and native languages. The museum can make diverse forms of training available and provide skills that allow community members to develop projects that respond to their own needs and aspirations. The museum can become a window through which the community relates to other communities, carrying out cultural exchange and building networks to impact diverse projects and policies. Through the museum a community can organize services for visitors, designed by community members, in a respectful and orderly exchange, instead of remaining an object of consumption by commercial tourism agencies.' (Camarena and Morales 2006: 328)

The program for the community museums of Comarca Kuna Yala and the Museum of the Kuna Nation, as explained by Anelio Merry (2007b), includes workshops with the communities, educational activities for children, and is as well a way to introduce tourists to Kuna Yala, whose numbers are increasing, in a regulated manner. Tourism regulations in the area also include the prohibition of the establishment of tourism businesses by non-Kunas. For Merry (2007b), it is really not the physical structure of the museum or the exhibition that counts, but the way in which it has and will continue to strengthen the network not only amongst the different island and continent based communities that make up Kuna Yala, but also with other indigenous communities from Abya Yala³⁸.

The museum is divided into eight main sections: Chicha Brava, Kitchen, Kuna Cemetery, Cesteria, Musical Instruments, Fishing Arts, Historic Documents and Hammock Art. The museum emphasizes the 'traditional', which needs to be protected and enhanced in face of the foreign customs brought by the 'wagas' (foreigners).

³⁸ Abya Yala is the Kuna name for the American Continent.

For example, the Chicha Brava section describes the spiritual Kuna ceremony of female puberty, which includes drinking corn alcohol, the Chicha Brava, a beverage known in Kuna as *inna* or *gabir*. This ceremony is not often discussed with foreigners, yet its display at the museum, in addition to highlighting the fundamental role of the Kuna women in society, serves as a reminder of how strongly Panamanian authorities and missionaries repressed this ceremony, along with traditional female dresses and language at the beginning of the twentieth century (Howe 2004: 58-59, 119, 189-90). The display of this ceremony at the museum, although this may not be made explicit, becomes a symbol of the preservation of a tradition misunderstood by the wagas.

The Kitchen section, on the other hand, focuses on representing the traditional Kuna kitchen and utensils. This mutes, however, changes in culinary customs in both Kuna Yala and Panama City produced by developments after the Dule Revolution, when Canal Zone authorities started employing Kunas to work amongst other things in kitchens at establishments inside the zone. Kuna chefs have a well-established reputation in Panama City restaurants. An emphasis on representing above all what is conceived as 'traditional' in food and in other areas may come from the pressure for changes in habits brought by the increase of tourism in the area.

The displays on *Cestería* and Hammoc Art also reinforce the message of the protection of 'tradition'. The display of *Cestería* shows the handcraft practiced by men, consisting of the weaving of vegetable fibres for the elaboration of containers, hats and other types of instruments. This display is complemented by practical workshops with members of the community who want to learn *Cestería*. The display of Hammock Art points at ongoing changes that may represent a loss for the Kuna society. This female activity that includes the cultivation of cotton, recollection and weaving of hammocks in vertical looms, is displayed as an activity that is on the verge of extinction.

Historical Documents encompass letters, reports and other materials from the *Intendencia* during the twentieth century. This section serves to narrate the history of

the Dule Revolution, which is also commemorated each year in festivities that include theatrical representations of the Revolution.

The Museum of the Kuna Nation is, I argue, a political tool for self-determination that responds to pressures upon the use of natural resources in the Comarca Kuna Yala, and searches to preserve language and customs that have been the target of repression in the past, in this way reaffirming the right of a people to transmit their culture to future generations. Some of the contemporary challenges the community faces are, however, missing in this display. One is the increasing migration of Kunas to the city, which often results in the loss of links with the community. Others are the disputes with *campesinos* and other populations around and inside the territory of Kuna Yala. Disputes range from the illegal extraction of gold, appropriation of land at the borders of the Comarca, cutting of trees, and not least drug trafficking and guerrilla activities on the border with Colombia. These issues, although absent from the museum display, are discussed in the Congreso General Kuna publications (see, for example, *Kuna Yarki*).

Despite these silences, however, the Museum of the Kuna Nation is an important addition to the representation of nationhood in Panama, one that certainly is different from the view of indigenous peoples as frozen in time or remnants of the past. The Museum of the Kuna Nation, moreover, is an important departure from the centralized structures that shape the exhibitions of government museums, as this museum's organization places the consensus of the community as central to the making of exhibitions.

In Part III: *Models*, I will shift gears to an analysis of examples in which alternative or silenced voices might be heard on issues such as national identity. This is a topic that I have already begun discussing in the analysis of both the West Indian Museum of Panama and the Museum of the Kuna Nation. These two cases, however, are primarily about the voices of minorities looking for their own space, not necessarily challenging directly dominant representations of Panamanianness. In the cases to come, I will be looking at examples in which the majority images of nation

and identity are explicitly questioned. I will start in Chapter 10 with the 7th Panama Art Biennial, an exhibition that focused precisely in addressing contemporary debates surrounding the dominant representation of Panamanianness.

Part III: **Models**

Chapter 11: The 7th Panama Art Biennial at the Museum of Contemporary Art

Debates over the contemporary definition of Panamanianness have become increasingly prominent in Panama's art world after the return of democracy and the turnover of the Canal. In the following chapters, I will focus on exhibitions and works that explicitly attempt to question dominant ideas, to address silences, and to promote debate about Panama inside and beyond the museum's walls. These examples address the question of how can alternative perspectives, missing voices and muted stories become included in Panamanian museum representations.

I start in this chapter with the 7th Panama Art Biennial, an event held in 2005 that came to deal with aspects of Panamanianness that have remained largely muted or silenced at other museums. Artists spoke about sexual minorities, about the invasion of Panama, about the internationalization of culture and global market influences, and about the cannibalization of the perceived Western contemporary art ideal in the Panamanian art scene.

In this chapter, the discussion will focus on the channels artists in Panama use to intervene in the public debates about Panamanianness and post-conflict, exploring the extent to which the country's museums limit or encourage the type of debates these artists engage in. I argue that this exhibition set an example in Panama of collaborative work between museums, external curatorial agents and artists: it effectively turned the Museum of Contemporary Art (MAC) into a space for alternative and critical representations of Panamanian identity, opening the museum to a broader range of voices.

I start the chapter with a background of the Biennial, to then continue with a look at the organization of the 7th Panama Art Biennial, and finish with the analysis of the exhibition itself. As part of the background I will present *ciudadMULTIPLEcity*, an exhibition of urban art that used a decentralized, non-museum based format to discuss issues around the Centennial of the Republic in 2003. I link this exhibition to the choices made at the 7th Panama Art Biennial, which I argue is similar in tone.

Both *ciudadMULTIPLEcity* and the 7th Panama Art Biennial help understand the role artists, independent curators and non-governmental organizations are playing in breaking the public silence over conflictive issues in Panama, although the temporary character of these events may limit their potential to address the prevailing silence in a more profound way.

For this chapter, I use my own experience as participating artist at the 7th Panama Art Biennial, interviews with Walo Araújo (co-organizer), Internet material, press releases and testimonies by the artists available in the Biennial's catalogue, and the publication and DVD edited by the organizers of *ciudadMULTIPLEcity*.

***ciudadMULTIPLEcity*: Urban Spaces for Play, Critique and Reflection**

ciudadMULTIPLEcity was a public art festival that took place in Panama City between 20 March and 20 April 2003, the year of the commemoration of the Centennial of the Republic. The event was aimed at gathering a selection of Panamanian and foreign artists to create works in Panama City, works of art that in the words of curators Adrienne Samos and Gerardo Mosquera

'would have a direct impact on the metropolitan area, its communities, imaginaries, problems, dreams, preoccupations... Art capable of resonating with the people in the street and with the life and dynamics of the multiple, complex capital of a tiny global country.' (Mosquera and Samos 2004: 23)

ciudadMULTIPLEcity was in sharp contrast to the official events programmed for the celebration of the Centennial in 2003 (for example Miss Universe, or the feast with fireworks and loud music in Panama City bay).

The project started when Gerardo Mosquera, Cuban art critic, joint curator of the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York and cofounder of the Havana Biennials, and Adrienne Samos, Panamanian journalist, curator and art critic, invited 9 artists to participate in *ciudadMULTIPLEcity*, a public art event to be staged in

Panama City. According to Mosquera and Samos (2004: 24), the idea was to showcase the already emerging body of critical and provoking work about Panama City that had begun to receive both local and international attention in recent years, as well as invite international artists to reflect upon the city from the outside. Public spaces were preferred over galleries or museums because of the wish to reach an audience that went beyond the small milieu that normally attends art events in Panama City. For these curators, the need to reach broader audiences stemmed also from their opinion that in Panama City, in spite of the permanent flow of goods, people, ideas and cultures, the art offer is limited to what is shown in one private funded Art Museum (the Museum of Contemporary Art to which I refer to later in this chapter) and a small number of art galleries (Mosquera and Samos 2004: 24).

Works addressed a broad range of topics, including urban violence, the psychology of beauty in urban spaces, power and corruption, contrasts between rich and poor, Panama City's special relationship with the ocean and with maritime activities, urban noise and migrants. While some artworks caught little attention, others were prohibited from being shown or removed during the show by Panamanian authorities.

ciudadMULTIPLEcity became a laboratory, workshop and a space for dialogue between foreign and local artists, and also between artists and public (seminars open to the public took place parallel to the event). The managerial structure was itself decentralized, consisting of a group of Panamanian artists that acted as local links between the city and the international guest artists.

Amongst the participating pieces was Gustavo Artigas' *Intervención en el Museo de Historia* (Intervention at the History Museum), where the Mexican artist faked the burning of the History Museum by setting tires on fire at the roof-top of the building and having local firemen perform as if it was a real fire, fooling residents and visitors in the area. Artigas declared that the piece was meant to call attention upon the lack of care Panamanian authorities have for history or culture, as represented by the decay of this particular museum. The piece can, however, be also

read as a desire to forget all that happened before the celebration of the national centennial, or perhaps as a reminder of the dark period the country went through during the dictatorship and the invasion (which hit the surrounding area of El Chorrillo hardest).

Juan Andrés Milanés, a Cuban artist, covered part of Las Bóvedas in San Felipe with blocks of ice for a work entitled *Abstracción en marzo* (Abstraction in March). The goal was to give the public the opportunity to ski in the middle of the hot tropical summer. Ramón Zafrani (2004a: 134), assistant curator of the exhibition, commented that it made him think ‘about the fixation that most children who grow up in the tropics have with snow. This is a country where White Christmas means pine trees imported from Canada, cotton ornaments simulating snow, and several costumed Santa Clauses drenched in sweat’.

Humberto Vélez, a Panamanian artist based in Manchester who later on participated in the 7th Panama Art Biennial, collaborated with the marching band of El Hogar (a vocational school), to create *La Banda de Mi Hogar*. In the project, the band marched through parts of the city where pedestrians are usually not allowed such as the Bridge of the Americas (for long the only bridge connecting the two parts of Panamá City that had been divided by the Canal and the Canal Zone).

Yoan Capote, another Cuban artist, presented *Análisis de la belleza* (Analysis of Beauty), where he re-enacted a work that had been already performed in Cuba, and covered the trash containers of San Felipe with velvet and other fabrics. For Mónica Portillo (2004a), also assistant curator of *ciudadMULTIPLEcity*, the work was related to the renewal process that is going on in San Felipe. For Portillo (2004a: 118), the neighbourhood was ‘experiencing a new phase of symbolic occupation; it was being reclaimed as “Historical District” and this symbolic occupation also involved evictions’. The work marked the tension between the exterior renewal and the internal conflicts in the area.

Artway of thinking, a group formed by Stefania Mantovani and Federica Thiene from Italy, presented *Relation:Ships . Vivir el litoral* (Living the Coast). The

project started as a research on Panama City as a place of intercultural negotiation, and ended as an esoteric ritual that searched to reconcile Panama City with the ocean (Portillo 2004b: 110-11). The work called attention upon the fact that Panama City, a coastal city, seems to live with its back to the ocean, as attested by the daily dumping of sewage from the city into the bay (which has led to the closing down of beaches for bathing) (Portillo 2004b: 111).

Gustavo Araújo, Panamanian artist, created *La cosa está dura* (Things are Tough), a work that consisted on a series of billboards and newspaper advertisements with the phrase 'la cosa está dura'. Initially approved by the commercial sponsors who provided the billboard spaces, the work was later blocked by these very sponsors, who considered it 'an attack on the "healthy optimism" of the consumer' (Samos 2004b: 98).

Belgian Francis Alÿs and Mexican Rafael Ortega created *1 minuto de silencio* (1 Minute of Silence), in collaboration with 35 Panamanian and 10 Nicaraguan artists. The project was to spread silence in various city spaces and to help confront the participating artists with the dynamics offered by the practices of contemporary art (Alÿs and Ortega 2004: 78). The project coincided with the first bombardments of Bagdad, turning it into a form of silent protest (Alÿs and Ortega 2004: 82).

Jesús Palomino, a Spanish artist, presented *Buhoneros y precaristas* (Vendors and Squatters). The piece consisted in placing a series of kiosks and market stalls (which simulated those found in impoverished areas of the city) next to luxurious boutiques in the banking district, as well as placing fictitious shanty houses next to a billboard in a vacant lot and next to a high-rise building (Samos 2004a: 143, 146).

Chinese artist GuXiong traced the lives of Chinese migrants in Panama City from the first arrivals during the construction of the Trans-Isthmian Railroad, to present *Soy quien soy* (I am who I am). The work consisted of a series of enlarged photographs that hung along Avenida B in Chinatown, a street that borders San Felipe (Gualde 2004a: 163). The photos were gathered through a series of interviews with members of the Chinese community in Panama, and were inscribed with

testimonies in Traditional Chinese, Spanish and English, which for example read ‘I had to change my name’, ‘I built the railroad and the Canal’, ‘I am more than my face’, ‘I have mixed blood’, ‘Am I no longer excluded?’, ‘I am a Chinese-Panamanian’, ‘I am like anyone in this land’, ‘This is my home’, and ‘I am who I am’ (see photos in Gualde 2004a: 158-59).

Brooke Alfaro, Panamanian artist, presented *Nueve* (Nine), where he video recorded two rival gangs from Barraza, a sector of El Chorrillo, singing the same rap song, and later projected both recordings simultaneously in the walls of tenement buildings in Barraza (Gualde 2004b: 72). The presentation of the work in this ‘high risk’ area provided the opportunity for dialogue between local families, gang members and foreigners that would perhaps not come together otherwise (Gualde 2004b: 74).

Two works of *ciudadMULTIPLEcity* met strong official opposition and censorship. One censored work was Brazilian Cildo Meirele’s *Panamini*, planned to be the smallest boat to ever cross the Canal. The Panama Canal Authority rejected the project on the grounds that it could attract unwanted attention (for example from terrorists) that could endanger the Canal (see Samos 2004c: 130). The second, and the one that aroused the strongest official rejection, was *Proverbios Chinos* (Chinese Proverbs), presented by Egyptian born and New York based Ghada Amer. Amer placed a series of billboards throughout the city. The billboard that triggered censorship read *Por amor al dinero callará la verdad* (For the Love of Money, Truth will be Silenced) and was placed in front of the Comptroller’s office. Although the organizers had all the required permits to place the billboard, employees from the Mayor’s office removed it just a few hours after installation (Zafrani 2004b: 90).

Mosquera and Samos (2004: 41) commented on the rejection of Amer’s work saying that ‘this scandalous act, recalling the practices of totalitarian countries, clearly showed the repressive side of a society that is liberal only on the surface, revealing a mind-set and schemes that would fit the kind of military dictatorship that oppressed Panama for more than twenty years’. In relation to their overall evaluation

of the project, Mosquera y Samos (2004: 38) argued that *ciudadMULTIPLEcity* had stimulated exchanges between artists and surroundings, and the placement in public spaces had broadened the reach of the works. Nevertheless, difficulties with the organizational structure of the various communities in the urban area hindered the possibility to develop more thorough informational programs with these communities, and diminished the possibilities of dialogue between communities and artists (Mosquera and Samos 2004: 42).

Three years later, the Panamanian art scene would again articulate a critique of Panamanianness that echoed the tone of *ciudadMULTIPLEcity*, this time at the 7th Panama Art Biennial at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

The 7th Panama Art Biennial

Hosted by the privately run Museum of Contemporary Art of Panama and organized by the non-profit foundation Fundación Arte y Cultura, the 7th Panama Art Biennial took place in Panama City from October to December 2005. At the 7th Panama Art Biennial, Fundación Arte y Cultura, an organization independent from the museum, aimed at creating a collaborative environment between artists, organizers, curators and exhibition designers. Through this collaboration, the exhibition became a space for the exploration and discussion of Panamanianness. Although I focus on the 7th Panama Art Biennial, not on the Museum of Contemporary Art, some comments are in point.

This museum started as the Instituto Panameño de Arte (PANARTE) (Panamanian Institute of Art), a private institution working in rented locales that presented art exhibitions, theatre plays, concerts and films (Museo de Arte Contemporáneo 2006). As compensation for the costs of organizing exhibitions, each exhibiting artist was requested to donate one work to PANARTE. In 1983, in view of the growing collection, PANARTE started a campaign to get funding for its own building. With donations and a loan from the Panamanian bank Caja de Ahorros, PANARTE bought the building of the Masonic Temple in Ancón, in a lot in the

former Canal Zone by Avenida de los Mártires (Avenue of the Martyrs, formerly Avenue 4th of July) where the 1964 *Flag Riots* took place (see Chapter 7). The building became the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, a non-governmental organization dedicated to the promotion of Latin-American art, especially Panamanian art.

The Museum of Contemporary Art collaborates with the Panama Art Biennial only by providing the space. The Panama Art Biennial is an independent project created in the 1990s by Mónica Kúpfer in collaboration with the late Irene Scoffery. Kúpfer (2006: 15) explains that in the years of the creation of this event, Panama was coming out of the dictatorship and entering a period of expectation and renewal prompted by the imminent turnover of the Canal. The Panama Art Biennial was planned as a long-term project to foster the development of the arts in the country.

The 1st Panama Art Biennial, held in 1992, was as prize-based painting exhibition. This format began to change already in the 6th Biennial, which included a broader range of media. From being a prize-based exhibition with an emphasis in traditional art disciplines such as painting and sculpture, the Biennial gradually went on to become a place for experimentation in a diversity of audiovisual media. More profound changes came about when the organizer of the Biennial, Mónica Kúpfer, appointed Walo Araújo, who had been involved in *ciudadMULTIPLEcity* as coordinator, to direct the 7th Panama Art Biennial. Araújo (2006: 8) created a new system for the selection of works, which consisted in the appointment of a curator of international renown and an open call for artist portfolios with the only precondition that the artists be either nationals or residents of Panama for at least 3 years. The prerequisite of Panamanian citizenship responded to the Biennial's traditional objective of being the showroom for the latest in Panamanian Art, although in the end almost half of the selected artists for the 7th Panama Art Biennial were not born in Panama.

Led by Kúpfer, Fundación Arte y Cultura was primarily in charge of raising funds for supporting the artists with a stipend to create their works, and for covering

the costs of catalogues, promotion, the opening ceremony and workshops with international curators held at the museum and open to the general public. Financial support came primarily from the private sector (Cervecería Nacional, Samsung) and for the first time in its 12 years of organizing the Biennials, the foundation received governmental support from the National Institute of Culture. Guatemalan curator Rosina Cazali was appointed, and 63 portfolios led to the selection of 15 artists who would develop work specifically for the exhibition (2 artists dropped out later on due to other commitments). For Araújo (2007), it was important that Cazali was from Central America, because one of the objectives of the show would be to promote the integration of Panama into the Central American art dynamics. Another important change the appointment of Cazali brought was that the Biennial would stop being a three jury, prize-based exhibition, and become a curated show, which for Araújo (2007) helped in its coherence. The limit of 15 on the number of artists was due in part to the resources available to support the artists in their creation of works for the exhibit, and also by the size of the museum and the desire of the exhibitors to have enough space to show the works appropriately, and lastly, because the exhibitors felt that 15 artists would be representative enough considering the size of the artistic community in Panama (Araújo 2006: 10).

Collaboration between artists and curator started right after selection, as the exhibition was just a few months away. Meetings between Cazali and the artists took place at the Museum of Contemporary Art to discuss artwork proposals. Collaboration was partly held via email because of the curator's residence in Guatemala. Direct collaboration, however, continued between the artists and Ramon Zafrani, architect in charge of designing the flow plan, assigning spaces and mounting the infrastructure.

This collaborative process led to the production of a group of artworks that dealt with a fragmented, multicultural identity. Cazali (2006: 24) explains that one of the concerns during the initial meetings was finding a common thread for the exhibition. For Cazali (2006: 25), the majority of the artwork proposals pointed to a concern with periods of Panama's political biography, and a concern with what may

be 'typically Panamanian'. The exhibition became a critical look at Panamanianness. Artists addressed ethnic, social, political and economic factors as means of explanation or reflection upon Panamanian identity.

In the next section I analyse the exhibition and argue that one way of reading it is that Panamanian identity is geographical in essence, but this geography is also conceptual, attached to a series of symbols explored by the artists (such as the Panama Canal or other symbols of popular culture and folklore).

The Exhibition

The first work the visitor saw when entering the museum was Jonathan Harker's *Panama jat*, a giant image of a Panama hat pasted into a wall that was covered with the material of the museum's floor (Harker used 'jat' instead of hat to make an allusion to Panamanian slang for the English word 'hot'). The piece received the visitor in an apparently light, humorous tone, playing with how a foreign object (the Panama hat is made in Ecuador) became a 'typical' Panamanian thing. As Harker (2006: 60) put it, his portrait of an Ecuadorian hat that is called Panama hat was like himself, Ecuadorian born but thought of as being Panamanian. In this sense, Panamanianness is more a matter of perception than of origin - a process of appropriation. Harker has often used a mocking tone for his pieces, as for example in the series of photographs produced for the *ciudadMULTIPLEcity* publication, where amongst other things he dressed in a pollera and as a beauty contest queen to address Panamanian attitudes of carelessness, stubborn traditionalism and superficiality.

Facing Harker's piece was the entrance to the second room of the exhibition, divided in three booths dedicated to video and computer art pieces: *Cambios* (Changes), *Angie contra el mundo* (Angie Against the World) and *Más me dan* (They Give Me More). Seen as a flow, the pieces took the visitor from the tropics to the global market via history. *Cambios*, a video loop by Victor Mares, presented us with a scene in an anonymous tropical setting: it could have been anywhere with palm trees in Latin America, but it was in fact in Cuba, where Mares studied film editing

and produced this video. In the video, two girls try to change the tire of a car, exchanging roles every now and then, but never completing the action of changing the tire. *Cambios* becomes this way a metaphor of change where ‘change’ is really an illusion. The characters have no choice but to continue trying again and again to fix something, repeating over and over the same moves, the same hopes, the same forms of evasion (while one girl tries to change the tire, the other comes to the front of the screen and listens to music).

After looking for a while at the hypnotizing *Cambios*, the spectator found in the next booth *Angie contra el mundo*, a computer game about the 1989 invasion of Panama of which I am author. This computer game was a closed circuit of scenes that tried to communicate that there was no point in playing the game of war or no point of trying to escape what already happened, the massive attack by U.S. Forces in December 1989. I will leave this piece for the moment, as I will analyse it in detail from the point of view of the creator in the next chapter.

In the third booth, the spectator met *Más me dan*, a video loop by Donna Conlon that spoke about Panamanian consumerism. Conlon used bags imprinted with brand names of stores from all over the world that came out of each other in an endless sequence. With this simple gesture, Conlon made a strong commentary on globalization and consumerism, where the point of exchange with other cultures becomes anonymous goods made to be thrown away. Brand names from stores all over the world appear printed on the bags and fade away in the dark background of oblivion, as if to express the very Panamanian compulsion with the acquisition of goods, perhaps due to the Canal and the constant flow of merchandise.

Around the corner from this room on the ground floor was another space dedicated to video, in this case a single piece, Ramses Giovanni’s *El hilo rojo* (The Red Thread). In this video, Giovanni and his boyfriend are the characters of an idyllic gay male beach sequence. As law in Panama prohibits same-gender expressions of love in public (Decree 149 of 20 May 1949 from the Ministry of Work and Public Health), his was a piece that was openly subversive and provoking.

Back to the main room and on the way to the top floor was a large black closet by Beatriz Paredes, *Reflexiones silentes* (Silent Reflections), in which the artist had a number of extravagant, at times grotesque objects, for example a pair of eyeballs, that the visitor could discover when opening the cabinets. On the top floor of the museum, the exhibition continued with another large sculpture, *La formación del yo* (The Formation of the I) by Leslie Milzon, also in black, presenting an abstract wooden forest hanging over a water pond. This and the former work addressed the audience in more intimate ways, calling to what is hidden or secret.

A return to more explicit pieces followed on the second room of the top floor, with *Nación Moebius* (Moebius Nation), Enrique Castro's work, an autobiographical piece that talked about the author's experiences in diverse travels around the world, with texts, video and audio that blended images and phrases to create a vision of the way identity is transformed by contact with other cultures and places. One strong icon in this piece was the Panama Canal, which alluded to the constant flow of people that has made Panama City one of the most diverse cities in Latin America.

Contiguous to this room was a small room in the far corner that caught the eye immediately by its contrast with the darkness of the multimedia projection of *Nación Moebius*. This was a small white room that had Francisco Merel's *El Diablico Blanco* (The White Devil), a large geometric abstraction of a *diablo sucio* (dirty devil) mask in white. The *diablos sucios* are figures of folkloric dances that fight against angels, usually seen during the festivities of the Corpus Christi. They were called this way because in the old days, the natural ink of their red and black dresses melted during the dances, making them look dirty. Merel took the dirt out of the *diablicos*, transforming the mask into an almost heavenly, pure and glooming white statue.

The last room of the exhibit changed the tone from the previous sobriety and seriousness to humour, irony and sarcasm. Rachele Mozman used an archetypical rich Panamanian family and her previous photographic portraits entitled *American Exurbia* to search for similarities between Panamanian and U.S. wealthy classes. The

photos presented the visitor with rich girls that looked like giant size dolls in a perfect dollhouse.

On the wall facing Mozman's photos were Jose Manuel Castellon's distorted photographs of Miss Universe, entitled *Welcome to my country*. Deformed faces of over painted women smiled at the viewer, conveying the unreality of Panamanian's illusions of wealth. Instead of using the taxpayer's money to address the severe poverty of the countryside in Panama, to celebrate the centenary of the Republic in 2003, the government led by Mireya Moscoso paid 10 million U.S. dollars to Donald Trump in hope that hosting Miss Universe would boost the national economy. Castellón called attention upon the way Panama portrays itself as a commercial and retirement paradise, full of gorgeous women, palm trees and beaches, a paradise that is nevertheless only accessible to the very few that can afford it. Castellón's photos show the smiles of these women as rigid, false and empty.

Mira Valencia's work dominated the largest wall on the farthest end of the room. Entitled *De DS 77-2 C to DS 92-3 C / From 9140 C to 9583 C / From DS 316-1 C to 325-4 C / Impresiones Digitales en Canvas* (From DS 77-2 C to DS 92-3 C / From 9140 C to 9583 C / From DS 316-1 C to 325-4 C / Digital Impressions on Canvas), these 'paintings', prints on easel of Pantone tones, were a reflection about what a painting is, echoing the fact that the Biennial itself started 12 years ago as a contest that only allowed paintings.

Finally, the last work in this room was to be heard: Humberto Vélez *La Carrera – Clásico VII Bienal de Panamá* (The Race – 7th Panama Biennial Classic) was an audio installation in the form of a radio horse race. Given the title of the work, I interpret the names of the horses as nicknames for the 13 works participating in the exhibition, competing for the first place in the art race, with 'Miss Universe' (Castrellón's work) coming as the winner by a head to 'Damn Negro' (Milzon's black forest), and followed in third place by 'American Visa' (Sánchez Laws' computer game), with runner up 'AIDS' (Giovanni's video) and last in line 'I have a dream' (Castro's multimedia work). But at the same time, as Adrienne Samos (2005: 2) put

it, these nicknames concentrated in a couple of words many of the Panamanian realities, dreams and obsessions.

In the foreword of the exhibition catalogue Araújo (2006) pointed out that the purpose of the Biennial was to become a window to Panamanian contemporary art. The works were interpreted in this publication from the point of view of the aesthetic currents in Latin American Art today. There are no explicit statements in the catalogue or website discussing the potential social and political impact of the exhibition in the public debate on Panamanian identity and nationhood. Yet although the Biennial organizers did not explicitly endorse or highlight the critical statements of the works in the exhibition, the fact that the pieces were shown in the MAC gave these artworks a certain degree of institutional support. As Henrietta Lidchi (1997) points out, ‘artifacts do not spirit themselves into museum collections: they are collected, interpreted and exhibited – all purposeful and motivated activities’. Therefore, both the Museum of Contemporary Art and Fundación Arte y Cultura share, though indirectly, the responsibility with the artists in creating a temporary space for a very daring questioning of Panamanian society.

The Biennial spoke of a Panamanian identity that was multicultural, marked by a recent history of post-conflict, formed by sharply segregated socio-economic groups, presenting a false image of beauty and wealth, suspended in time, and yet able to laugh at itself. The questioned the more sombre aspects of Panamanianness. Nevertheless, in spite of the criticism this exhibition came to present about the majority’s image of Panamanianness, debates concerning minorities such as the West Indian or indigenous peoples were not presented. These voices, as in other displays, remained silenced.

In the following chapter, I take a closer look at two New Media models that I developed for this research. The first is *Angie Against the World*, one of the pieces presented at the 7th Panama Art Biennial, a computer game about the invasion of Panama by U.S. forces in 1989. The second is an online multimedia centre entitled

CiudadPanama.org, where I explore the possibilities the Internet provides for the inclusion of alternative voices in representations of Panamanianness.

Chapter 12: ***Angie Against the World and CiudadPanama.org***

In this chapter, I discuss *Angie Against the World*, a game that combines fictional video with documentary footage to introduce and at times confront the player with the history of the invasion of Panama in 1989. The game has two sections: in the first, ‘Angie’ must find shelter amidst the general bombing and burnout of the city; the second is a collection of interviews from different Panamanian citizens who narrate their memories about the invasion. I will discuss the game in relation to my research process, describing my motivations for creating it.

This will be followed by a description of the development process of *CiudadPanama.org*, a prototype of an online multimedia centre about Panama. Findings from the previous analyses point to a need to open spaces for alternative voices and contemporary debates in Panamanian museums. Ways to open such spaces could be explored for each individual museum but such a project is beyond the scope of this research. Therefore, with the online model I have concentrated on identifying at a general level some of the possibilities the Internet currently offers in relation to the inclusion of alternative voices and stories.

In relation to *Angie Against the World*, I will discuss the feedback I got from audiences in the context of the 7th Panama Art Biennial, and compare this to feedback from other sites in which the game has been shown, as an example of the importance of contexts. In addition to its exhibition at the 7th Panama Art Biennial, the game was also shown in the exhibitions *Inquieta Imagen* (Restless Image) at the Contemporary Museum of Art and Design in San José, Costa Rica (2005), Cornelius Hertz Gallery in Bremen, Germany (2006) and *Ars Latina* in Baja California, Mexico (2007). The game has also been part of academic presentations of this PhD research at the ‘Games as vehicle for social change and democracy’ Seminar in the University of Bergen, Norway (2006) and at the *Digital Arts and Culture Conference DAC* in Perth, Australia (2007).

CiudadPanama.org has not yet been released, for which I will limit my comments to providing a background for the prototype and a description of the planned characteristics.

Motivation: a Perceived Silence About the Invasion

As discussed in Chapter 3, on 20 December 1989 the United States of America invaded Panama to capture General Manuel Antonio Noriega and end his military narco-dictatorship. The operation left thousands of dead, injured, or homeless, and an economy in ruins. This event has been widely discussed in books by Panamanian and U.S. authors (see for example Bernal 1990; Koster and Sánchez 1990; Murillo 1995; J. de J. Martínez 1991; and Vera Calderón 2003). In film, Barbara Krueger produced in 1992 the Oscar winning documentary *The Panama Deception*, a film that was, however, released primarily with a U.S. audience in mind.

The 1989 invasion, however, is still missing from permanent displays in Panamanian museums, as I have pointed out in the analysis of cases. It is also muted, and even silenced, in schoolbooks. For example, a survey about history schoolbooks conducted in 2007 for the national newspaper *La Prensa* by José Arciajovanka Guardia yielded the following results: the seventh grade schoolbook provided a summary version of the military period only up to the ascent of General Manuel Noriega; the fifth year schoolbook summarized the invasion in three lines by saying that ‘el ejército norteamericano invadió a Panamá el 20 de diciembre de 1989 y destruyó el ejército de la dictadura militar’ ‘the North American Army invaded Panama on 20 December 1989, and destroyed the army of the military dictatorship’; the fourth year schoolbook did not have any mention of the period.

I argue that in the last few years, this event has been fading away from the media. For instance, on 20 December 2004, on the fifteenth anniversary of the invasion, I did not find references to the invasion on national television channels. Other public references have also been fading: in 2004, the *Marcha de los Caídos* (March of the Fallen), a large event started in the 1990s in which the families of the

victims walked along the main avenues of Panama City dressed in black to demand public recognition of their loss and ask for monetary compensations, had almost ceased, even though the demands of these families have not been fulfilled.

As a way to address what I perceived was an increasing silence about the invasion, I began a project in collaboration with the film collective *La Pecera* for a documentary about the invasion. The project evolved into a research for a documentary about the street level memories of the invasion. We gained access to raw footage from this period that was stored in the Servicio Estatal de Radio y Televisión (SERTV) (State Radio and Television Service). We also made a video survey in Panama City in 2005, consisting of in-depth interviews where we asked people about their memories of the invasion³⁹. Many of our respondents believed that the invasion was absent from the public media, and cited as reasons for silence the fact that events were still unclear, that current political actors were vulnerable to information coming from further investigation, and that for many families the invasion was still hurtful, for which they preferred silence.

Making Angie Against the World

Parallel to the investigations for a documentary, I created a short fiction film about the invasion using the metaphor of a videogame and some of the documentary footage⁴⁰. When the Museum of Contemporary Art in Panama granted me funds to present a work at the 7th Panama Art Biennial (discussed in the previous chapter), I decided to use this short film and additional documentary footage to create a computer game in Flash.

The choice of a computer game as format had to do with the target audience, Panamanian teenagers who had not gone through the invasion and who are currently

³⁹ The series of interviews were made in the District of Panama in October and November 2005 by La Pecera audiovisual group (Ana Sánchez Laws, Ernesto Jara, Clea Eppelin and Camilo Poltronieri) with funds granted by CINERGIA, the Audiovisual Production Fund for Central America and the Caribbean.

⁴⁰ Ernesto Jara (photo), Camilo Poltronieri (sound) and Angie Trihane (actress) helped me make this short film.

playing computer games such as *America's Army* (a multiplayer game released by the U.S. Military). When doing the street interviews, I found that Panamanian teenagers had very little knowledge about the invasion. I thus wanted to present to them my interpretation of what had happened in Panama only 18 years ago. I was also interested in the metaphor of the invasion as a game because I had seen footage from the invasion where the soldiers were shooting at houses in El Chorrillo from a tank and were commenting on it as if they were in a shooting game.

In this computer game, I wanted to combine a fictional street level perspective with testimonials and archive footage as a way to reflect the dual perspective with which I argue many Panamanians experienced the invasion. During the invasion of Panama, media coverage had been severely restricted both by Panamanian and U.S. militia. Panamanians had as their main sources of information either Panamanian Defence Force's radio, newspaper and TV stations, or broadcasts from the U.S. Southern Command Network (SCN) based in the Canal Zone. Panama's military TV, newspaper and radio channels began to be controlled by the U.S. military right at the beginning of the attack. Regarding SCN, although this channel was transmitting U.S. main broadcasters such as ABC and CNN in addition to their own reports, these broadcasters had themselves very little access to what was happening in the streets of Panama. All incoming journalists were forced to stay in U.S. military bases during the operation and were only allowed to cover the latter stages of the operation (Aukofer and Lawrence 1995: 44). Panamanians therefore witnessed the invasion from two diverging perspectives: the street level perspective and the U.S. military supervised media perspective.

I divided the short film footage into a series of scenes that are interrupted by 'gaming' sections, which include a shooting game, a questionnaire game, and a labyrinth game.

In the first screen, the player is presented with a menu with two options: to play a game, or to view a series of testimonies. The opening sequence of the game section shows Angie, a young woman with a military haircut, running. The point of view of

the camera goes from third person to subjective shots to make clear that the player is in Angie's shoes. Texts that pop up under the main video frame confirm the role of the player as Angie by speaking to the player in the second person ('you have to run for shelter' etc.). The sequence shows footage from an arcade war game mixed with archive news media footage. The archive images function as cues for the historical context. The arcade images are designed to situate the player in a fictitious world. Screen texts set the scenario as 'the city of Panama'.

The opening video sequence is interrupted when Angie runs into a street where she is confronted with danger. She is asked to shoot either an unarmed soldier or a little girl. Even if the player doesn't shoot any of them, she obtains a record and moves on to the next screen, where Angie continues running. This sequence gives way to a questionnaire about the history of the invasion. Getting right answers leads to an accumulation of points that, however, does not alter the course of the game.

At the end of the game, a choice is presented upon 'erasing memory'. If the player chooses 'yes', the game starts over, if 'no', the game ends at a closing screen with short information about the invasion and the possibility to enter the second section of the game, the video archive. The video archive section shows a series of testimonies in which interviewees from a variety of backgrounds talk about their memory of the invasion. These testimonies are presented in a non-hierarchical way. The sample, however, was limited to six testimonies because of the technical choices I made when implementing the game in Flash.

Following is a series of screenshots from the game.



Figure 21. Opening sequence

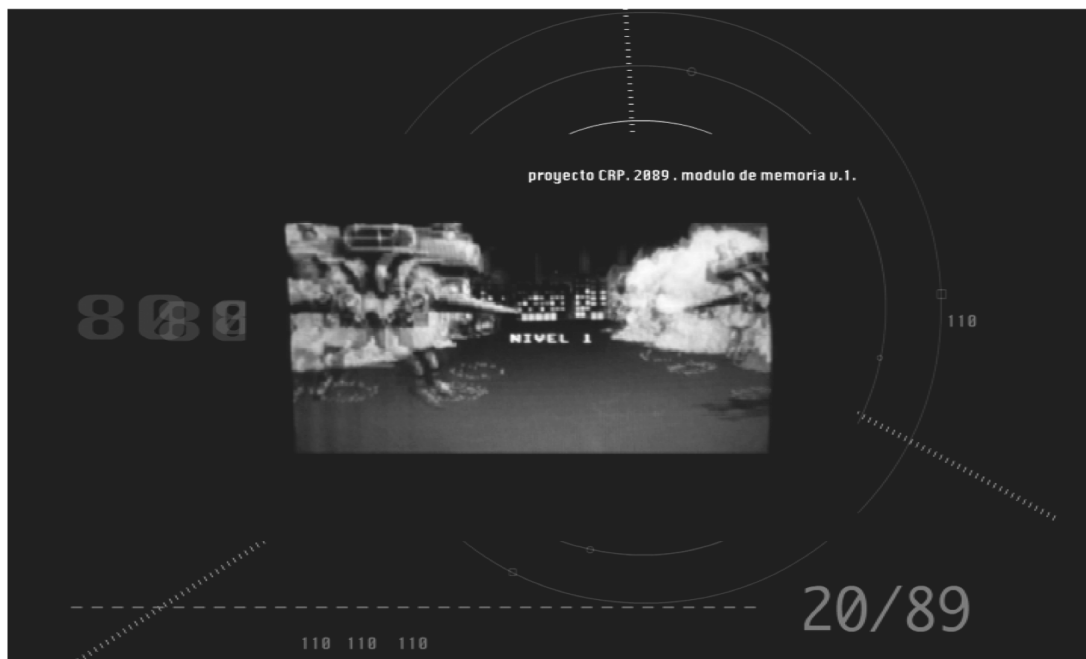


Figure 22. Arcade images



Figure 23. Documentary footage



Figure 24. Shooting game

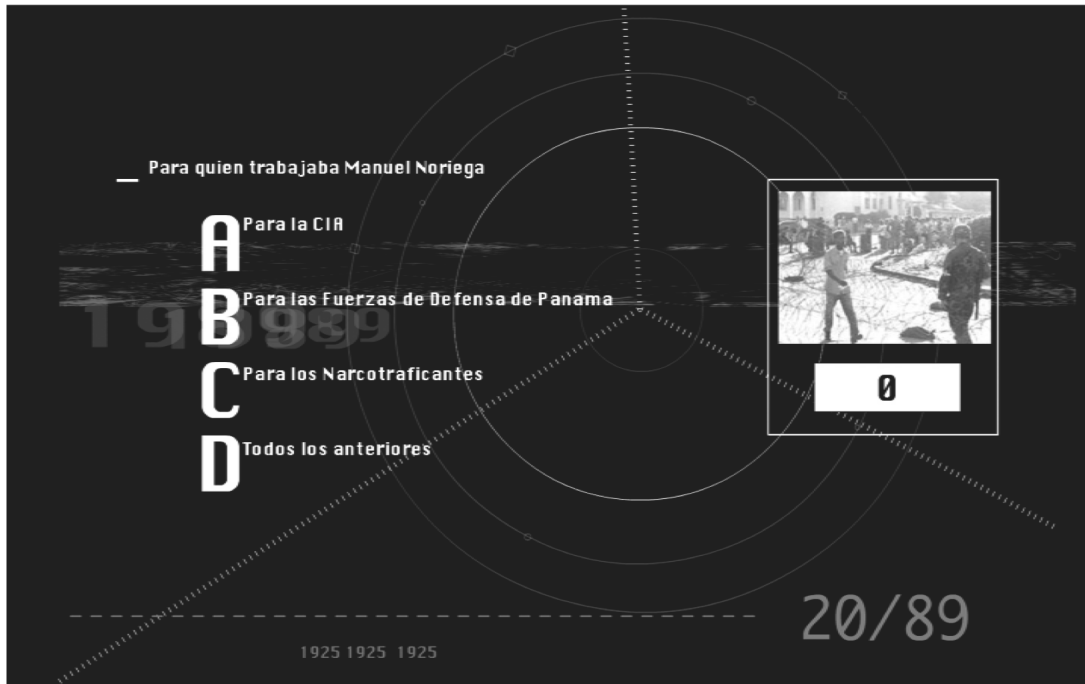


Figure 25. Questionnaire game



Figure 26. Angie runs for shelter in the streets of San Felipe

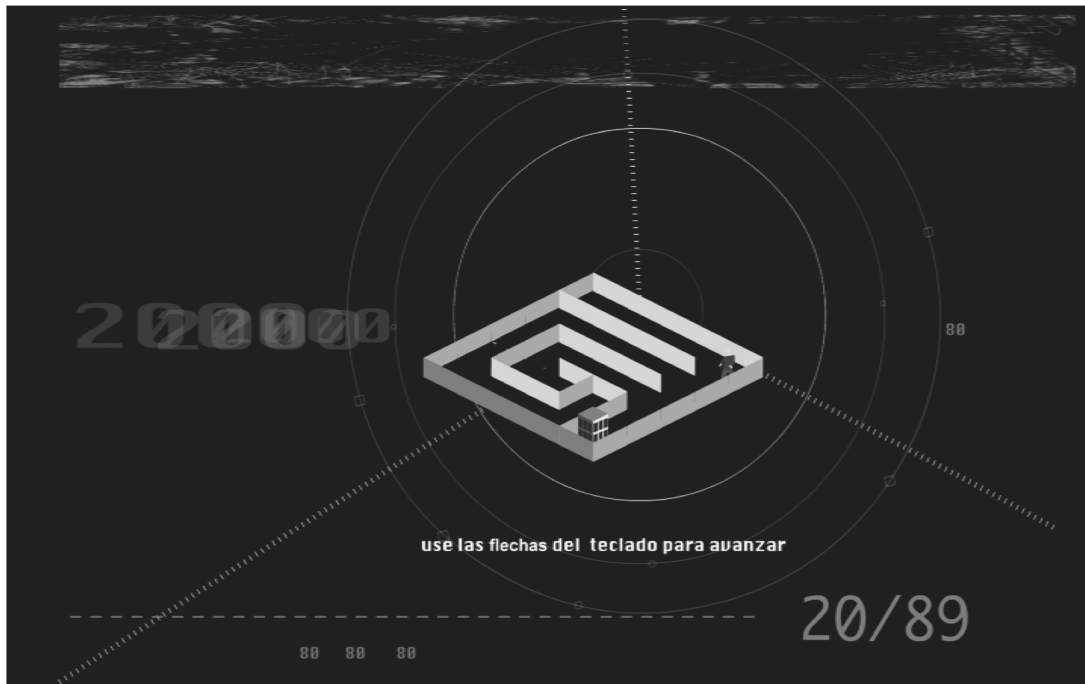


Figure 27. Labyrinth game



Figure 28. Toy soldiers attack Angie

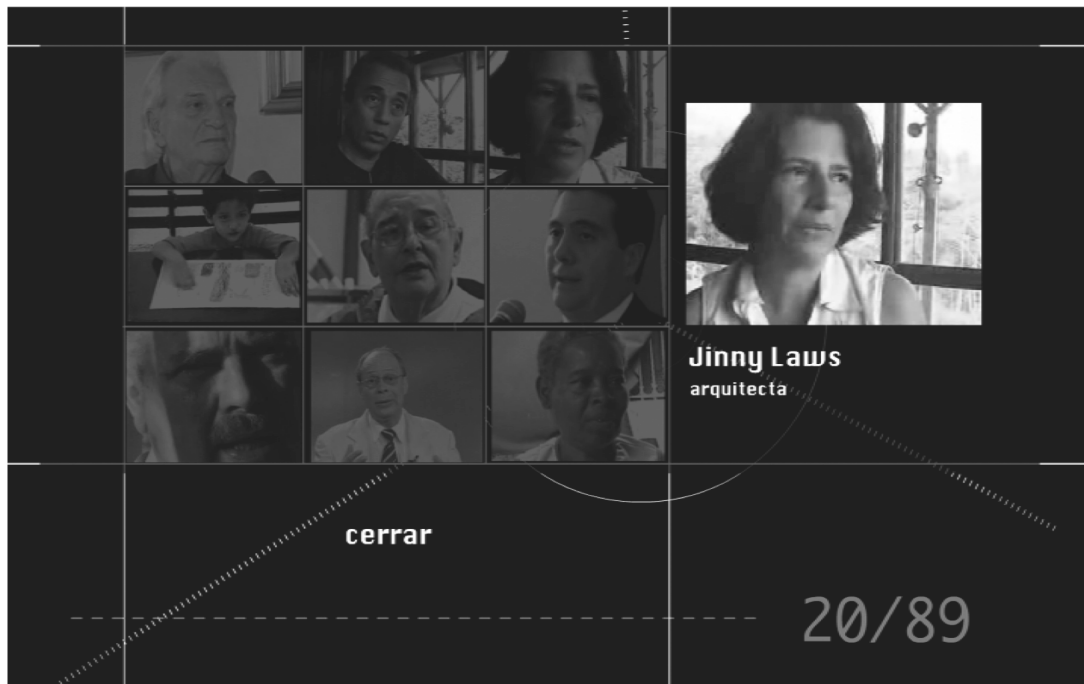


Figure 29. Video archive

Costa Rican art critic Jorge Albán (2006) presented a review of the game at the 9th Havana Biennial. In his view, *Angie Against the World* is a series of ludic dynamics that require the participation of the player to move forward. It is a confrontational narrative that attempts to portray the tragedy of the invasion while maintaining the player at an emotional distance from the event. He points out that in opposition to the narrative of traditional drama, which appeals for an internalization of the main character's situation, this game forces the player to confront the main character. This is exemplified by the fact that Angie is trying to escape from a military attack but is dressed in military clothes. He also argues that the game asks the player not to have feelings about the invasion, but to make decisions instead, like for instance when in the final scene players are asked whether they want to continue or to erase their memory. Albán, however, criticizes the game's playability. He argues that by pushing into reflection via sarcasm, *Angie Against the World* has not paid enough attention to its usability. Albán asks: how many times can this game be played?

This brings me to Gonzalo Frasca's (2000) OSGON concept (One Session Game of Narration). This concept is Frasca's theoretical solution to creating computer games about serious subjects. Using as an example the Holocaust, he discusses the obstacles to create a game about this subject when confronted with traditional conceptions of computer games. He defines these conceptions as having two main characteristics: binary actions and computer game conventions for life and death. Binary actions represent the ability to repeat the game, to be allowed to follow a trial and error routine, therefore evading any consequence of our actions. Conventions of life and death in computer games, on the other hand, turn death into something that can be fixed (start again). This way, if one were to make a game about the Holocaust within these conventions, the situations arising from this historical event would become mere obstacles to overcome in the player's search to win. Frasca then proposes the OSGON, a theoretical prototype consisting of a single player ephemeral piece of software that would enforce a sense of irreversibility of the player's actions. This would be a way of retaining the ethical, social and historical value of concepts of life and death in computer games.

I argue that *Angie Against the World* is such type of work. It is a game to be played once. The player does not really have a choice to change history, the invasion happened and the important thing is to remember that it did, and to try to understand the consequences. It is a game in which the player is constrained to a rigid narrative that will not change in a second play, a narrative that may nevertheless acquire different meanings in each view. Winning is not the purpose of the game - the game has been decided by the game-master, although players may have the illusion that they intervene only because they can click the mouse to continue.

An aspect I would add to Frasca's model, however, is the importance of the context in which the player experiences a computer game. A player in a museum experiences the computer game not only by itself, but also as part of the larger discourse of the museum. In his proposal for frameworks for the analysis of digital games, Jeffrey Wimmer (2008: 339) has also argued that it is not only important to pay attention to dimensions that are specific to a game (such as interactivity and

simulation), but also to the real contexts in which the game is played. In the following section, I will discuss the contexts in which the game has been presented, and focus on the different audience responses when presenting it inside and outside of the museum.

The Game and Audience Response

This game was created as a critical representation about the invasion of Panama that aims to address a current silence in Panamanian museums. Experiencing the game in a museum, I argue, raises a set of concerns that are different from those that arise when the game is played at home or in other spaces.

In the museum, specifically in the context of the 7th Panama Art Biennial, this game became a vehicle for public re-experiencing and reinterpreting of the invasion, and it also became part of the larger exhibition discourse about sensitive political topics and identities. The outreach of the game, however, went beyond this particular exhibition. Because of the Biennial, students at the School of Arts at the University of Panama contacted me to discuss the game. We had two sessions in which the students asked me about my motivations for making the game, but they were especially interested in sharing with their peers and with me their own experiences about the invasion. The game acted as a trigger for the need of these students to tell their stories, memories that have a heavy weight and that are seldom expressed in public. One of the students told me that when she played the game, she remembered how just a couple of days before the invasion she had wanted El Chorrillo to disappear, because this marginal neighbourhood, for her, was such an ugly entry point to the city. She told me how guilty she had felt all her life after this neighbourhood was burned to the ground during the invasion. Another student spoke about the period before the invasion, when Panamanians were protesting in the streets and were being tortured and raped by the Panamanian Defence Forces. For her, the invasion was a relief, the final event in the dark night of the 20 years long dictatorship, but she was shocked at listening to her peer's stories of the loss of family members, and she apologized to her fellow classmates. I asked the art students at the University of

Panama if they would allow me to have a session in which I would bring the video camera and record their testimonies to later use them in a documentary, to which they agreed.

When I showed the game in a gallery in Bremen, the context was an exhibition about Latin American issues, including developments in Venezuela and Bolivia. Already framed by the event, the audience was interested in the types of initiatives that were currently being taken to ask for compensations and to condemn the U.S. action. The game was not the subject of the discussion, but the excuse to talk about the current political situation in Latin America.

At a seminar in Norway about digital games and stories of conflict or post-conflict, the audience composed of researchers interested in the design of 'serious games' was concerned with knowing how Panamanian audiences had responded. There were no questions about the invasion, but about the game as a tool for social change or as a prototype that could be used for other subjects.

In another museum exhibition, this time at the *Ars Latina* exhibition in Baja California, Mexico, the feedback I had was from the curator, Laura Castanedo, who commented on how Latin Americans tend to forget the terrible events that plagued the region a few decades ago. A similar comment was made in Costa Rica, where Jorge Albán pointed out its importance as a memory work within the current tendencies of contemporary Latin American art, while also criticized the game in terms of its narrative characteristics.

At a conference about national museums in Leicester, however, the feedback from the U.S. audience included feeling uncomfortable about my portrayal of the United States, rejecting a representation that was taken as biased towards favouring the point of view of Panamanians. In the DAC conference in Perth, other responses from U.S. participants included apologizing as taxpayers for the responsibility for the damage caused, while also criticizing the internal characteristics of the game.

In the former cases, when the game was played or showed only once, there was a mixed response that in all cases included a stronger emphasis on the political subject that the game deals with. There were personal responses to the event in the case of the Panamanian University students and the U.S. audiences. There were more general responses to political issues related to Latin America in the case of the exhibitions in México and Germany. When looking at responses in private environments, the issue of the design of the game was much more important than in the previous examples (this was the case with Jorge Albán, who contacted me to get a copy of the game for his analysis).

From the experience with making and showing this game, and the material gathered during the research for this thesis, I started a project of an online multimedia centre about the city of Panama, entitled *CiudadPanama.org*.

***CiudadPanama.org*, an Online Multimedia Centre About Panama**

The second New Media model I created for this thesis, which is still in a prototype stage, was an online multimedia centre entitled *CiudadPanama.org*. In this model, I looked at some of the possibilities provided by the Internet. Findings from the previous analyses in relation to the question of *what can an analysis of museums in Panama tell us about the current representations of Panamanianness, and what can this tell us about missing stories and voices*, were the point of departure for the development of this model.

Because this model is still under development, I will not be able to present a full discussion of New Media issues. I will rather present a consideration of how silences could be filled through the use of the Internet. I move to close off this thesis, in other words, by looking forward to what could be done beyond physical in-house change and improvement of web resources in a per museum basis, and propose bringing together the resources of more public institutions: museums, mass media, and libraries.

During the first stages of this PhD research in 2006, I contacted María Magela Brenes, director at the National Library Ernesto J. Castillero (BINAL) in Panama, because I was aware of the recent creation of an Audiovisual and Music Centre with the aid of the Japanese government in their physical location in Panama City. Although the National Library provides a very efficient online service for their large database of printed material, they do not have the resources to provide an online audiovisual archive, primarily because of the high cost of server space and bandwidth. The National Library was interested in the possibility of collaborating with me to create this online archive, yet did not have funds to do so. I also contacted Alexandra Schjelderup, head of International Cooperation at the State Radio and Television Service (SERTV), who became interested in collaborating on an online archive with the National Library because SERTV needed to start digitizing the more than 30 years of video footage they have stored in their headquarters. This material, which is in a host of different formats, is in danger of being lost because of the decay of supporting media. As in the case of the National Library, SERTV did not have the resources to create such an online archive.

One of the aims of the project of an online archive was to promote institutional collaboration on issues of digital heritage, a fairly new subject in Panama. The main concerns included creating an infrastructure for access to audiovisual heritage, as well as providing an online platform for research and networking. In collaboration with SERTV and BINAL, we presented the project to the National Secretariat for Science and Technology (SENACYT). Issues that were initially discussed for the project presented to SENACYT were the need to develop a legal framework in relation to digital heritage, the need to develop a networking platform, and the need to develop prototypes for expandable online audiovisual archives.

Although the project did not receive a positive response from SENACYT, a collaboration agreement was established between SERTV and BINAL. Between 2007 and 2008, I began developing one of the modules of the original proposal presented to SENACYT as part of my research, but without the participation of SERTV and BINAL. I focused on creating a model for an online audiovisual collection about

Panamanian history. This model would be an exploration on how to include alternative views of history and contemporary issues by providing a space where the display of materials was the product of a negotiation between the online centre's administrators and users. The content would be produced via collaboration through forums, commenting, and uploading of audiovisual material.

For this prototype development, I used the results from the investigation of Panamanian history and identity as presented in museums developed as the main component of this research. As I have pointed out earlier, an important issue that emerges from the analysis of cases is the lack of representation of contemporary debates. Online, however, some of the museums have attempted to present contemporary debates by linking to their associated research centres. This is the case of the Museum of the Kuna Nation, which is linked to the webpage of the Congreso General Kuna, and through it, to the publications of the Koskun Kalu Research Institute. A similar strategy is taken with the website of the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal, which includes a section about the Specialized Centre for Research and Investigation of the Canal Expansion, a documentation centre created by the museum to build a collection about the ongoing expansion project. The Patronato Panamá Viejo has also published an online archaeological register where visitors to the website can browse the collection and look at the results of current archaeological investigations. The website also provides an online tour of the ruins via a map, and downloadable publications from its scholarly journal *Canto Rodado*. The website of the SAMAAP has recently undergone major changes (it was relaunched in August 2008). Formerly, the website provided a host of links to associated networks and articles from the SAMAAP print publication. In the new version, however, these features have been eliminated and the website is now geared towards making the visitor contribute monetarily through joining the SAMAAP.

None of these websites, however, provide video or audio material related to contemporary debates. The creation of an online collection of Panamanian digital material on themes such as Panamanian identity and history could be an avenue for museums to address these subjects as well as a way to begin a collaboration with the

general public by providing tools for participation in the build-up of the collection and its interpretation. I argue that by letting go of some of their curatorial power and giving more responsibility to the public, Panamanian museums would be gaining in terms of outreach, as they would be encouraging a direct dialogue with their audiences.

Following is a series of screenshots of the ongoing project.

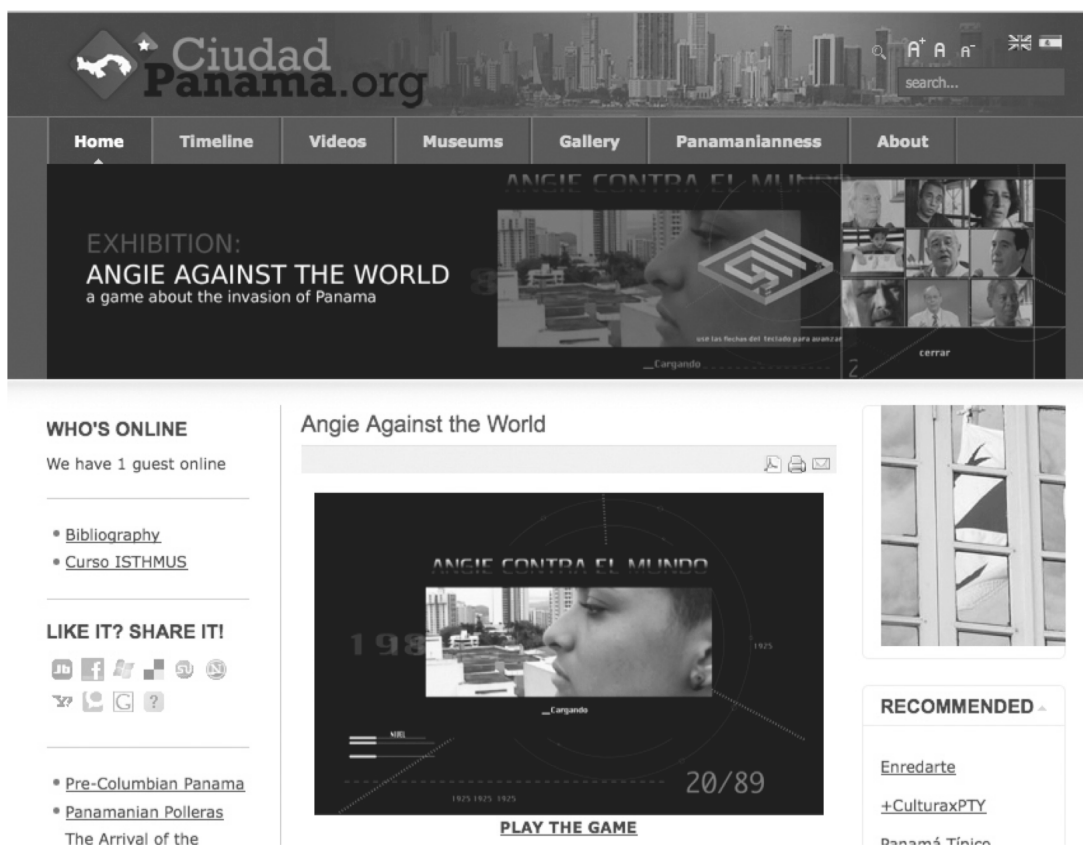


Figure 30. Opening Page

Ciudad Panama.org

Home Timeline Videos Museums Gallery Panamanianness About

Home > Videos

Videos

The Fists of a Nation

Documentary by Pituka Heilbron.

RECOMMENDED

- Enredarte
- +CulturaxPTY
- Panamá Típico
- SAMAAP
- BINAL

LIKE IT? SHARE IT!

fb f w g+ v

• Bibliography

• Curso ISTHMUS

• Panamanian Polleras

• President Bush -

• Address to the Nation on Panama

• So beautiful is Panama

• Timelapse Panama Canal

• La gran familia

Figure 31. Video Section

Ciudad Panama.org

Home Timeline Videos Museums Gallery Panamanianness About

Home > Museums

Museums

CiudadMULTIPLEcity and the 7th Panama Biennial

Ana Luisa Sánchez Laws

In contrast to the silence of some official museums, debates over the definition of Panamanianness have become increasingly prominent in Panama's art world after Canal turnover. The 7th Panama Biennial in 2005 dealt with aspects of Panamanianness that have remained largely muted or silenced at other museums. Artists spoke about minorities such as lesbians and gay males, about the invasion of Panama, about the internationalization of culture and global market influences, and about the cannibalization of the perceived Western contemporary art ideal in the Panamanian art scene. This exhibition set an example in Panama of collaborative work between museums, external curatorial agents, and artists: it effectively turned the MAC into a space for alternative and critical representations of Panamanian identity, opening the museum to a broader range of voices.

READ MORE...

IMAGES OF PANAMA

• Bibliography

• Curso ISTHMUS

LIKE IT? SHARE IT!

fb f w g+ v

The Reina Torres de

Arauz Anthropological

RECOMMENDED

- Enredarte
- +CulturaxPTY
- Panamá Típico
- SAMAAP
- BINAL

Figure 32. Museums Section

Chapter 13: Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to present an analysis of current representations of nationhood and identity in museums in Panama. With this analysis, I attempted to point out missing stories and gaps in representations of Panamanianness that I argue should be addressed.

The main research question was: *what can an analysis of museums in Panama tell us about the current representations of Panamanianness, and what can this tell us about missing stories and voices?* To answer this question, I began by identifying key factors behind the selection of what is represented in Panamanian museums, as well as where and when changes have been made. I analysed a set of museums where I argued dominant narratives could be found, linking these dominant narratives to the political and economic contexts surrounding these museums. I developed an analytical model dividing these contexts into *external and internal contexts*. External contexts were defined as political and economic factors affecting the museums (apparent in policies, sources of funding, and employment practices). Internal contexts included disciplinary changes affecting the conceptualization of museums and their mission, as well as other normative changes affecting methods of collection and museum deontology. These external and internal contexts were national, regional and international, and I looked at their changes over time. To do this, I made a comparison between what is presented in the museums and what is addressed in contemporary debates about Panamanian history and identity that are found in historical and sociological texts. I presented a summary of these debates as a background to the analyses, pointing to the links between the various historical periods and the museums I would later analyse. As a way of looking forward, I also included a practice-based component where I described some possible uses of New Media to address silences and gaps in representations, with a focus on the use of computer games and video material.

Cases

I started the analysis of cases with the Museum of Nationality, a museum created to represent the essential components of Panamanianness. I reviewed the history of the creation of this museum, tracing it to the restructuration of the museum sector during the first years of the military dictatorship. I argued that this museum could be interpreted as part of the need of the military to have a strong popular support for their permanence in power and for the upcoming negotiations of the Panama Canal treaty. I also pointed to the historical aspects surrounding the choice of the Hispanic-Indigenous mix as the essence of Panamanianness. I then discussed representations of contemporary debates surrounding the rural *campesino* communities of the Azuero Peninsula, and pointed out that in this museum these debates are mentioned only indirectly.

The next case was the Anthropological Museum Reina Torres de Araúz, a museum originally created to articulate the Panamanian national culture. I described the emergence of this museum during the period of the military dictatorship. I described the work done by Reina Torres de Araúz to tackle the problem of national cohesion by presenting Panamanianness as composed by a series of human groups. I then discussed the changes undergone by this museum in recent years, which include its relocation and the remaking of its exhibition. I analysed this new exhibition and argued that the former attempt to provide unified version of Panamanianness at this museum had been substituted by an emphasis in the archaeological collection.

Following was the Museum of the Inter-Oceanic Canal, a museum where Panamanianness is represented as inextricably intertwined with the history of the Panama Canal. I argued that this museum muted or silenced contemporary debates about Panama's recent history of political conflict because of its function as an instrument of diplomacy. I also noted how this museum presents a grand narrative where the stories of migrants who came to work at the construction of the Canal is muted.

I then examined the Panamá Viejo Monumental Complex and Visitor Centre, where I continued the discussion about the relationship between international and local contexts. I considered the possible impact of its inclusion in the World Heritage List for the community surrounding the site of Panamá La Vieja.

From these cases, I moved into examples of minorities looking for spaces for their own representations of identity and history in Panama. I analysed the case of the West Indian Museum of Panama, and examined the current exhibition in comparison to the activities of SAMAAP (the Society of Friends of the West Indian Museum of Panama). I argued that the current administrative structure of this museum hinders the inclusion of contemporary debates about black ethnicity in the exhibition.

I finished the analytical section with the Museum of the Kuna Nation. I looked at how the Kunas, one of Panama's indigenous groups, are using the model of community museum as a way to maintain and enhance their cultural and political autonomy. I pointed out that contemporary debates about other groups that live in the region are not present in this museum.

I continued in the last part of this dissertation with a review of cases where the majority's version of Panamanianness has been questioned. I discussed ciudadMÚLTIPLEcity and the 7th Panama Art Biennial. Both exhibitions attempted to bring to the forefront contemporary debates about Panamanianness. The topics addressed by the exhibition included the convulsed political history of Panama during the twentieth century, the situation of sexual minorities, political corruption, and debates over Panamanianness as inescapably determined by the Panama Canal.

This was followed by an analysis of two New Media models I created during this research. The first model I discussed was *Angie Against the World*, a computer game about the invasion of Panama in 1989. I related this game to the OSGON, a theoretical model proposed by Gonzalo Frasca for the use of games to address sensitive political topics. The second model I described was *CiudadPanama.org*, a work in progress planned as an online multimedia centre about Panama. The idea behind this model was to explore how institutions such as libraries, mass media

services and museums could work together to present contemporary debates and issues through the creation of a collection of audiovisual material. I developed one module for this project, built upon the results from the current research. This was a website with interpretive texts and a showcase of videos about Panamanian history and identity.

Throughout the cases, I found that an important similarity was the muting or silencing of contemporary debates in these exhibitions. I argue that the exclusion of contemporary debates from museums is a way to exclude a segment of the population from participating in the build-up of Panamanian identity and nationhood, as debates often refer to vulnerable minorities. To include contemporary debates in Panamanian museum exhibitions would represent an investment into societal trust and human dignity, and would mean thinking about development beyond the construction of infrastructure. Furthermore, given Panama's recent history of conflict and its diverse society, I argue that including alternative voices and addressing contemporary debates are amongst the most important duties Panamanian museums have.

Addressing contemporary debates, however, presents many challenges. First, it requires the inclusion of conflicting points of view and testimonies within an exhibition. Museums have to handle carefully their position in relation to the diverging points of view presented. Exhibiting contemporary debates can become an opportunity to analyse from multiple perspectives the impact of a given event, yet stakeholder interests can also lead to the creation of exhibitions that fall into what Enid Schildkrout (1995) calls 'selective amnesia', the production of 'politically useful memories'. Moira Simpson (1996: 48) argues, however, that if museums take the initiative and ask for the collaboration of groups to build multiple perspectives on issues, they may be able to prevent exhibitions from becoming spaces 'for a group to air its grievances'. Simpson (1996: 48) argues that this does not mean the active involvement of the museum in political issues or its siding with certain groups, but the provision of background information and a counterbalancing of the reporting of media, thus making of the museum a forum for discussion.

There is another delicate issue when attempting to address contemporary debates over histories of conflict, and it concerns the feelings of those who suffered injuries during a given event. David Dolan (2000) has warned that

'Museums must be tactful and compassionate in interpreting tragic historic events recent enough to still cause pain to living people', yet 'evasiveness and censorship allow and indeed encourage false and defamatory versions and stories to proliferate and circulate. This is surely an injustice to the dead; and presumably increases the pain for the survivors'. (Dolan 2000)

Limitations, Applications and Future Research

If I could start again, I wish I had begun my study with the understanding of the contexts of these museums that I have gained during this research. If I had found analyses, more than descriptions, in the literature about Panamanian museums, I could have concentrated in developing New Media models, which is truly how this research started. I initially wanted to develop models that would allow the inclusion of alternative stories and the voices of minorities in narrations of Panamanian history and identity. The desire to understand why and how dominant stories, silences and muted voices have formed in Panamanian museums took over, in detriment of the development of models. Although I don't regret this being the case, I do feel that the practice-based part of this research could have been richer. This part could have helped to add the perspective of audiences, an angle that I only briefly touch upon when discussing my computer game, and that is otherwise lacking in this research.

I would also have liked to understand more of the practical issues surrounding the creation of these exhibitions, in this way adding the perspective of 'production histories'. This angle could have complemented previous research on the material conditions of museums, such as Mónica Aparicio Rueda's (1984) *Diagnóstico de los museos en Panamá* (Diagnostic of Museums in Panama), developed for the UNDP. Including the production angle, however, was unachievable partly because of my stay

in Bergen, and partly because of the impossibility to gain access to data about some of the museums.

Results from this research could be applied in practical or analytical projects. A practical application would be to do individual models for each of the museums analysed. This could be a way of gaining insight into specific audiences at a national level and deepening the understanding of the production processes of these museums.

Another way of expanding this research would be to apply its model for the analysis of the contexts of museums to other cases in the region in order to draw comparisons. For example, a comparative study of representations of national identity and diversity in museums in Panama's neighbours, Colombia to the east and Costa Rica to the west, would afford the opportunity to deepen the understanding of cultural interconnections between Central and South America.

This first in-depth study of the contexts of Panamanian museums, of their dominant representations, silences and muted voices, however, was an essential starting point, which others and I hopefully will be able to build upon.

Works Cited

- Albán, J. 2006. *Angie en su Laberinto: Narrativa, Juego y Crítica en la Era Digital*. Havana: Forum Idea, 9 Bienal de la Habana.
- Alexander Craft, R. 2008. “‘Una Raza, Dos Etnias’”: The Politics of Be(com)ing/Performing “Afropanameño”, *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 3(2): 123-47. Retrieved 15 November 2008 from Informaworld database.
- Alfaro, R. J. 1960. *Vida del General Tomás Herrera*. Panamá: Imprenta Nacional.
- Alÿs, F. and R. Ortega. 2004. ‘1 Minuto de Silencio’, in G. Mosquera and A. Samos (eds), *ciudadMULTIPLECity. Art>Panama 2003. Urban Art and Global Cities: An Experiment in Context*. Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, pp. 76-82.
- Anales de la Convención. 1904. *Proyecto de Ley 3(55), 15 de julio de 1904*. Panamá: Biblioteca Nacional Ernesto J. Castellero R.
- Anderson, B. 1983. *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Aparicio Rueda, M. 1984. *Diagnóstico de los Museos en Panamá. Proyecto para el Desarrollo del Patrimonio Cultural PAN 82/008*. Panama: PNUD / UNESCO.
- Arango, J. de. 2006. ‘El Sitio de Panamá Viejo. Un Ejemplo de Gestión Patrimonial’, *Canto Rodado*(1): 1-15.
- Araújo, W. 2006. ‘Lucky Seven’, in M. Kúpfer and W. Araújo (eds), *7a Bienal de Arte de Panamá = 7th Panama Art Biennial*. Panamá: Fundación Arte y Cultura, pp. 8-13.
- . 2007. Interview with Ana Luisa Sánchez Laws. Email.
- Araúz, A. 1997. ‘Segundo Congreso Universal del Canal Interoceánico’, *Revista Lotería 412*: May –June, 41-43.

- Araúz Montafante, C. A. 1980. *La Independencia de Panamá de España en 1821: Antecedentes, Balance y Proyecciones*. Panamá: Academia Panameña de la Historia.
- . 1991. 'Algunas Características que Definen la Personalidad Histórica del Istmo de Panamá Durante los Siglos XVI y XVII', in ILDEA (ed.), *Visión de la Nacionalidad Panameña*, Spec. issue of *La Prensa*, 8 August, 7-10.
- Araúz Montafante, C. A. and J. Kam Ríos. [1975]. 'Relaciones Entre Panamá y los Estados Unidos de América (Siglo XIX)', *Boletín de la Academia Panameña de la Historia, Tercera Época*, Panama, October-November 1975 and January-February 1976.
- Araúz Monfante, C. A., A. Tello de Burgos and A. Figueroa Navarro. 2006. *Manual de Historia de Panamá*. 2 vols. Panamá: Litho Editorial Chen.
- Arciajovanka Guardia, J. 2007. 'Lo Que No Cuenta la Historia de Panamá', *La Prensa*, 30 September. Retrieved from La Prensa online archives 13 November 2008.
- Arosemena, M. 1868. *Apuntamientos Históricos (1801-1840)*. Panamá: Biblioteca Ernesto J. Castellero. Biblioteca de la Nacionalidad. Retrieved 4 December 2008 from BINAL database.
- Arrocha, V. 2007. 'Museos sin verano', *Ellas Virtual*: 2 February. Retrieved from La Prensa online archives 26 July 2008.
- Aukofer, F. A. and W. P. Lawrence. 1995. *America's Team: The Odd Couple, A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military*. The Freedom Forum First Amendment Centre. Retrieved 21 June 2008 from the FFFAC website.
- Autoridad del Canal de Panamá. 2001. 'ACP Colabora con Museo del Canal Interoceánico para Día Internacional del Museo', *El Faro* 2(11): 1 June, 9. Retrieved 14 August 2008 from the ACP website.

-
- . 2006. *Proposal for the Expansion of the Panama Canal, Third Set of Locks Project*. Panamá: Autoridad del Canal de Panamá. Retrieved 3 August 2006 from the ACP website.
- Baquero Ramos, A. 2006. Interview with Ana Luisa Sánchez Laws. Panamá: Museo del Canal Interoceánico.
- Bal, M. 2007. 'Exhibition as Film', in S. Macdonald and P. Basu (eds), *Exhibition Experiments*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 71-93.
- Barrantes, R., et al. 1990. 'Microevolution in Lower Central America: Genetic Characterization of the Chibcha-speaking groups of Costa Rica and Panama, and a Taxonomy Based on Genetics, Linguistics and Geography', *American Journal of Human Genetics* 46: 63-80.
- Benjamin, A. T. 2005. 'Moradores Confrontan al Patronato de Panamá Viejo', *La Prensa*, 13 December. Retrieved 11 November 2008 from La Prensa online archives.
- Bennett, T. 1995. *The Birth of the Museum. History, Theory, Politics*. London: Routledge. Culture: Policies and Politics.
- Bernal, M. A. 1990. *A Panamanian Warrior in the U.S.: The Fax against Noriega*. Pennsylvania: Lehigh University.
- Bilbao, G. 2004. 'Museo Tucán, la Trama Secreta', Spec. issue of *La Prensa*, 17 September. Retrieved 28 January 2008 from La Prensa online archives.
- Boyd, A. 1997. 'Congreso Universal sobre el Canal de Panamá', *UN General Assembly, 52 Session Period, 50th Plenary Session, A/52/PV.50*. New York: United Nations. Retrieved 28 September 2008 from the UN database.
- Boza, A. 2007. Interview with Ana Luisa Sánchez Laws. Panama: Cambefort y Boza offices, 18 December.

- Brown, P. C. 1997. 'The Panama Canal: the African American Experience', *Federal Records and African American History* 29(2).
- Cajar Páez, A. 2003. 'La Invasión', Extra-Centennial issue of *La Prensa*, 9 November, 22.
- Camarena, C. and T. Morales. 2006. 'Community Museums and Global Connections: The Union of Community Museums of Oaxaca', in I. Karp et al. (eds), *Museum Frictions. Public Cultures / Global Transformations*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 323-44.
- Camargo de Cooke, M. 2003. 'Entre Penas y Glorias: 100 Años de Museos en Panamá', in R. Miró Grimaldo, A. Castellero Calvo and I. Gólcher (eds), *Panamá, itinerario de una nación*. Panamá: El Hombre de La Mancha, pp. 165-84.
- . 1980. 'Surgimiento y Desarrollo del Museo del Hombre Panameño', in Universidad de Panamá (ed.), *Actas del 1er Congreso Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología y Etnohistoria de Panamá*. Panamá: Ediciones INAC Panamá.
- Castillero Calvo, A. 1960. 'Fundamentos Económicos y Sociales de la Independencia de 1821', *Tareas* 1(1): October. Panamá.
- . 1971. *La independencia de Panamá de España. Factores Coyunturales y Estructurales en la Capital y el Interior, 1821*. Panamá: Instituto Panameño de Turismo.
- . 1994. *Arquitectura, Urbanismo y Sociedad, La Vivienda Colonial en Panamá, Historia de un Sueño*. Bogotá: Editorial Presencia.
- . 1995. *Conquista, Evangelización y Resistencia*. Panamá: Instituto Nacional de Cultura.

-
- . 1999. 'La Carrera, el Monopolio y las Ferias del Trópico', in A. Castellero Calvo and A. Kuethe (eds), *Historia General de América Latina* 3(1). Paris: UNESCO, pp. 75-124.
- . 2004. 'Historia y Sociedad. Los Grupos de Poder en la Colonia', *Tareas* 116: January-April. Retrieved 21 October 2008 from the Tareas website.
- . 2006. *Sociedad, Economía y Cultura Material. Historia Urbana de Panamá La Vieja*. Panamá: Imprenta Alloni.
- Cazali, R. 2006. 'Panama without Distances or the Drawing of a Sentimental Cartography', in M. Kúpfer and W. Araújo (eds), *7a Bienal de Arte de Panamá = 7th Panama Art Biennial*. Panamá: Fundación Arte y Cultura, pp. 23-26.
- Chong, Z. 2006. 'Tesoros por Descubrir', *La Prensa*, 22 January. Retrieved from La Prensa online archives 13 November 2008.
- Cleves Martínez, C. E. 2005. *Sobre los Trabajadores de la Construcción del Ferrocarril de Panamá*. Dissertation at Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Retrieved from Universidad Nacional de Colombia website 20 January 2008.
- Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. 1995. *Report on the Technical Assistance Mission to Panama*, U.N. Doc. E/C.12/1995/8. Retrieved from University of Minnesota Human Rights Library 7 September 2006.
- Congreso General Kuna. 1994. *Encuentro de Pueblos Indígenas de Abia Yala. Ustupu, Kuna Yala, 21-26 de febrero, 1993*. Ustupu: Congreso General Kuna.
- Conniff, M. L. 2001. *Panama and the United States: The Forced Alliance*. 2nd Edition. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Constenla, A. 1985. 'Las Lenguas Dorasque y Chángena y sus Relaciones Genealógicas', *Revista de Filología y Lingüística de la Universidad de Costa Rica* 9: 81-91.

- . 1991. *Las Lenguas del Área Intermedia: Introducción a su Estudio Areal*. San José: Editorial de la Universidad de Costa Rica.
- Conte Guardia, A. M. 1978. 'Aspectos Significativos de la Cultura del grupo Afroantillano de Panamá', *Guía del Museo Afroantillano*. Panamá: Dirección Nacional de Patrimonio Histórico.
- Cooke, R. 1991. 'El Período Precolombino', in ILDEA (ed.), *Visión de la Nacionalidad Panameña*, Spec. issue of *La Prensa*, 8 August, 3-6.
- Cooke, R. and L. A. Sánchez. 2004. 'Arqueología en Panamá (1888-2003)', in Comisión Universitaria del Centenario de la República (ed.), *Panamá: Cien años de republica*. Panamá: Manfer S.A. Retrieved from the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute website 5 October 2008.
- Cooke, R., et al. 2003. 'Los Pueblos Indígenas de Panamá Durante el Siglo XVI: Transformaciones Sociales y Culturales desde una Perspectiva Arqueológica y Paleoecológica', *Mesoamérica* 45: January-December. Retrieved from the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute website 5 October 2008.
- Corrales U., F. 2000. *An Evaluation of Long-Term Cultural Change in Southern Central America: the Ceramic Record of the Diquís Archaeological Sub-Region, Costa Rica*. Dissertation at the University of Kansas. Lawrence: University of Kansas.
- Davison, P. 2005. 'Museums and the Re-Shaping of Memory', in G. Corsane (ed.), *Heritage, Museums and Galleries. An Introductory Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 184-94.
- DeCarli, G. 2003. 'Visión de la Nueva Museología en América Latina: conceptos y modelos', *Revista ABRA*: July-December, pp. 1-22. Retrieved 20 September 2008.
- De Gracia, G. 2006. Interview with Ana Luisa Sánchez Laws. Panama: Dirección de Patrimonio Histórico, December.

-
- Dolan, D. 2000. 'Sins of Omission', *Open Museum Journal* 2, August.
- Encore, S. I., et al. 2000. *Guarding the Gates, the Story of Fort Clayton – Its setting, Its Architecture and Its Role in the History of the Panama Canal*. Champaign: US Army Corps of Engineers.
- Encyclopaedia Britannica Online. 2008. Consulted 15 February 2008.
- Evans, J. 1999. 'Introduction: Nation and Representation', in D. Boswell and J. Evans (eds), *Representing the Nation: A Reader. Histories, Heritage and Museums*. London: Routledge, pp. 1-8.
- Fernández, M. A. 2004. 'Hacedor de Museos', *In memoriam Felipe Lacouture*, Spec. issue of *Gaceta de Museos* 1, November 11-12.
- Fessenden N., O. 1867. *Isthmus of Panama. History of the Panama Railroad and of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers.
- Fortune, A. 1975. 'El Esclavo Negro y el Desarrollo Económico del Istmo de Panamá Durante el Descubrimiento y la Conquista (1501-1532)', *Revista Lotería* 228: February.
- . 1977. 'Composición Étnica y Mestizaje en el Istmo de Panamá Durante la Colonia', *Revista Nacional de Cultura* 7-8: April-September.
- Frasca, G. 2000. "Ephemeral Games: is it Barbaric to Design Videogames After Auschwitz?" *Cybertext Yearbook*. Retrieved 21 November 2008 from Ludology.org.
- Gaceta Oficial. 1916. *Ley 8 del 23 de Octubre de 1916*, Segunda época, 12(2467): 6 November, Panamá.
- . 1977. *Ley 91 del 22 de diciembre de 1976 'Por el cual se regulan los Conjuntos Monumentales Históricos de Panamá Viejo, Portobelo y el Casco Antiguo de la Ciudad de Panamá'*, 18252. Retrieved 20 September 2008.

- González Guzmán, R. 1976. 'Estado Actual de los Museos en Panamá', Sunday issue of *El Panamá América*, 14 September.
- . 1997. 'Reina Torres de Araúz y su Fecunda Labor en Beneficio de Nuestro Patrimonio Cultural', *Revista Cultural Lotería* 412: 61-77.
- Goodnow, K. 2006. *Challenge and Transformation: Museums in Cape Town and Sidney*. Paris: Éditions UNESCO-BPI/PUB. Museums and Diversity.
- Gualde, A. 2004a. 'I Am Who I Am', in G. Mosquera and A. Samos (eds), *ciudadMULTIPLECity. Art>Panama 2003. Urban Art and Global Cities: An Experiment in Context*. Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, pp. 156-63.
- . 2004b. 'Nueve', in G. Mosquera and A. Samos (eds), *ciudadMULTIPLECity. Art>Panama 2003. Urban Art and Global Cities: An Experiment in Context*. Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, pp. 68-74.
- Harker, J. 2006. 'Panama Jat', in M. Kúpfer and W. Araújo (eds), *7a Bienal de Arte de Panamá = 7th Panama Art Biennial*. Panamá: Fundación Arte y Cultura, pp. 60-65.
- Hauenschild, A. 2000. *Claims and Reality of New Museology: Case Studies in Canada, the United States and Mexico*. Smithsonian Centre for Education and Museum Studies. Retrieved from the Smithsonian Institution website 20 January 2007.
- Heckadon Moreno, S. 1994. *Panamá en sus Usos y Costumbres*. Panamá: Editorial Universitaria.
- Herlihy, P. H. 1997. 'Central American Indian Peoples and Land Today' in A. G. Coates (ed.), *Central America: A Natural and Cultural History*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Herrera, F. A. 2003. 'Las Comunidades Indígenas Panameñas en el Umbral del Nuevo Milenio', in R. Miró Grimaldo, A. Castellero Calvo and I. Gólcher (eds),

-
- Panamá, itinerario de una nación*. Panamá: El Hombre de La Mancha, pp. 185-210.
- Horna, J. 1980. *Museos de Panamá*. Panamá: Instituto Nacional de Cultura (INAC).
- Hooper-Greenhill, E. 1992. *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*. London: Routledge.
- , 1995. (ed.). *Museums, Media, Message*. London: Routledge. Museums: New Visions, New Approaches.
- Howe, J. 2004. *Un Pueblo que No se Arrodillaba. Panamá, los Estados Unidos y los Kunas de San Blas*. CITY: Plumsock Mesoamerican Studies, Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica, Serie Monográfica 13.
- Instituto Nacional de Cultura (INAC). 2008. *Museos de Panamá: Museo Antropológico Reina Torres de Araúz*. INAC. Retrieved 26 July 2008 from INAC website.
- Jaén Suárez, O. 1974. 'Las Fuentes para un Estudio de la Mortalidad en la Época de Construcción del Canal de Panamá 1880-1920', *Actas del V Simposium Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología y Etnohistoria de Panamá*. Panamá: Universidad de Panamá / Instituto Nacional de Cultura.
- . 1978. *La Población del Istmo de Panamá, del Siglo XVI al Siglo XX*. Panamá: Impresora de la Nación.
- . 1980. 'La Presencia Africana en Panamá', *Revista Lotería* 296-97: November-December.
- . 1981. 'Negros y Esclavos en la Época Colonial de Panamá', *Revista Nacional de Cultura* 16.
- . 1991. *El Siglo XVIII en Panamá y las Permanencias Estructurales*. In ILDEA (ed.), *Visión de la Nacionalidad Panameña*, Spec. issue of *La Prensa*, 8 August, 11-14.

- Jane, C. (ed.). 1988. *The Four Voyages of Columbus. A History in Eight Documents, Including Five by Christopher Columbus, in the Original Spanish, with English Translations*. New York: Dover.
- Kane, G. P. 2004a. 'From Defiant Cimarrones to Determined Canal Workers: Racial Identity in Panama', in D. Wickham (ed.), *Home Away From Home: Africans in the Americas*. Greensboro: Institute for Advanced Journalism Studies, pp. 47-51. Retrieved 31 October 2008 from the University of North Carolina website.
- . 2004b. 'Panama in Black and White - and Silver and Gold', in D. Wickham (ed.), *Home Away From Home: Africans in the Americas*. Greensboro: Institute for Advanced Journalism Studies, pp. 36-42. Retrieved 31 October 2008 from the University of North Carolina website.
- Karp, I. and S. Lavine, (eds). 1991. *Exhibiting Cultures. The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Karp, I., S. Lavine and C. Mullen Kreamer (eds). 1992. *Museums and Communities: the Politics of Public Culture*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Karp, I., et al. (eds). 2006. *Museum Frictions: Public cultures/global transformations*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.
- Koster, R. and G. Sánchez Borbón. 1990. *In the time of the tyrants, Panama: 1968-1990*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Kúper, M. and W. Araújo (eds). 2006. *7a Bienal de Arte de Panamá = 7th Panama Art Biennial*. Panamá: Fundación Arte y Cultura.
- Law Environmental Caribe. 1999. *Plan Maestro de Panamá Viejo*. Unpublished document presented to the Patronato Panamá Viejo. Panama.
- Lehrer, J. 1999. *Ceremonial Transfer*. Online *NewsHour*. 14 December. Retrieved 23 September 2008 from PBS website.

-
- Lemaitre, E. 1972. *Panamá y su Separación de Colombia. Una Historia que Parece Novela*. Bogotá: Biblioteca Banco Popular.
- Lidchi, H. 1997. 'The Poetics and The Politics of Exhibiting Other Cultures', in Hall, S. (ed.) *Representation. Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*. London: SAGE Publications & The Open University, pp. 151-222.
- Light, H. 2005. *The importance of museums in the development of changes in social thinking*. Hawke Centre. Retrieved 15 August 2008.
- Linares, O. F. 1979. 'What is Lower Central American Archaeology?' *Annual Review of Anthropology* 8: 21-43
- . 1977. 'Ecology and the Arts in Ancient Panama: on the Development of Rank and Symbolism in the Central Provinces', *Studies in Precolumbian Art and Archaeology* 17. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks.
- . 1986. 'Estratificación y Economía entre Grupos Antillanos Bocatoreños', *Situación de la Costa Atlántica, Serie Realidad Nacional* 1: September. Panamá: Universidad de Panamá.
- Lippy, C. H., R. Coquette and S. Poole. 1992. *Christianity Comes to the Americas: 1492-1776*. New York: Paragon House.
- Lohman, J. 2006. 'Introduction to the Series', in K. Goodnow, *Challenge and Transformation: Museums in Cape Town and Sidney*. Paris: Éditions UNESCO-BPI/PUB. Museums and Diversity.
- Lombardo, R. 2007. Interview with Ana Luisa Sánchez Laws. Panama: West Indian Museum of Panama, December.
- Luxner, L. 1998. 'Panama Opens Doors to Canal Museum', *Journal of Commerce*, 10 June. Retrieved 22 July 2008 from Luxner News Inc. website.
- Macdonald, S. and P. Basu, (eds). 2007. *Exhibition Experiments*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing. New Interventions in Art History.

- Mack, G. 1944. *The Land Divided*. Alfred A. Knopf.
- Maloney, G. 1989. *El Canal de Panamá y los Trabajadores Antillanos. Panamá 1920: Cronología de una Lucha*. Panamá: Ediciones Formato 16.
- Martínez, J. de J. 1991. *La Invasión de Panamá*. Bogotá: Causadias Editores.
- Masur, G. 1948. *Simón Bolívar*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Mayo, J. 2004. *La industria prehispánica de conchas marinas en 'Gran Coclé', Panamá*. Diss. U Complutense de Madrid.
- McCarthy, C. 2007. 'Museum factions - the transformation of museum studies', *Museum and Society* 5(3): 179-85.
- McConnell, J. 2005. *Foreword*, in National Library of Scotland, National Archives of Scotland and Museo del Canal Interoceánico (eds), *The Darién Adventure*. Panamá: Museo del Canal Interoceánico, p. 4.
- McLean, A. 2007. Interview with Ana Luisa Sánchez Laws. Panama: West Indian Museum of Panama, December.
- McLean, K. 2004. 'Museum exhibitions and the dynamics of dialogue', in G. Anderson (ed.), *Reinventing the Museum. Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on a Paradigm Shift*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, pp. 193-211.
- Méndez Pereira, O. 1915. *Historia de la instrucción pública en Panamá*. Panamá: Tipografía Moderna.
- Merry, A. 2007a. *Historia de los Museos Comunitarios de Kuna Yala*. Congreso General Kuna. Retrieved 23 September 2007.
- . 2007b. Interview with Ana Luisa Sánchez Laws. Panamá: Oficina del Congreso General Kuna, December.

-
- Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas. 2005. *Pobreza en Panamá, una encuesta sobre estándares de vida*. Panamá: Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas. Retrieved 3 August 2006.
- Mon Pinzón, R. A. 1979. *Historia de la Migración China Durante la Construcción del Ferrocarril de Panamá*. Masters Thesis. México: El Colegio de México.
- Moore, K. 1997. *Museums and Popular Culture*. London: Cassell.
- Morales, A. 1995. 'El Estudio Jurídico Político de las Comarcas Indígenas en el Derecho Positivo Nacional'. *América Indígena*, 15(4): October-December, 137-50.
- Morgan, J. D. 2005. 'Panama, the promised land', in National Library of Scotland, National Archives of Scotland and Museo del Canal Interoceánico (eds), *The Darién Adventure*. Panamá: Museo del Canal Interoceánico, p. 3.
- Mosquera, G. and A. Samos (eds). 2004. *ciudadMULTIPLECity. Art>Panama 2003. Urban Art and Global Cities: An Experiment in Context*. Amsterdam: KIT Publishers.
- Murillo, L. E. 1995. *The Noriega Mess: The Drugs, The Canal and Why America Invaded*. Berkeley: Video.Books.
- Museo Nacional de Colombia. 2008a. *Carta del Barón Von Humboldt a Simón Bolívar*. Retrieved 20 January 2008 from Museo Nacional de Colombia website.
- . 2008b. *Nacimiento del Museo*. Retrieved 20 January 2008 from Museo Nacional de Colombia website.
- Museo de Arte Contemporáneo. 2006. *Historia del MAC*. Retrieved from the MAC website 2 December 2008.
- Museum. 1982a. 30(2). Geneva: UNESCO.
- . 1982b. 34(2). Geneva: UNESCO.

- Myers, F. 2006. 'The Complicity of Cultural Production: The Contingencies of Performance in Globalizing Museum Practices', in I. Karp et al. (eds), *Museum Frictions: Public cultures/global transformations*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- National Institute of Culture. 1978. *Cultural Policy in the Republic of Panama*. Madrid: UNESCO. Web. 21 September 2008.
- National Library of Scotland, National Archives of Scotland and Museo del Canal Interoceánico. 2005. *The Darién Adventure*. Panamá: Museo del Canal Interoceánico.
- New York Times. 1989. *A Transcript of President Bush's Address on the Decision to Use Force*, 21 December 1989. Retrieved from the New York Times online archives 21 June 2008.
- Ochy, M. and I. Ruiz. 2004. *Un Siglo de Luchas*, Documentary, 1:22'. Panama: Museum of the Inter-oceanic Canal.
- Olivares, D. 1974. 'Analogía de las Estructuras de Edificios Coloniales y los Actuales', *Actas del V Simposium Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología y Etnohistoria de Panamá*. Panamá: Universidad de Panamá / Instituto Nacional de Cultura (INAC), pp. 239-49.
- Opatrny, J. 1986. 'El Año 1903 en la Historiografía Panameña', in M. O. Sisnett Cano (ed.), *Boletín de la Academia Panameña de la Historia*. Tercera Época, 48-49: July – December.
- 'Opinión'. 2006. *El Panamá América* August-September. Web. 25 July 2008.
- Ortiz, F. 1952. 'La Leyenda Negra Contra Fray Bartolomé', *Cuadernos Americanos*, vol. 65.
- Paniza Paredes, S. E. 2006. 'Un aniversario más del Museo de Hombre Panameño Reina Torres de Araúz', *Mosaico* 20(4): 219.

-
- Pastides, N. 2007. 'Allies, Constituents or Myopic Investors: Marcus Garvey and Black Americans', *Journal of American Studies* 41(2): 279-305. Retrieved 14 October 2008.
- Patronato Panamá Viejo. 1998. *Patronato Panamá Viejo*. Retrieved 1 December 2008 from PPV website.
- . 2006. *Panamá Viejo: de la Aldea a la Urbe*. Panamá: Editorial Patronato Panamá Viejo.
- Pereira de Padilla, J. and R. Segura, (eds). 1983a. *Aproximación a la Obra de Reina Torres de Araúz*. Panamá: Instituto Nacional de Cultura.
- , 1983b. (eds). 'Reina Torres de Araúz, Constituyente de 1972', *Aproximación a la obra de Reina Torres de Araúz*. Panamá: Instituto Nacional de Cultura.
- , 1983c. (eds). 'Reina Torres de Araúz, Defensora de la Cultura Popular', *Aproximación a la obra de Reina Torres de Araúz*. Panamá: Instituto Nacional de Cultura, pp. 53-59.
- Pérez, A. de, A. Gandhi and R. Shahani. 1976. 'Evolución histórico demográfica de la comunidad hindostana de Panamá', in Biblioteca de la Nacionalidad (ed.), *Panamá, sus etnias y el canal*. Panamá: Autoridad del Canal de Panamá. Retrieved 21 October 2008 from BINAL database.
- Piperno, D. R. 1984. *The Application of Phytolith Analysis to the Reconstruction of Plant Subsistence and Environments in Prehistoric Panama*. Dissertation Temple University. Philadelphia: Temple University.
- Pizzurno Gelós, P. 2007. 'El Turismo y el Patrimonio en el Panamá Republicano', *Canto Rodado* 2: 1-22. Panamá: Patronato Panamá Viejo.
- Pizzurno Gelós, P. and C. A. Araúz. 1996. *Estudios sobre el Panamá Republicano (1903-1989)*. Colombia: Manfer S.A.

- Portillo, M. 2004a. 'Análisis de la belleza', in G. Mosquera and A. Samos (eds), *ciudadMULTIPLECity. Art>Panama 2003. Urban Art and Global Cities: An Experiment in Context*. Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, pp. 116-23.
- . 2004b. 'Relation:Ships . Vivir el litoral', in G. Mosquera and A. Samos (eds), *ciudadMULTIPLECity. Art>Panama 2003. Urban Art and Global Cities: An Experiment in Context*. Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, pp. 108-15.
- Priestley, G. 1987. 'Etnia, Clase y Cuestión Nacional en Panamá: Análisis de Estudios Recientes', *Tareas 67*: October-December. Centro de Estudios Lationoamericanos CELA 'Justo Arosemena'. Retrieved 21 October 2008.
- . 2004. 'Antillean-Panamanians or Afro-Panamanians?: Political Participation and the Politics of Identity During the Carter-Torrijos Treaty Negotiations', *Transforming Anthropology* 12(1-2): 50-67. Berkeley: California University Press. Retrieved 21 October 2008.
- Proaño Wexman, C. 2007. *Teatro Piedra a Piedra. La Prensa*, 27 March. Retrieved from La Prensa online archives 13 November 2008.
- Reuter Orán, A. and P. Chiari. 1974. 'Vida Rutinaria del Indio Kuna', in Universidad de Panamá (ed.), *Actas del V Simposium Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología y Etnohistoria de Panamá. Homenaje a Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas*. Panamá: Universidad de Panamá / Instituto Nacional de Cultura.
- Revilla Argüeso, A. 1987. *Cultura Hispanoamericana en el Istmo de Panamá*. Panamá: ECU Ediciones, Convento de Santo Domingo.
- Riba, J. 1968. *Informe al I.V.U. sobre el Plan de Panamá*. Panamá: Instituto de Vivienda y Urbanismo IVU.
- Rodriguez, R. 1997. 'El museo del Canal Interoceánico de Panamá: breve reseña de su gestión, metas y proyecciones', *Revista Lotería 412*: May –June, 49-59.

-
- Rodríguez Arce, J. R. 1939. 'La cuestión racial en el continente americano', *América* 3(2).
- Rovira, B. 2001. 'Actualizando el Pasado', *Arqueología en Panamá La Vieja*: Agosto, 1-11.
- . 2008. 'Arqueología Histórica y Gestión Patrimonial: el Caso de Panamá Viejo', Conference Proceedings. *Ciudades de la Transculturación*. San Salvador: Centro Cultural de España / Universidad Tecnológica de El Salvador / Academia Salvadoreña de la Historia, 2 April.
- Rubio, A. 1950a. *La Ciudad de Panamá*. Panamá: Autoridad del Canal de Panamá, 1999. Retrieved 27 September 2008 from BINAL database.
- . 1950b. *Panamá: Monumentos Históricos y Arqueológicos*. México: Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia.
- Saco, J. A. 1938. *Historia de la Esclavitud de la Raza Africana en el Nuevo Mundo y en especial en los Países Américo Hispanos*. Havana: Cultural S.A.
- Saldaña, A. 2006. 'Ampliación del Canal, Buen Negocio para Quién?' *Expresiones para una Sociedad Participativa*. Retrieved 15 September 2006.
- Samos, A. 2004a. 'Buhoneros y Precaristas', in G. Mosquera and A. Samos (eds), *ciudadMULTIPLECity. Art>Panama 2003. Urban Art and Global Cities: An Experiment in Context*. Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, pp. 140-46.
- . 2004b. 'La Cosa Está Dura', in G. Mosquera and A. Samos (eds), *ciudadMULTIPLECity. Art>Panama 2003. Urban Art and Global Cities: An Experiment in Context*. Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, pp. 92-99.
- . 2004c. 'Panamini', in G. Mosquera and A. Samos (eds), *ciudadMULTIPLECity. Art>Panama 2003. Urban Art and Global Cities: An Experiment in Context*. Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, pp. 124-31.
- . 2005. 'El Gran Salto', *Artmedia*. San José.

- Sandell, R. (ed.). 2002. *Museums, Society, Inequality*. London: Routledge. Museum Meanings.
- Schildkrout, E. 1995. *Museums and Nationalism in Namibia*. Museum Anthropology 19.
- Simpson, M. G. 1996. *Making Representations, Museums in the Post-Colonial Era*. London: Routledge.
- Skartveit, H.-L. 2007. *Representing the Real Through Play and Interaction. Changing Forms of Nonfiction*. Dissertation University of Bergen. Bergen: University of Bergen.
- Soler, R. 1971. *Pensamiento Panameño y Concepción de la Nacionalidad Durante el Siglo XIX*. Panamá: Librería Cultural Panameña S.A.
- . 1978. *La Nación Hispanoamericana, Estudios Histórico-Críticos sobre la Idea Nacional-Hispanoamericana*. Panamá: Ediciones Instituto Nacional de Cultura.
- Spadafora, V. and E. Tejeira Davis (eds). 2001. *Panama City's Old Quarter*. Panamá: CiudadCity Publishers.
- Spadafora, V. 2001. 'Management, Master Plan and Development', in V. Spadafora and E. Tejeira Davis (eds), *Panama City's Old Quarter*. Panamá: CiudadCity Publishers, pp. 172-239.
- Stam, D. 1993. 'The Informed Muse: the Implications of 'The New Museology' for Museum Practice', *Museum Management and Curatorship* 12: 267-83.
- Starn, R. 2006. 'A Historian's Brief Guide to New Museum Studies', *The American Historical Review* 110(1). Retrieved 23 November 2008 from The American Historical Review website.
- Tamayo, E. 1995. 'Abriendo el Camino. Congresos de la Cultura Negra de las Américas', *América Latina en Movimiento*. Agencia Latinoamericana de Información. Retrieved 21 October 2008 from ALAINET database.

-
- Tejeira Davis, E. 2001. 'The City, its People and its Architecture', in V. Spadafora and E. Tejeira Davis (eds), *Panama City's Old Quarter*. Panamá: CiudadCity Publishers, pp. 18-151.
- . 2004. 'Taking Back the Canal Zone', in G. Mosquera and A. Samos (eds), *ciudadMULTIPLECity. Art>Panama 2003. Urban Art and Global Cities: An Experiment in Context*. Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, pp. 200-20.
- Torres de Araúz, R. 1957. *La Mujer Cuna, Darién: etnología de una región histórica*. Panamá.
- . 1981a. 'Omar Torrijos y su Ideario de la Cultura Nacional', *Revista Lotería, Torrijos, Figura, Tiempo, Faena 1*: August-September, 305-6, October-November, 307-8, December, 309. Panamá: Litho-Impresora Panama.
- . 1981b. *Panamá Indígena*. Panamá: Autoridad del Canal de Panamá.
- . 1983a. 'Apología de la Cultura Nacional', in J. Pereira de Padilla and R. Segura (eds), *Aproximación a la Obra de Reina Torres de Araúz*. Panamá: Instituto Nacional de Cultura.
- . 1983b. 'Le Musee de L'Homme Panameen, Panama', in J. Pereira de Padilla and R. Segura (eds), *Aproximación a la Obra de Reina Torres de Araúz*. Panamá: Instituto Nacional de Cultura.
- . 1983c. 'Una Nueva Ley para Proteger Nuestros Tesoros Arqueológicos', in J. Pereira de Padilla and R. Segura (eds), *Aproximación a la Obra de Reina Torres de Araúz*. Panamá: Instituto Nacional de Cultura.
- . 1983d. 'Etnohistoria Cuna', in J. Pereira de Padilla and R. Segura (eds), *Aproximación a la Obra de Reina Torres de Araúz*. Panamá: Instituto Nacional de Cultura.

- . 1983e. 'Estado Actual de la Antropología en Panamá', in J. Pereira de Padilla and R. Segura (eds), *Aproximación a la Obra de Reina Torres de Araúz*. Panama: Instituto Nacional de Cultura.
- Torrijos, M. 2006. *Declarations Upon Sanctioning the Law that Approves the Expansion of the Canal*. Retrieved 1 August 2008 from ACP website.
- Torrijos, O. [1999]. 'La Yunta Pueblo-Gobierno Trabaja para la Comunidad y para el País', in Autoridad del Canal de Panamá (ed.), *Pensamiento del General Omar Torrijos Herrera*. Panamá: Biblioteca Nacional Ernesto J. Castillero. Biblioteca de la Nacionalidad, pp. 152-59.
- Universidad de Panamá (ed.). 1974. *Actas del V Simposium Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología y Etnohistoria de Panamá. Homenaje a Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas*. Panamá: Universidad de Panamá / Instituto Nacional de Cultura.
- . 1980. (ed.). *Actas del Ier Congreso Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología y Etnohistoria de Panamá*. Panamá: Ediciones INAC Panamá.
- Uribe, A. 2004. 'Panama City Then and Now', in G. Mosquera and A. Samos (eds), *ciudadMULTIPLECity. Art>Panama 2003. Urban Art and Global Cities: An Experiment in Context*. Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, pp. 171-93.
- Valiente López, A. 2002. *Derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas de Panamá*. San José: Impresora Gossestra.
- Vásquez, J. M. 1981. *Investigaciones sobre la Naturaleza del Ser Panameño (una Teoría de la Nacionalidad Panameña)*. Panamá: Ediciones Olga Elena.
- Vega Abad, L. (ed.). 2003a. 'Panamá Viejo, Historia de sus Barriadas', *La Prensa*, 8 August. Retrieved from La Prensa online archives 13 November 2008.
- . 2003b. 'Un Brindis por Panamá La Vieja', *La Prensa*, 15 August. Retrieved from La Prensa online archives 13 November 2008.

---. 2003c. 'Una Calle de Espaldas a la Historia', *La Prensa*, 11 August. Retrieved from La Prensa online archives 13 November 2008.

Vera Calderón, R. 2003. 'The United States Invasion of Panama: A Tri-Dimensional Analysis'. *Entrecaminos*. Washington: Georgetown University. Retrieved 21 June 2008.

Vergo, P. 1989. *The New Museology*. London: Reaktion Books.

Wagua, A. 2007. *Así Lo Vi y Así Me Lo Contaron*. Panamá: Congreso General de la Cultura Kuna.

Weibel, P. and B. Latour. 2007. 'Experimenting with Representation: *Iconoclash* and *Making Things Public*', in S. Macdonald and P. Basu (eds), *Exhibition Experiments*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 94-108.

Westerman, G. 1956. *Carlos Antonio Mendoza, Father of Panama's Independence Act*. Panamá: Ministerio de Educación.

---. 1980. 'Los Inmigrantes Antillanos en Panamá', in Biblioteca de la Nacionalidad (ed.), *Panamá, sus Etnias y el Canal*. Panamá: Autoridad del Canal de Panamá, pp. 11-96. Retrieved 30 September 2008.

Wilson, C. G. 2003. 'El Aporte Cultural de la Etnia Negra en Panamá'. *Revista Istmo* 7: November – December. Retrieved 22 October 2008.

Wimmer, J. 2008. 'The Multiple Social Meanings of Digital Games. What the First-Person Shooter Case Study Reveals Us about the Prerequisites for Research', in N. Carpentier et al. (eds), *Democracy, Journalism and Technology: New Developments in an Enlarged Europe. The Intellectual Work of ECREAs 2008 European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School*. Tartu: Tartu University Press, pp. 335-42.

World Heritage Committee. 1997. *Twenty-first Session, World Heritage Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*. Naples: UNESCO. Retrieved 20 September 2008 from the UNESCO database.

---. 2000. *Twenty-fourth Session, Information Document: Synthesis Report of the Regional Expert Meeting on 'Cultural Landscapes in Central America'*. Paris: UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Retrieved 20 September 2008 from the UNESCO database.

---. 2003. *Twenty-seventh Session, Decisions*. Paris: UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Retrieved 20 September 2008 from the UNESCO database.

---. 2005. *Basic Texts of the 1972 World Heritage Convention*. Paris: UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Retrieved 20 September 2008 from the UNESCO database.

---. 2008. *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved 20 September 2008 from the UNESCO database.

Zafrani, R. 2004a. 'Abstracción en Marzo', in G. Mosquera and A. Samos (eds), *ciudadMULTIPLECity. Art>Panama 2003. Urban Art and Global Cities: An Experiment in Context*. Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, pp. 132-38.

---. 2004b. 'Proverbios Chinos', in G. Mosquera and A. Samos (eds), *ciudadMULTIPLECity. Art>Panama 2003. Urban Art and Global Cities: An Experiment in Context*. Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, pp. 84-91.

Zárate, A. 2003. 'Muertos y Desaparecidos Durante la Época Militar', Extra-Centennial issue of *La Prensa*, 9 November.

Zárate, M. and D. Pérez de Zárate. 1952. *La Décima y la Copla en Panamá*. Panamá: Biblioteca Nacional Ernesto J. Castillero. Biblioteca de la Nacionalidad.

Zentner, F. Jr. 1975. 'Orientación Histórica Sobre Algunos Sitios y Hechos
Importantes de la Ciudad de Panamá', *Revista Lotería* 235: Septiembre.